

# Southwestern Vermont Hoarding Task Force in Rutland County

*Goals and purpose of the task force, rating scale, and basics about hoarding disorder*



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Webinar Presentation

# Content

- ❖ *Basics about hoarding*
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# Basics about hoarding / hoarding disorder

## ❖ What is hoarding?



Photo taken by BROCC Weatherization team

- Included in DSM-5
- Difficulty discarding or parting with possessions, regardless of the value
- Excessive clutter in the home to the point where it becomes unsafe & unhealthy for everyone (pets, too!) in the home

## Basics about hoarding / hoarding disorder continued

- ❖ Affects approximately 2-5% of the population; more recent studies have calculated 5% or 1 in 20 people
- ❖ Has harmful effects for the person their family members
  - emotional, physical, social, financial, and even legal
- ❖ Compulsive hoarding – attempting to decrease stress & anxiety
- ❖ Clutter creates falls, health and fire hazards – negatively effects lifestyle
- ❖ Quantity of their collected items sets them apart
  - Excessive shopping, collecting trash, bargain shopping
  - Papers, books, clothes, food, furniture, etc.

# Characteristics of hoarding

- ❖ Men and women of all socioeconomic status & ethnic groups
- ❖ The more isolated the person, the worse the hoarding will be (but just because a person is isolated does not mean they have a hoarding issue)
- ❖ Strenuous relationship with family/friends because of hoarding
- ❖ May have memory issues / short attention span
- ❖ Onset age can start as early as 10 years old
- ❖ Anxious, depressed, have social phobias, co-morbid diagnoses
- ❖ Experienced traumatic event(s)
- ❖ Progresses with age



Photo taken by BROOC Weatherization team

# Characteristics of hoarding continued

## ❖ Signs to look for:

- Frequent conversations about possessions
- Will not allow you to enter the home, or will only allow you to enter parts of the home
- Puts off repairs/paying bills
- Shops often and acquires more items
- Believes cleaning/organizing as a *major* task
- Multiple ER visits due to falls or respiratory problems
- Frequent home shopping network shopper
- Their car may be filled with items
- Person may be “living” in their car



Photo taken by BROOC Weatherization team

# Why do people hoard?

## ❖ Common themes of hoarding



Photo taken by BROOC Weatherization team

- *Sentimental* – connection to important people, places, and events; brings up memories and emotions; may experience exaggerated attachment with inanimate objects and think they have emotions; becomes an extension of self
- *Instrumental* – “just in case items”, has a clear functional purpose, excessive collection; newspapers, flyers, magazines, shoes, toothbrushes, etc.
- *Intrinsic* – no particular use for item, seen as appealing, special, or has a unique craftsmanship, views item as beautiful or pretty



# Can people be treated for hoarding disorder?

- ❖ Person has to WANT help and be willing to change their behaviors
- ❖ Most common treatment: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) -- develops connections with the person's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors
  - Strong emphasis on changing the client's behavior, understanding the motive (increases functioning, rational thinking, and decreases negative feelings)
  - Challenges the thoughts and beliefs about the client's attachment to hoarded items, addresses the need to collect new items
- ❖ Group treatment can be more effective – support groups, Buried in Treasures workshop
- ❖ Motivational interviewing; learning new behaviors
- ❖ Client themselves should work on how they think, feel and act to have a positive effect on brain functions
- ❖ ★ Work with therapists & professionals to develop ways to maintain clutter and hoarding habits, & help prevent relapse into old behaviors ★



# Can people be treated for hoarding disorder (continued)?

- ❖ Medications can be used – particularly used for depression – studies have found this is not very effective
- ❖ Support from family, friends, community, etc.
- ❖ Early treatment rules (examples)
  - Team does not touch/throw away without permission
  - Client makes all decisions about possessions
  - Categories are established before handling possessions
  - Client verbalizes decisions



# Clutter Image Rating Scale

## **Clutter Image Rating: Bedroom**

Please select the photo that most accurately reflects the amount of clutter in your room.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

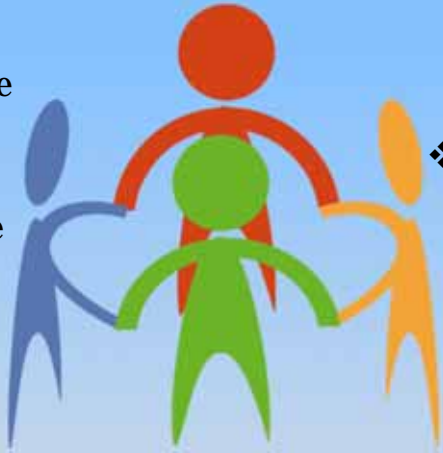
# Homeowners and hoarding

- ❖ When encountering a homeowner who has hoarding disorder, voice your concern about the conditions of their home and talk about the consequences of living in a hoarded home
  - If there are children in the home, DCF could be contacted and become involved
  - If there are elderly adults in the home, APS could be contacted and become involved
- ❖ Ask if you can take pictures or videos; the person may be “blinded” by the condition of their home and not recognize there is a problem
- ❖ Contact the town health and safety officer
- ❖ If the person has family members or community members who they trust and get along with to help encourage the person to change their living habits



# Goals & purpose for the task force

- ❖ Provide awareness and training opportunities to professionals and the public
- ❖ Identify best practices to improve services and eviction prevention, and to improve the quality of life for people with hoarding disorder
- ❖ Recommend and discuss changes to the task force
- ❖ Discuss cases to brainstorm ways to support people and certain situations with clients when needed
- ❖ Provide an inventory of resources that are available for people to get the help they need/want through <http://www.broc.org>
- ❖ Educate the community and public about hoarding disorder, the need for help, and the resources available to help



# Southwestern Vermont Hoarding Task Force Info.

- ❖ Meets monthly; 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of every month
- ❖ 10:00am-11:00am at BROC (45 Union St., Rutland, VT)
- ❖ Contact information:
  - Kate Tibbs
  - BROC
  - 45 Union St., Rutland, VT 05701
  - 802-665-1705
  - [KTibbs@broc.org](mailto:KTibbs@broc.org)

# Sources cited

Beyond Overwhelmed: The Impact of Compulsive Hoarding and Cluttering in San Francisco and Recommendations to Reduce Negative Impacts and Improve Care. (2009). Retrieved February 5, from [http://www.mentalhealthsf.org/documents/Task Force Report \(FINAL\).pdf](http://www.mentalhealthsf.org/documents/Task Force Report (FINAL).pdf)

Burningham, D., & Shapiro, L. (n.d.). Tough Talk: How to Have the Difficult Conversation About Hoarding. Retrieved February 2, 2016, from <http://thehoardingproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Burningham-Shapiro-Talking-About-Hoarding-Disorder.pdf>

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Tompkins County Task Force on Hoarding

Tolin, D. F., Frost, R. O., & Steketee, G. (2014). *Buried in Treasures: Help for Compulsive Acquiring, Saving, and Hoarding (2nd ed.)*. New York, NY: Oxford Uni. Press.

Frost, R. O., & Steketee, G. (2011). *Stuff: Compulsive Hoarding and the Meaning of Things*. New York, NY: First Mariner Books.

## Books to read!

- ❖ Buried in Treasures: Help for Compulsive Acquiring, Saving, and Hoarding by David F. Tolin, Randy O. Frost, & Gail Steketee
- ❖ Stuff: Compulsive Hoarding and the Meaning of Things by Randy O. Frost & Gail Steketee
- ❖ The Hoarding Handbook: A Guide for Human Service Professionals by Christiana Bratiotis, Cristina Sorrentino Schmalisch, Gail Steketee
- ❖ Mess: One Man's Struggle to Clean Up His House and His Act by Barry Yourgrau
- ❖ Digging Out: Helping Your Loved One Manage Clutter, Hoarding, and Compulsive Acquiring by Michael A. Tompkins
- ❖ What Every Professional Organizer Needs To Know About Hoarding by Judith Kolberg
- ❖ Compulsive Hoarding and Acquiring: Therapist Guide (Treatments That Work) by Gail Steketee