

Hoarding Disorder

An insight



What is Hoarding?

Hoarding is the persistent difficulty in discarding or parting with personal possessions, even those of apparently useless or limited value, due to strong urges to save items, distress, and/or indecision associated with discarding.

Hoarding is a very misunderstood and complex issue. It affects people across all socio-economic, age and ethnic groups. It not only has an effect on the individual but radiates through the family and community. It is usually believed to affect older people, however, research shows that whilst the issue can start as early as 13 years of age, treatment is often not sought until around age 50.

Why does it occur?

There is still little research into Hoarding Disorder but there appears to be a possible genetic propensity for it. The most common cause appears to be reaction to trauma, and usually a trauma involving loss.

Hoarding can sometimes result from deficits in processing information. Making decisions about keeping and categorising objects is difficult and confidence in one's ability to remember and to sustain attention is lacking.





Common Traits

Excessive acquiring from shopping, collecting, or from skips etc.

Collecting and storing these items in the home, garage, sheds, others homes or paid storage.

Inability or unwillingness to dispose of any of the items, even those that appear to have no value.

Stored and collected items are taking over the functional living space making those rooms unusable. i.e. people can't sleep in bedroom, cook in kitchen, etc.

There appears to be a poor awareness of the issue and denial that it is a problem.

Debilitating shame preventing them from inviting people into their homes



Risks Involved

Without intervention, this condition won't stop. If it's allowed to continue, the risks can be harmful to the person, their relationships, their families, friends and neighbours.

It can lead to and increased risk of:

- house fires
- infestations
- self care and infestation issues
- tripping/falls
- social isolation
- access for emergency services is challenging
- social isolation
- child protection issues
- tenancy agreement breaches leading to evictions
- anxiety, depression and stress (which, in turn, leads to increased hoarding)



GP's Role in Patient Recovery

GP's play an enormously important role as they are often the first person who learns about the disorder (often during a visit for a different condition).

It is hard to recognise a person struggling with Hoarding Disorder as there is no typical person who hoards. They are often, well groomed, socially competent, well educated and in work.

There aren't many signposts possibilities but simply listening and asking a patient how they would like you to help is a good starting point.



Possibilities Currently Available

Support Groups

An up to date list of these can be found on:

www.cloudsend.org.uk

and

www.helpforhoarders.co.uk.

Local Authorities

Your local authority may have a Multi-Agency group that works with hoarders.

APDO

The Association of Professional Declutterers and Organisers has some members that work with hoarders, www.apdo-uk.co.uk

Local Fire Service

They can discuss safe pathways and exits when fitting smoke alarms. Can also be part of a multi-agency group.

“We can sort it,
Together”





Clutter Image Rating: Living Room

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



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

Where are you on this scale?

Clouds End CIC is a social enterprise that works with people with hoarding issues.

www.cloudsend.org.uk