



Hoarding Response: Resources for Families & Friends

What is Hoarding Disorder?

American Psychiatric Association (2013)

Diagnostic Criteria

- Persistent difficulty discarding or parting with possessions
- Strong need to save items
- Causes large amounts of distress
- Buildup of possessions that clutter active living areas
- Excessive collecting, buying, or stealing unneeded items

Impact on Families & Friends

Vorstenbocsh et al. (2015)

- **Hoarding behaviours cause significant family dysfunction and burden on family members.**

Chasson (2014)

- **Family members of individuals who practice hoarding behaviours often have high levels of distress and attempt to intervene unsuccessfully.**

Impact on the Individual

Vorstenbocsh et al. (2015)

- **Negative attitudes from families are likely to have negative effects on individuals with hoarding behaviours.**

Tompkins (2015)

- **Individuals who practice hoarding behaviours often face high levels of rejection from family members.**
- **The hostile and rejecting attitude that many friends and family members hold toward the person who hoards fuels resentment and mistrust that comes from years of misguided attempts to help.**

"Friends and family members see the solution as the removal of clutter. People who hoard often see the solution as the acquisition of more space so that they can live more comfortably in their home while keeping the possessions elsewhere"

(Tompkins, 2015).

What can Family Members Do?

Tompkins (2015)

Family members and friends can be powerful agents of change when they understand two important things:

- Their actions increase or decrease the willingness of the loved one with severe hoarding to accept help for the problem.
- To help the loved one, it is necessary that they are willing to change first.

It is important for family members and friends to be caring, patient, and forgive their loved ones for their hoarding behaviours.

Use assertive statements to communicate in a clear, calm manner what is wanted/unwanted, and what will happen if these requests are ignored.

It is encouraged for family members to spend time with the individual inside of their home without discussing the hoarding problem.

Resources

American Psychiatric Association (2013). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition*. American Psychiatric Association Publishing. <https://cdn.website-editor.net/30f11123991548a0af708722d458e476/files/uploaded/DSM%2520V.pdf>

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Tompkins, M. A. (2015). *Clinician's Guide to Severe Hoarding A Harm Reduction Approach* (1st ed. 2015.). Springer New York. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4939-1432-6>

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