

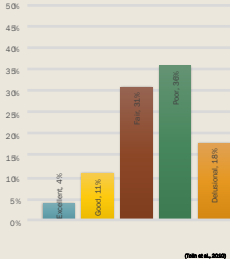
MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY
 HOARDING INTERVENTION CONFERENCE
 MAY, 2019

Christiana Bratiotis, Ph.D., MSW
 School of Social Work & Centre for Collaborative Research on Hoarding



Insight Problems

- Anosognosia
- Clutter Blindness
- Overvalued Ideation
- Defensiveness



| Insight Problem | Prevalence (%) |
|---------------------|----------------|
| Anosognosia | 4% |
| Clutter Blindness | 11% |
| Overvalued Ideation | 32% |
| Defensiveness | 18% |
| Poor Insight | 36% |

O'Neil et al., 2010

Fluctuating Insight

- Fluctuating insight can make intervention difficult
- 3 categories of insight
 - Non-insightful
 - Insightful but not motivated
 - Insightful, motivated but non-compliant

Building and Enhancing Motivation

- Goal: Increase readiness for change!
- Focus: Importance and confidence
- Tasks: Notice, raise and work to resolve ambivalence
 - Ask open ended questions
 - Listen and reflect what you hear
 - Use advantages/disadvantages

- External motivators can be supportive and helpful but building internal motivation is key

Decisional Balance Sheet

Carry On

- +Keep stuff
- +Avoid decision making
- +No work to clear objects

- -Can't find anything
- -Can't have people over
- -Can't use rooms

Change

- +To know what I have
- +Be able to use what I have
- +Family and friend happy

- -Part with objects
- -Hard work
- -Emotional distress

Establish Personal Goals and Values

- Values
 - What does the client care most about? - family, friends, honesty, achievement...
- Personal goals
 - What does the client most want to do in the remainder of his/her life?
- Refer to personal goals and values throughout work together to clarify ambivalence and increase motivation

Intervention Options

- Supportive, step-by-step reduction of clutter
 - Behavioural coach, in-home
 - Mental health treatment (specialized CBT for hoarding)
 - Employs harm reduction
- Supported clean-out
- Clean out without control/presence
- Eviction/Condemnation

■ Inappropriate intervention WILL result in accumulation of clutter (or worse)

Intervention Decision Making

Level 1: Imminent Risk

Level 2: Moderate Risk

Level 3: Low Risk

Harm Reduction

- Identify areas of risk and determine harm potential (harm reduction targets)
- Move objects out of high risk locations and establish systems and structures
- Provide on-going monitoring to reduce relapse potential

Harm Reduction Examples

- ❖ **Harm Potential:** Stacks of 2 feet of paper stored on burners on stove.
Harm Reduction Strategy: Designate a location away from the stove, secure a box for storing papers, move papers from stove into box. Establish limit for amount of paper in box and rules for discarding.
- ❖ **Harm Potential:** Pathway from front door to living window is filled with paper, clothing and other objects. The floor is not visible and the client must move sideways to get through the area.
Harm Reduction Strategy: Move items from pathway to other areas that do not block an exit to the home, be sure the pathway is clear to the floor, use tape or string to mark a 3 foot wide pathway.

Behavioural Strategies

- Divide tasks requiring 3 or more steps into small component parts
- Use visual cues such as lists, calendars and photos
- Provide instructions verbally and in writing (and then post them!)
- Use timer
- Take frequent breaks and reinforce with pleasurable things

Communication Strategies

Use respectful, non-judgmental language;
mirror language used by the client

Ask open-ended questions Encourage engagement

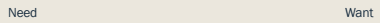
Be clear and concise Praise Success

Reduce Acquiring

- Discuss high acquisition environments and the types of items they are drawn to acquire
 - Grocery stores (*buying multiples of food items*)
 - Sales of any kind (*two for a dollar, etc...*)
 - Free items (*picking up free boxes from a store, dumpster diving*)
 - Low cost settings (*garage sales, thrift shops*)

Reducing Acquisition

- Help clients resist the urge to acquire (purchase, free things, passive)
- Determine if items are needed or wanted and to what degree using scale



** On a scale of 0 – 10 where 0 is no (need/want) and 10 and is the most (need/want), how much do you (need/want) this item?

Reduce Acquiring (con't)

- Develop personal rules for acquiring
 - Only shopping on certain days
 - Only paying cash
 - Answering the questions for acquiring
 - Setting limits on amount acquired before leaving the house
- Discuss ways to avoid acquiring situations
 - Plan other events during high acquiring times
 - Bring an informed buddy/coach
 - Avoid the newspaper ads or commercials that tempt

Non-Acquisition Questions

- How many do I already have?
- Do I have any others like it?
- Is it really important or does it seem so just because I'm looking at it right now?
- Can I afford it?
- Where will I put it once it's in my home?

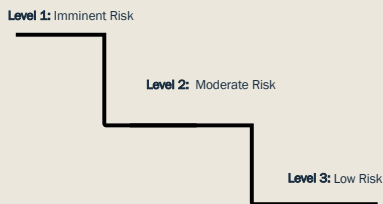
We all have and use rules for acquiring- what are some of yours?

Clutter: Intervention Options

- Supportive, step-by-step reduction of clutter
- Clean out without control/presence
- Eviction/Condemnation

- Inappropriate intervention WILL result in accumulation of clutter (or worse)

Intervention Decision Making



Intervention Decision Making

Corrine is a 45 year old Latina wife & mother of two boys ages 6 & 3. She owns her 3-story Victorian home in an established metro-area neighborhood. Her husband is a minister in their community. She was a special education teacher for 23 years but is on disability leave for depression. She spends most days outside the home, usually shopping.

Corrine's home is cluttered such that her family cannot use most rooms, including the kitchen. Meals are eaten sitting on beds or out of the house. Corrine's 6 year old son sleeps in his bed, which is mostly clear but he has no place to play or do homework. He is repeatedly denied requests to bring friends over to play. The 3 year old sleeps with his parents in their cluttered bed because his crib is full of clothing; he has motor development delays. There is no electricity on the first floor of the house; an extension cord runs outside and through a window to the first floor. One bathroom is clear & usable, all others unusable and filled with objects. The third floor of the home is entirely walled off with objects, mostly clothing. All floor and furniture surfaces have at least 2 feet of clutter on them with some piles reaching 6-7 feet. The family is over \$100,000 in credit card debt & the house is in need of structural repairs.

House Mapping and Room Mapping

- Create a map of the home
- Begin with greatest area of risk and/or highest motivation
- Label each room as a separate zone
- Further sub-divide each room into sections
- Begin sorting in section 1 and move clockwise (or counterclockwise) through the room until all sections have been sorted
- Nothing remains or re-enters that section unless it "lives there"

Steps in a Decluttering Session

- Select target area & type of possession
- Create categories for this type of possession
- Continue excavation until target area clear
- Plan appropriate use of cleared area
- Plan for preventing new clutter to area

Sorting and Categorizing

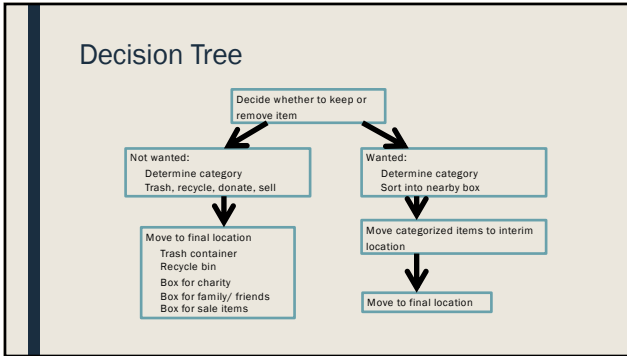
- People with hoarding behavior often perceive things differently than people without hoarding
- Perception influences organization, decision making and categorization
- These processes are important to sorting possessions

Sorting into 3 Piles

- Keep- Discard- 'I Don't Know'
- All items in Keep pile need to have a final location by end of sorting session
- Discard can mean: recycle, sell, give away, donate, garbage, etc.
- 'I Don't Know' pile is intended as temporary during sorting process to keep things moving quickly; a decision about all items in this pile must be made before the end of the sorting session

Decision-making Rules

- How many do I have and is that enough?
- Do I have enough time and space for it?
- Have I used it in the past year?
- Do I have a specific plan to use this within a reasonable time frame?
- Does this just seem important because I'm looking at it now?
- Is it current, of good quality, etc.?
- Would I buy it again if I didn't already own it?
- Do I really need it?
- Will not having this help me solve my hoarding problem?



- ### Maintaining Systems
- What systems are present in the home?
 - What systems are present and working?
 - What are the person's routines?
 - What tasks do they never seem to get to?
-
- Withhold judgment
 - Remember your brain works differently
 - Processes we take for granted need examined and careful planning

- ### Systems to maintain
- Laundry (clean and dirty)
 - Paying bills
 - Mail
 - Dishes
 - Trash
 - Cleaning out refrigerator
 - Pets
 - Sheets and towels

Maintenance Plan

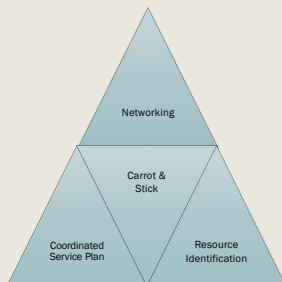
- Develop a plan for regularly attending to household tasks
- Address:
 - 1) Supply needs
 - 2) Space needs
 - 3) Time needs
 - 4) Motivation

Using An In-home Coach

(Case manager, family member, friend, home health aide, student, hired assistant)

- Provide emotional support and encouragement
- Helps identify areas to work
- Help the client stay focused on tasks
- Guide decisions, but doesn't make them
- Be a cheerleader
- Help with hauling
- Accompany the person on non-acquiring trips
- Celebrates successes (however small)

Collaborative and Multi-disciplinary Efforts



Case Management

- Basic needs met first (including housing)
- Additional behaviours & life factors that interfere with progress on hoarding
- Skills of crisis intervention, brokering, advocacy, networking
- Follow-up

Resources



Contact Information

Christiana Bratiotis, Ph.D., MSW
The University of British Columbia, Vancouver
School of Social Work
christiana.bratiotis@ubc.ca
