

HOARDING:

The Problem Behind

Closed Doors

Thursday, June 7, 2012

12th Annual Supportive Housing Network of NY Conference



CUCS

center for urban
community services

Rebuilding Lives Together

OUR DISTINGUISHED PANELIST

Moderator: Michael Golub, Trainer/Consultant, Center for Urban Community Services

Jerry Bubrick, Ph.D, Senior Director, Anxiety & Mood Disorders Center; Director, Intensive Pediatric Obsessive-Compulsive Spectrum Disorders Program, Child Mind Institute

Jon Calvert, Section Head, Housing Services, Project FIND

David Kamnitzer, Senior Vice President, Institute for Community Living





FRAMING THE ISSUE

- Hoarding is a new field, still many unknowns
- Difficult behavior to stop
- Estimated that there are 2-6 million Americans that compulsively hoard (5%)
- Oscar the Grouch, William Randolph Hearst, Andy Warhol
- Connection between trauma and hoarding
- There is no correlation between class and hoarding

DEMOGRAPHICS & FEATURES

- Education ranges widely
- Average age = 50
- Marital Status: tend to be single, high divorce rates
- Creative
- Tend to live alone
- Family history of hoarding is common
- Saving usually begins at childhood (13)
- Little evidence of history of material deprivation
- Hoarding may be worsened by loss
- Insight tends to be low

FRAMING THE ISSUE

- 60% of CH suffer from clinical depression—usually do to their CH
- 69%, in one study, reported having at least 1 traumatic event. Another study reported that only 6% develop PTSD showing that perhaps CH may help prevent the development of PTSD
- 20% report suffering from OCD

FRAMING THE ISSUE

- Many people who suffer from CH are highly intelligent and creative people but also report being highly sensitive to criticism
- Being raised by “cold” or overly critical parents runs through many of the feelings CH report
- Rigid ideas of perfection, fear of waste, fear of losing an opportunity, guilt and shame, ambivalent feelings of self-worth and self-doubt

CHARACTERISTICS, TRAITS & THOUGHT PATTERNS

- many hoarders are highly intelligent and creative people but also report being highly sensitive to criticism
 - being raised by “cold” or overly critical parents runs through many of the feelings CH report
 - accompanied by guilt and shame and ambivalent feelings of self-worth and self-doubt
 - rigid ideas of perfection
 - fear of wasting things
 - fear of losing an opportunity
-

OTHER PATTERNS OF THOUGHT

- difficulty staying on task and paying attention
- fear of waste
- trouble categorizing items
- difficulty making decision
- elaborative processing [twenty minute answer to a twenty-second question]
- don't trust their memories
- motivational problems and avoidant behaviors



THE
COLLYER
BROTHERS'
INFAMOUS
HOME

COLLECTING VS. HOARDING

We all save things for the following reasons:

- **Sentimental Value:** emotional attachments to things
- **Utility Value:** the item is, or could be, useful
- **Aesthetic Value**









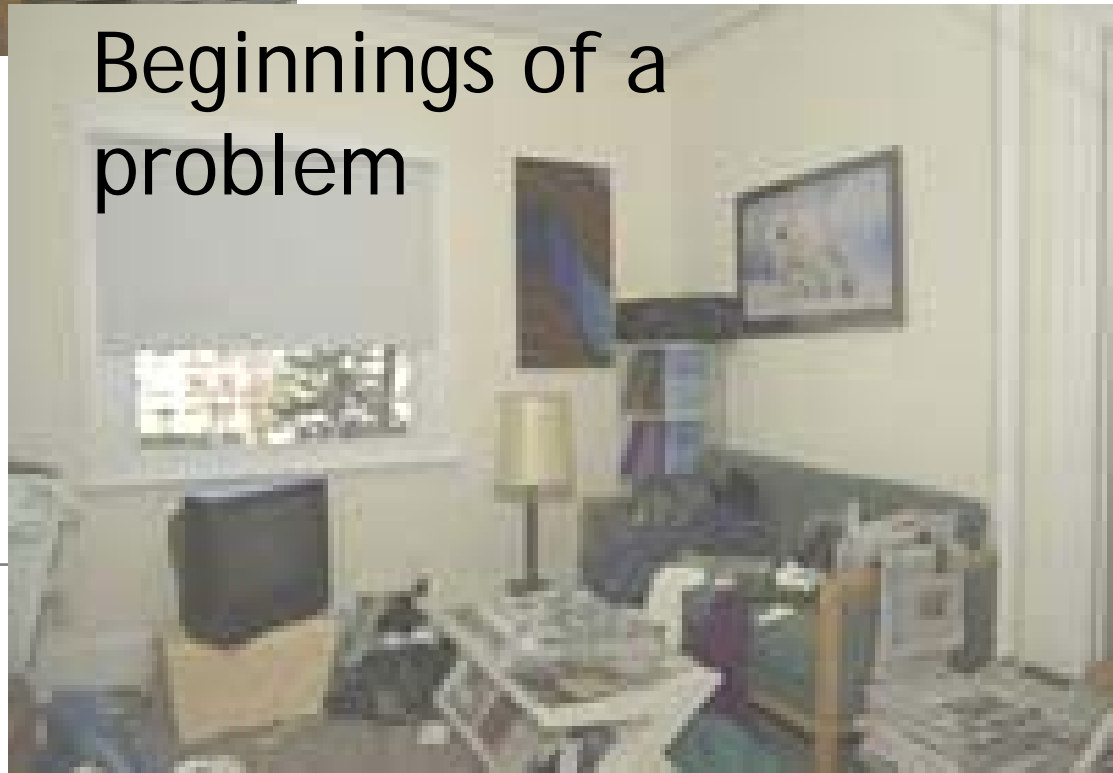




No evidence of CH



Beginnings of a problem



Mild CH



Moderate CH



Serious CH



Very serious CH



Severe CH



Very Severe



Very severe CH



Extreme CH



HOARDERS ON HOARDING

"I feel that if I FINALLY get rid of my piles that fill rooms in my house and garage, I will die. I know it's not true, but I feel that way. If I do manage to get rid of all the junk, then I will be bored. As long as there are huge piles, I know I will always have something to do. It's my safety pile and significant other. If I throw too much away, there'll be nothing left of me."

THREE COMPONENTS

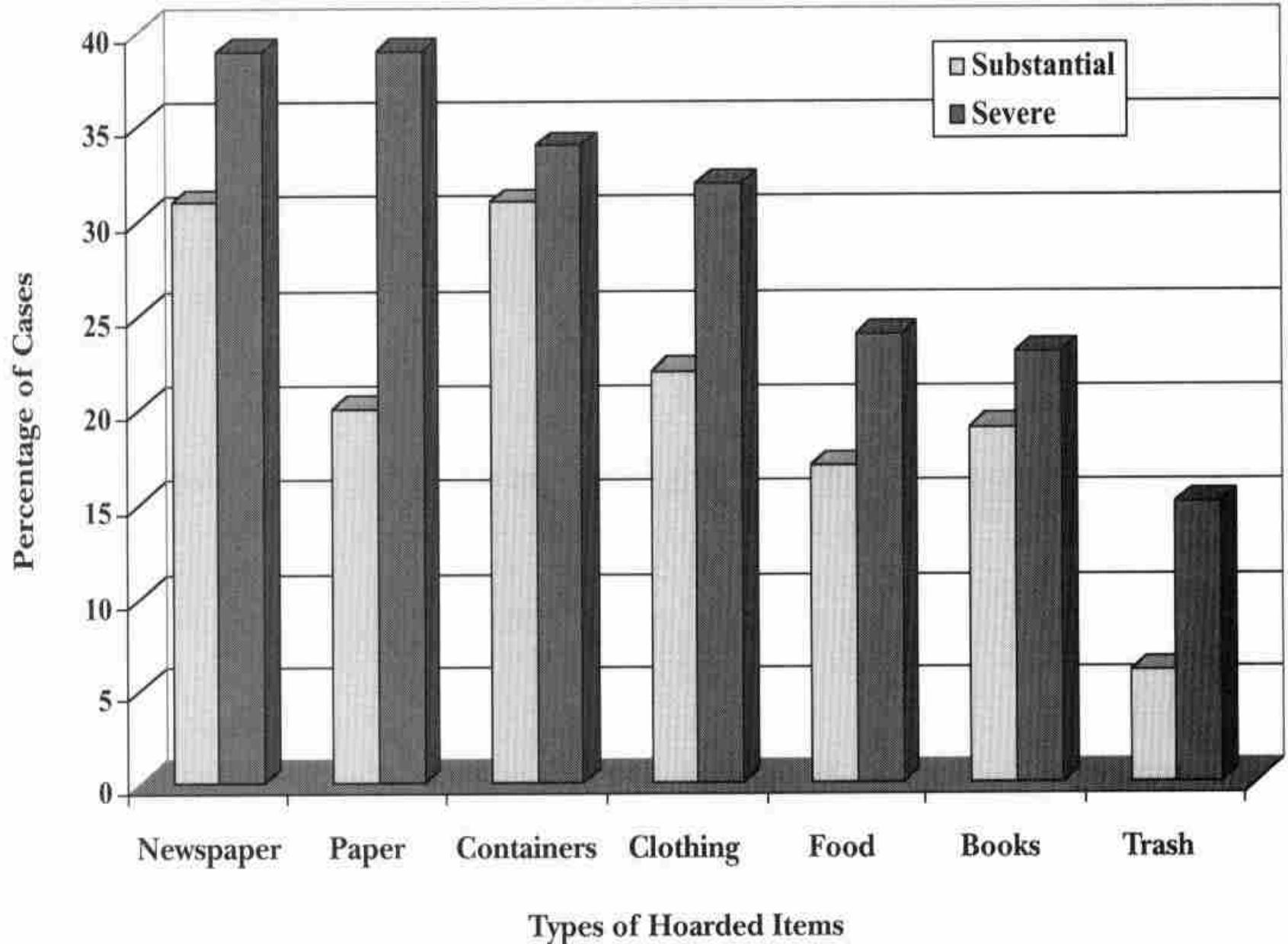
- **Compulsive Acquisition:** buying and/or acquiring free things
- **Compulsive Saving:**
 - Sentimental saving: "This is a part of me."
 - Instrumental saving: "I have a need for this."
 - Intrinsic saving: "This is too pretty to discard."
- **Clutter and Disorganization:**
 - Random piles
 - Fear of putting things out of sight
 - Indecisiveness
 - Churning: meaning that piles are worked over but nothing is ever done about the piles themselves



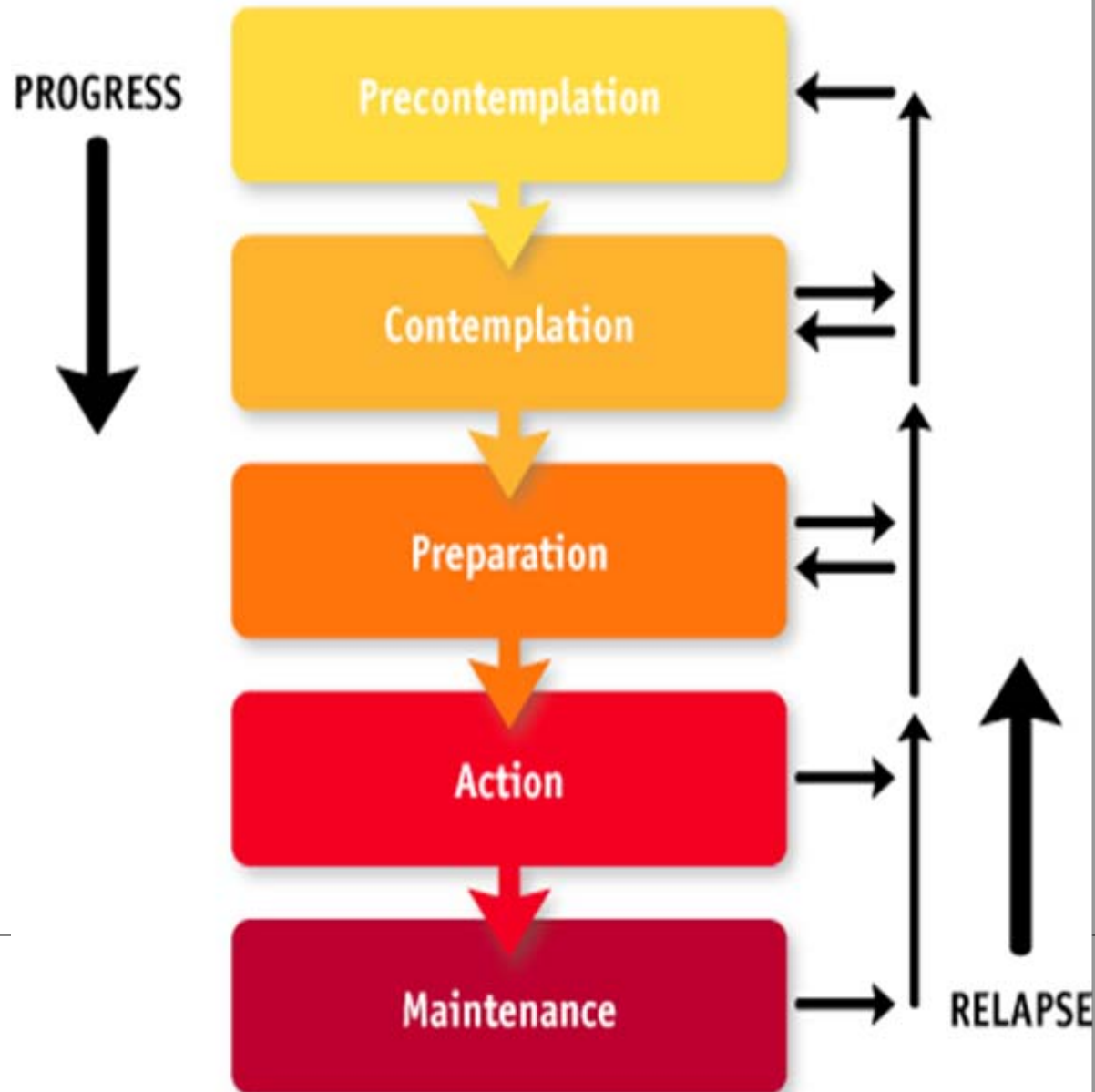
FOUR TYPES OF HOARDING

1. Common Hoarding
2. OCD-based Hoarding
3. Diogenes Syndrome
4. Animal Hoarding

Figure 1. Type and Severity of Clutter in the Homes of Elderly Hoarders (N = 62)



CONTEXTUALUALIZE & NORMALIZE



STAGES OF CHANGE

Pre-Contemplation & Contemplation	PROS	CONS
Actively Hoarding	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Feels good2. Makes pain go away3. Comfort having all the stuff surrounding me	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Feel bad the next day2. Very expensive3. Takes up all my time & thoughts4. Unhealthy5. Unsafe
Stop Hoarding	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Have more room to do the things I want to do2. Allow more time to do other things3. Save money	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Will be very difficult2. Have to change everything, routines, etc.3. Not sure I can do it

TOP 10 SIGNS THAT YOUR CLIENT *MAY HAVE* HOARDING PROBLEMS

1. Client keeps parts of their home off-limit
2. Client insists on meeting in your office, not his/her home
3. Client puts off repairs in home
4. Client often fails to pay bills
5. Client is in debt due to compulsive shopping

TOP 10 SIGNS THAT YOUR CLIENT MAY HAVE HOARDING PROBLEMS

6. Client discusses their stuff endlessly
7. Trying to de-clutter a small area is a major task taking more than a few hours or days
8. Client has trouble finding things and resists storing things out of sight
9. Storage areas are overflowing and rents one or more storage units
10. Client does not let you touch his/her possessions

FINDING HELP

- for compulsive hoarding, help is hard to find
- find a therapist with experience treating hoarding problems
- find a local hoarding support group
- staff and tenant can read recommended books in bibliography
- show the A&E shows on hoarding to people with the disorder, if they want to see it

SUPPORT GROUPS/NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Clutterless Recovery Group Inc

www.clutterless.org/seniors/senior_intro.htm

Clutterers Anonymous

www.clutterersanonymous.net

Messies Anonymous

www.messies.com

Squalor Survivors is a site of hoarders and former hoarders:

<http://www.squalorsurvivors.com/squalor/hoarding.shtml>



SOME OF THE MANY RESOURCES USED

