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of Living

A Division of Hartford Hospital

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of Living

A Division of Hartford Hospital

Hoarding Disorder Treatment Study



at the Anxiety Disorders Center

What Is Hoarding Disorder?

Hoarding Disorder is a recognized behavioral disorder that consists of:

- Difficulty discarding possessions, regardless of their actual value.
- Feelings of distress at the thought of discarding possessions and a need to instead save them.
- Possessions clutter living spaces until they can't be used for normal activities.
- Acquiring and saving result in significant distress and difficulty in one's personal and professional life.



Why Do People Hoard?

People hoard for different reasons. Some of the reasons we have identified through research include:

- Difficulty processing information, such as categorizing, decision-making, and sustaining attention.
- Unhelpful beliefs, such as a sense of emotional attachment to objects, worries about being wasteful, and worries about forgetting things.
- Significant emotional distress about discarding.

How Is Hoarding Disorder Treated?

The best available treatment for Hoarding Disorder is Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT), a form of counseling that has been proven to be effective. CBT is an active and time-limited treatment that is designed to help you:

- Understand more about why you save.
- Develop practical strategies to reduce acquiring and saving.
- Learn how to effectively de-clutter your home and improve your quality of life.
- Practice these strategies and work towards treatment goals.

How Do I Know If I Have Hoarding Disorder?

Although a lot of people have cluttered homes, that doesn't necessarily mean that they have Hoarding Disorder. Only a mental health professional can accurately diagnose Hoarding Disorder, but for a general sense, ask yourself the following questions. If you answer yes, you may benefit from further evaluation and treatment.

- Is my home so cluttered that I have trouble using my rooms or furniture?
- Is it hard for me to throw things away, even if I don't really need them?
- Is my saving of items, and the clutter in my home, having a negative impact on my health, safety, ability to function, or quality of life?
- Is my saving of items, and the clutter in my home, having a negative impact on other people?
- Has my saving of items, and the clutter in my home, caused conflict between me and other people?