

Supportive Approaches



Adopt a Team Approach with Hoarders

- ***Definition:*** Hoarding is the excessive acquiring and accumulation of items, to the point where the health and safety of the occupants and households in the neighborhood are jeopardized. The hoarder has a persistent inability to discard items because of a perceived need to save. These items may have little value or utility. The thought or action of discarding an item will cause extreme discomfort and stress.
- ***Myths:*** Hoarders are poorly educated, low income, anti-social, overweight, or lazy. These stereotypes are inaccurate.

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The best and longest lasting response to severe hoarding behaviors is a coordinated team approach of the appropriate officials, with referral as needed for evaluation and medical treatment.

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A coordinated team response will likely vary, depending on the size of the jurisdiction and the number of hoarding cases they may respond to over time.

Coordinated responses may include:

- *Agencies Sharing Information* via phone or e-mail as it arises
- *Coordination of a Response* through a lead agency
- *Formation of a Hoarding Task Force* that meets on a regular basis

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- A coordinated team response will vary depending on:
 - ✓ The size of the jurisdiction
 - ✓ The likely number of hoarding cases they may respond to over time

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- Codes
- Health Department
- Case Managers, including mental health, aging, substance abuse, and children's services
- Animal Control/SPCA
- Fire and Police
- Cleaning Services/Disposal
- In Home Care/Living Support
- Emergency Housing/Services

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- **Since hoarding is a mental disorder, in most cases the occupant won't have the ability to resolve the problem without help**
- **The occupant will need reasonable accommodation to address the situation, including a viable plan to declutter and clean the unit.**

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The *Clutter Image Rating* tool

- Developed by Dr. Randy Frost and the *International OCD Foundation*
- Includes a series of pictures of rooms in various stages of clutter
- Useful in assessing the level of hoarding behavior
- Provides direction for developing appropriate interventions

Clutter Image Rating: Living Room

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



1



2



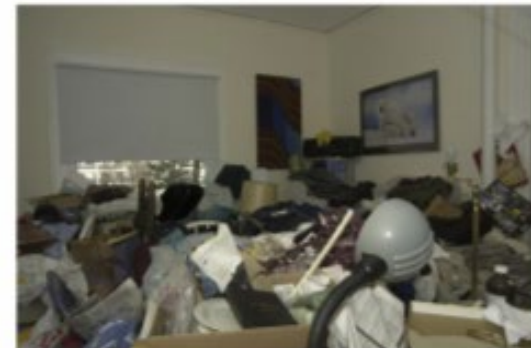
3



4



5



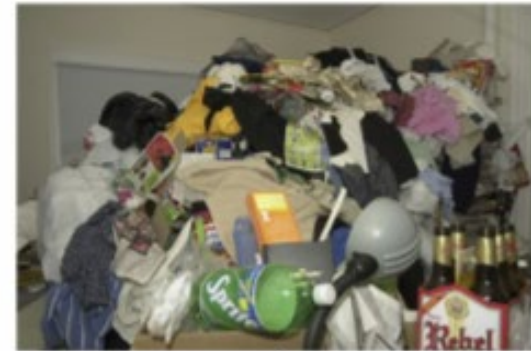
6



7



8



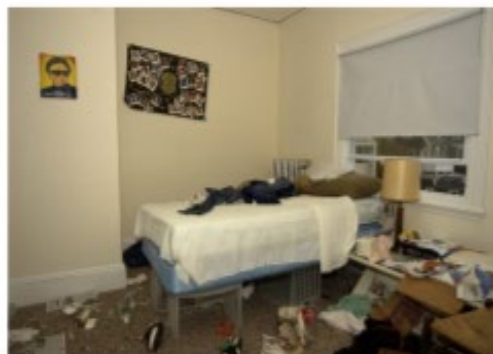
9

Clutter Image Rating: Bedroom

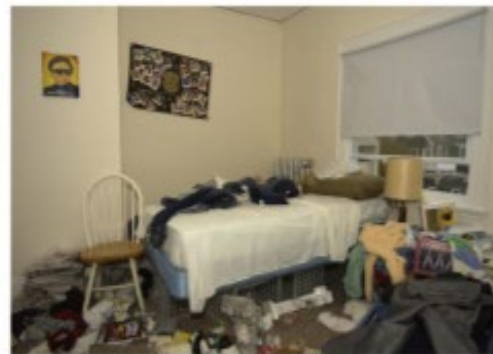
Please select the photo that most accurately reflects the amount of clutter in your room.



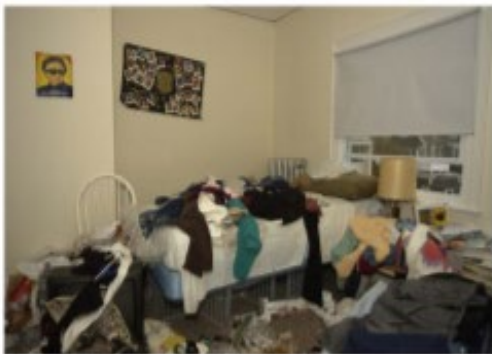
1



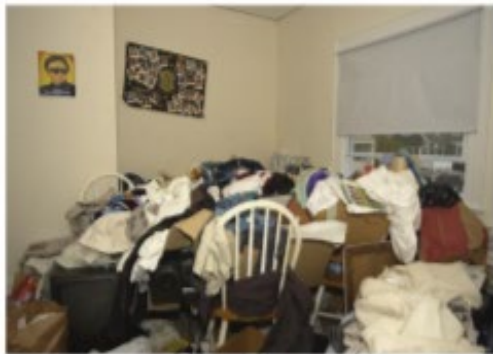
2



3



4



5



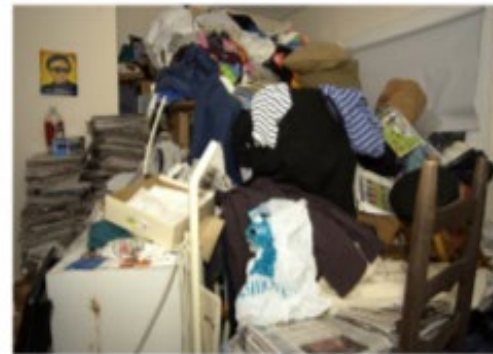
6



7



8



9

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- Provide the occupant with a written plan for decluttering and cleaning. Break the plan into multiple small, easy tasks.
- Set appropriate time limits for each specific task, keeping in mind the difficulty a hoarder will have in letting go of items, and the emotional cost in time and energy.
- Be sure the plan addresses all the code violations at issue, as this may help the occupant better appreciate the gravity of the problem.

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- **Start with the least sensitive issues:**
 - ✓ **Removing Food Leftovers/Containers (disposing of actual garbage is less likely to present sentimental challenges for the hoarder, and will result in quick improvement of sanitary conditions).**
 - ✓ **Decluttering Bathrooms**
- **Slowly move on to larger decluttering and cleaning projects.**

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- 1. Identify the most pressing issues and try to convince the occupant to address these first.**
- 2. Discuss simple strategies to tackle dangerous issues that pose a risk to the health and safety of the hoarder and other residents of the building:**
 - ✓ Reduce fire hazards
 - ✓ Get rid of vermin
 - ✓ Clear blocked passages
- 3. Allow sufficient time for the occupant to address the problem.**
- 4. Suggest other relevant measures to slowly improve the overall condition of the property.**

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Funding Options for Low and Moderate Income Households

- If your community meets the threshold of 51% low and moderate income persons, check with the CDBG Administrator. You should be able to use *CDBG* funds as a public service to provide funding for:
 - ✓ A dumpster
 - ✓ The landfill fee
- Approach community foundations or other local benevolent organizations for funding to cover the cost of having a private hauler dispose of the items.

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Remember:

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