Working with Hoarders

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Introductions / Welcome

- Introductions: Me, you…
- GRP AGREE: Phones, respect, confidentiality
- Break: 11, 12.30-1pm, 2-2.10*
- Questions? How to ask?
- Materials.

You will learn

- Understand what Hoarding is, the different types of hoarders there are and why people Hoard?
- Be given tools to help identify and work with Hoarders
- Understand hoarding risk and the importance of risk management.

You will learn ...(cont'd)

- Understand and be able to categorise different types of hoarders using validated assessment tools
- Understand how to work effectively and creatively with Hoarders using proven methods and recognised techniques
- Be aware of different support and specialist treatment options for hoarders.

Hoarding an introduction

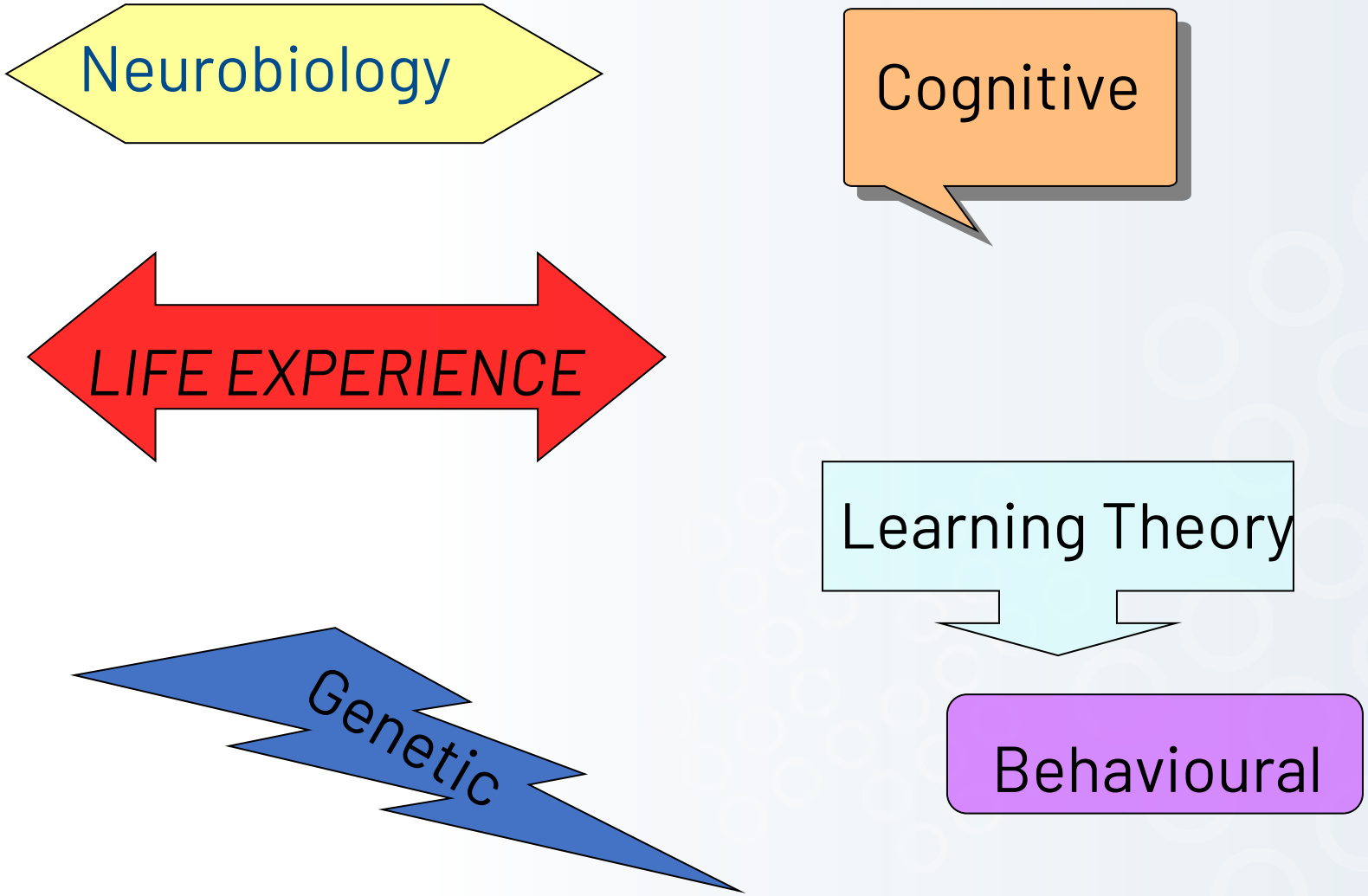
In small groups please:

- Please define what hoarding is?
- Why do people Hoard? (Single trigger or possibly multiple interconnecting factors)
- Please discuss and list the different types of hoarders you are aware of*?

Definitions of hoarding?

1. The acquisition of, and failure to discard, a large number of possessions that appear to be of useless or limited value
2. Living spaces sufficiently cluttered so as to preclude activities for which those spaces were designed
3. Hoarding vs Squalor?

Why do people hoard?

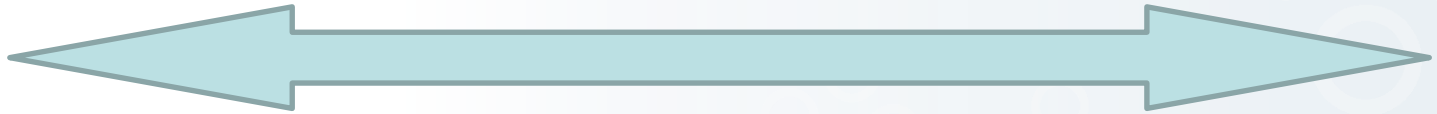


Hoarding an introduction ...(cont'd)

- What's the difference between 'Hoarding' and 'collecting'?

Hoarding continuum

Excessive 'Normal' Collector Cluttered 'Hoarder' Discarder



Hoarding?

- **Is Hoarding a lifestyle choice or a mental illness?**
- The Mental capacity act 2005
- Equalities act 2010 (reasonable adjustment for disability)
- Mental health act 1983/2007
- Mental health diagnosis (DSM-5 definition).

Hoarding diagnosis (DSM-5)*

There are five diagnostic criteria for identifying a case of hoarding disorder:

1. Persistent difficulty discarding or parting with possessions, regardless of their monetary value.
2. 2. A perceived need to save items and the individual experiencing distress with discarding items.
3. 3. The accumulation of possessions that congest and clutter in active living areas.
4. 4. The hoarding causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.
5. 5. The hoarding is not attributable to another medical condition or mental disorder.

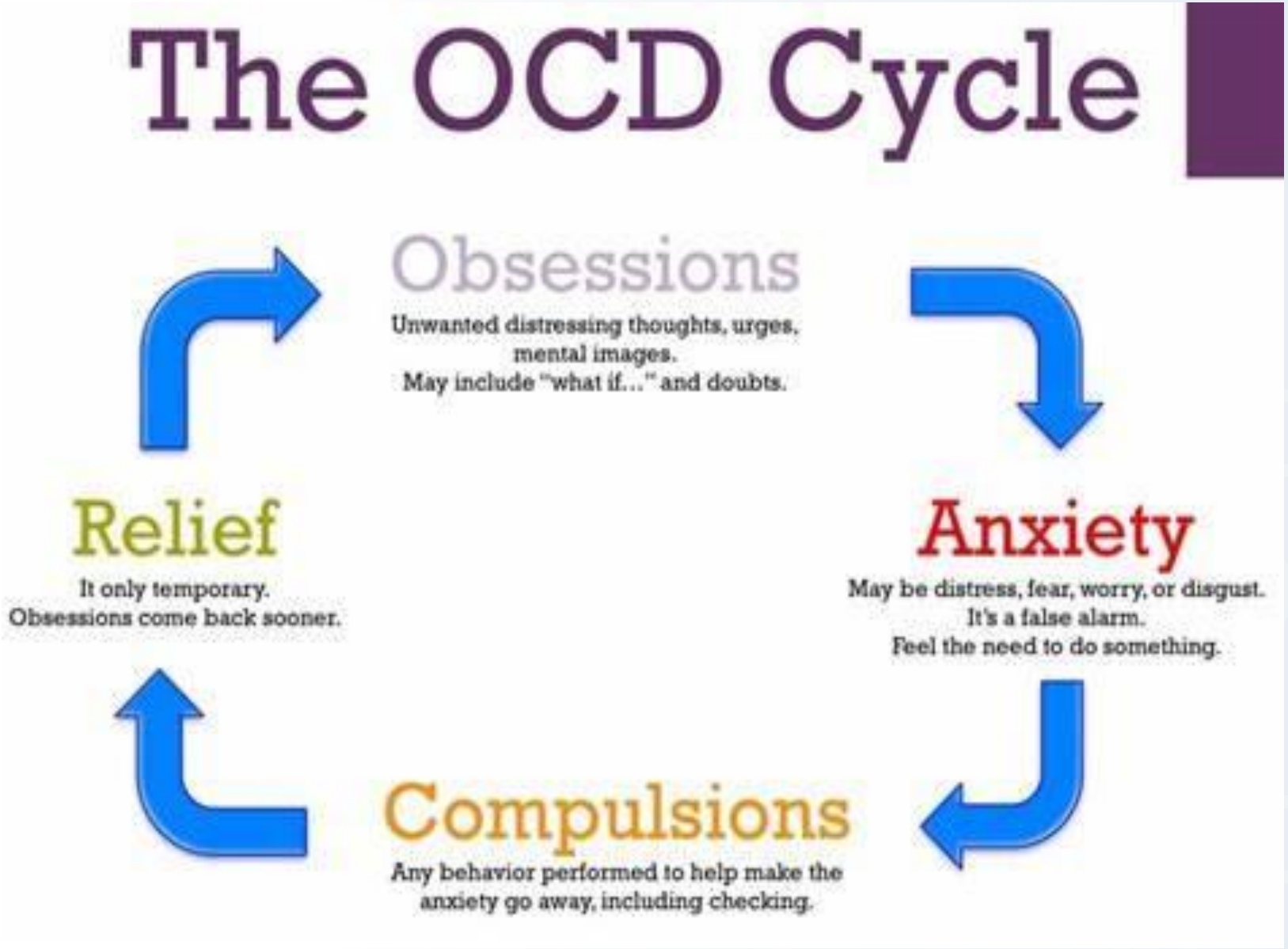
Different types of Hoarders

- Obsessive compulsive disorder's (OCD)
- Some Hoarders have OCD
- Many / most hoarders are anxious

- Anxiety=Avoidance / anger.

discuss

The OCD Cycle



Working with an anxious person?

- What might you need to consider when working with anxious people?

Anxious people / Hoarders

- Fight, flight or freeze response when anxious
- **Fight:** Anger, defensive, denial, 'My house do what I like, you're not coming in, you can't tell me what to do!'
- **Flight:** Avoidance. Don't answer door, don't open letter, bury head in sand and it will all go away, fear, over estimating everything
- **Freeze:** Inactivity, procrastination
- How should you act? Need for Control!

Types of hoarder

- **Primary hoarder:** The main issue is hoarding although there may be other factors such as depression
- Primary hoarder should be seen as long-term cases needing support, de-cluttering, therapy, high relapse risk
- **Secondary hoarding:** The primary issue is alcohol misuse or a physical or mental illness. This causes the hoarding and must be treated
- With secondary hoarding support should be offered for other issues (not tackling hoarding straight on is an option).

Types of hoarder ...(cont'd)

- **Situational hoarding:** Someone who moves from say a three-bedroom property to a one bedroom and is probably already along the continuum at collecting or cluttering
- Situational hoarding involves common sense practical approach. Possible use secondary location in a SMART way
- Be careful*.

Different types of Hoarders

- Hoarding disorder
- OCD hoarders
- Diogenes
- Animal hoarders
- Generalists & Specialists
- Wet vs Dry
- Organised vs Disorganised
- ‘Excessive acquirer subtypes’.

Diogenes syndrome (AKA: Senile squalor syndrome, Plyushkins, Severe social breakdown syndrome)

- A term used to describe a condition of extreme self-neglect, domestic squalor, social withdrawal, apathy and tendency to hoard rubbish (Clark et al., 1975).
- A descriptive term, not a psychiatric diagnosis.
- Predominantly refers to the elderly population
- Most sufferers will reject offers of help.

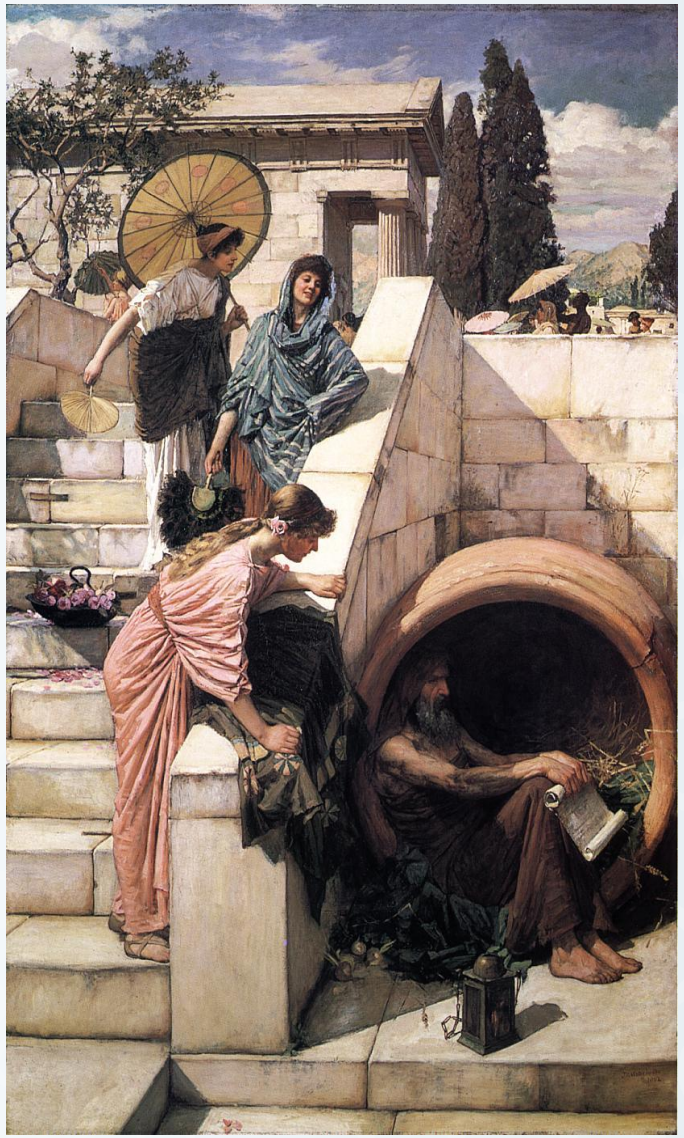
Chronic disorganisation

- While chronic disorganization may result in clutter and loss of living space, it is not the same as hoarding.
- Chronic disorganization may lead to clutter in the home, time management issues and a reactionary response rather than long-term planning. Chronic disorganization may be a result of ADD/ADHD, a chronic pain condition, dementia, or other health condition.
- Have clutter, including paper, boxes or bags stacked in the office or home
- Always be running behind
- Try to organize but just don't have the energy or time
- Spend the majority of their time putting out fires instead of long-term planning.

Diogenes Syndrome

Characterised by:

- Domestic squalor
- Self / property neglect
- Social isolation
- Hoarding of rubbish (Syllogomania)
- Lack of shame / insight
- Above average intelligence
- Manipulative, obstinate,
- HARD WORK!



Clark et al, Lancet, 1975; Cybulska & Rucinski Br. J Hosp Med. 1986; Rosenthal et al, Isr J Psych Relat Sci 1999

Animal hoarding

Types:

- Overwhelmed caregiver
- The rescuer hoarder
- The exploiter hoarder
- The breeder hoarder.

Excessive acquirers

- Some Hoarders (20-40%*) are excessive acquirers
- That means they feel compelled to acquire / buy / find items and bring them home, contributing to the Hoard!

Phases of the excessive acquirer cycle*:

– The urge to shop / acquire
– Anticipation and planning of purchases
– Euphoria during and immediately after purchases
– Depression and hopelessness once the shopper realises they've lost control.

Some possible characteristics of hoarders

- Beliefs that emotional comfort comes from objects
- Fear of losing something important
- Feelings of loss of self or identity
- Need for control, no one can move possessions
- Discarding is laborious; so it is avoided.

Some possible characteristics of hoarders ...(cont'd)

- Distress and avoidance. Distress at not acquiring, or discarding a possession: so hoarders avoid it
- Grief-like feelings when discarding due to intense initial attachment to the object
- Hyper responsible for objects: discarding requires others to need and appreciate items.

Prevalence

- No accurate UK data
- USA research approximately five percent
- Germany six percent
- Chartered institute of environmental health data 2008.

Exercise: Working with Hoarders

- What are some of the main problems or challenges working with hoarders?
- Engagement?
- Motivation?
- Time?
- List and discuss please.

Common problems and challenges working with Hoarders?

- Difficult to identify
- Difficult to engage
- Difficult to create insight / break down denial states
- Other services don't want to help!
- Costs
- Lack of resources
- Problems with monitoring and creating long term solutions
- Motivation
- Lack of sympathy with Hoarder!

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Stages of support / action

We need to look at working with hoarders in a stage by stage process.

- **One:** Identification
- **Two:** Initial meeting / contact, & developing rapport and trust
- **Three:** Assessment
- **Four:** Risk assessment
- **Five**: Support plan and goals
- **Six:** Harm reduction* (safety, health, comfort)
- **Seven:** De-cluttering*
- **Eight:** Follow up.

One: Identification

- How do you currently identify Hoarders?
- Also ideas of how you could identify more Hoarders in general?

Two: Initial meeting / contact, & developing rapport and trust

- **Preparation is essential:** Does someone internal already know the case? Is there any information in house?
- **Check with other agencies?**
- **Letter:** Think about the language used.
- Do not raise unnecessary alarm (remember many hoarders suffer from anxiety). Explain why you want to come around. Allow them to decide when but make them clear you will be coming around.
- **Arrive early**: Persevere as they may not answer straight away!

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Engagement: the visit

- **Body language (yours and theirs!)**
- **Support:** You want to help them!
- Meet in the middle approach
- **Negotiate:** Compromise.
- “You decide the journey allow them to decide the route”
- Highlight personal choice and control / menu of options
- Quick wins when it comes to motivation (more later)
- Hoarders anxiety levels increasing*.

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@cambsfrs

Exercise: Assessing hoarders?

- How do you assess hoarders?
- I am going to show you some tools that you could use to assess hoarders or their properties
- Then we will discuss.

Exercise: Risk assessment

- What are the main risks from hoarding (individual, property, community?)
- IE What risks does Hoarding pose?
- How do you currently manage these risks?

Risks from Hoarding?

- Hoarding is a high-risk factor for eviction or threat of eviction which is one of the highest risk factor for homelessness
- Damage to property
- Fire risk
- Public health & pest infestation risk
- Safeguarding adults / children.

Risks from Hoarding? ...(cont'd)

- Risks to Hoarder, to the property to others (neighbors etc.)
- Impaired ability to live a 'Normal*' life
- Unhealthy Living Conditions sometimes dangerous
- Unsafe Living Conditions for the person themselves and others around them (neighbours, family, visitors like you!).

Making a plan of action / support plan?

- Initial plan should be short sweet and simple (categorisation / organisation*)
- Do not go for big change until you have developed rapport and trust*
- What needs to be done and **WHY?**
- SMART planning
- (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timed).

Harm reduction

- Harm reduction is vital for **ALL hoarders**
- For some its as far as it will go and will have to get the house to an acceptable and safe standard.
- For others it's the start of the relationship to allow de-cluttering or further support
- It involves three areas:
- **Safety** (Target risks first such as fire, avalanche, access)
- **Health** (Food, bodily waste, medication)
- **Comfort** (Beds, bathroom, kitchen, their comfort).

De-cluttering: The options

- There are several options when de-cluttering
- Think SMART
- Only do yourself if insured and you have permission of manager and the tenant

Three options:

- The tenant does it.
- You / internal staff do it.
- You employ outside organisers to do it?

How to organise / discard?

1. Select target area and types of possessions.
2. Be SMART.
3. Create categories for possessions*.
4. Sort into discard, recycle/give away and keep piles (3/1/2).
5. Continue until target area is clear.
6. Don't leave too much space at first (especially able-bodied excessive acquirers).
7. Plan appropriate use of cleared area / prevent clutter.

Tools and techniques

- Develop and maintain motivation
- Why should they? What do they get from compliance?
- Highlight discrepancy to create motivation and to develop insight / challenge denial
- Look forward (how things could be better)
- Look back (how things were pre-hoard / problem).

Practical elements

1. Develop rapport and trust*.
2. Be patient & persevere.
3. Negotiate follow up and monitoring.
4. Acknowledge small successes*.
5. Unless you can't, because of danger or resources then look at it as a long-term piece of work.
6. Even if you look at it as a one-off piece of work you need to follow up*.

What works?

- Be clear about expectations and limitations
- Ask open-ended questions
- Reflectively listen
- Use respectful, non-judgmental language
- Mirror the language used by the tenant
- 'Work with' the tenant instead of 'doing for'.

Follow up and aftercare

- What ever work you do you need to follow up.
- If you just leave a Hoarder to their own devices, then expect relapse!
- Even if you offer on going support you should expect relapse!
- It should be SMART!
- Excessive acquirers
- Diogenes
- Squalor.

Enforcement/Legal factors

- There is not a straightforward piece of legislation to use with hoarders.
- They may be breaching their tenancy, they may be causing a 'Nuisance', their Hoard may be 'Filthy and verminous'.
- You can't evict a hoarder/disabled person because of their disability but you can evict them for their nuisance or anti-social behavior.
- Case law supports this and also the human rights of the neighbors as well as the tenant
- Legal handout*.

Possible questions acquiring

1. Do you need it?
2. How many do you already have?
3. Do you have an immediate use for it?
4. Do you have available space for it?
5. Can you afford it comfortably?
6. Do you have time to deal with it appropriately?

Possible questions discarding

1. Do you need it?
2. Do you have a plan to use this?
3. Have you used this in the last year?
4. Do you have enough space for this?
5. Do you love it?

Other help?

- Mental health?
- GP-Health
- Social services
- Fire service
- Charities (generic and specific)
- Faith groups
- Who else?