

# HOARDING, CLUTTER & DISORGANISATION Ice-Breaker Form

Empowering people whose health has been adversely affected by **clutter, disorganisation, compulsive acquiring/shopping or hoarding** to start a conversation with their GP or other medical professional, and get professional help and support

[www.hoardingicebreakerform.org](http://www.hoardingicebreakerform.org)

## Dear Medical Professional

**PLEASE HELP ME - I have a problem which is affecting my health**

**I think I have / I live with / I know someone who has a problem with  
hoarding / clutter / decluttering / compulsive shopping/acquiring**

*(delete as applicable)*

**I/my family member/my friend have** *(tick all the boxes that apply):*

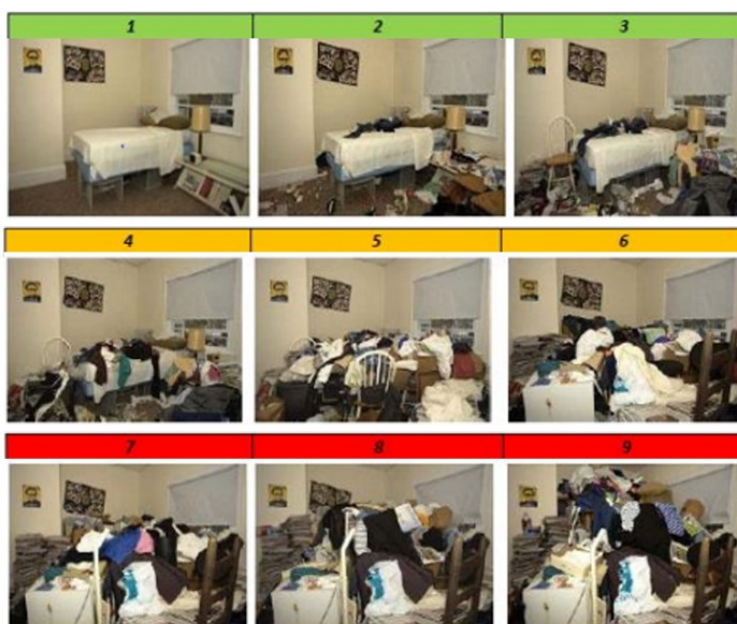
- A difficulty stopping acquiring things and accumulating them at my home
- Persistent difficulty discarding or parting with personal possessions
- Strong urges to save items
- A large number of possessions that fill up the active living areas of the home, workspace or other personal surroundings, and prevent normal use of the space (eg. can't use the toilet or kitchen; can't access the boiler or radiators; no heating/lighting, etc).
- Safety dangers in the home caused by too many belongings or faulty equipment (eg. slip/trip/fall hazards and/or fire risks)
- Become overwhelmed and find making progress to reduce the problem very difficult
- Severe difficulty with things like prioritising, planning, time-keeping, organising paperwork or paying bills regularly

The most cluttered area of my/their home is rated \_\_\_\_\_ on the **Clutter Image Rating Scale** (it can be any room or outside space, not just a bedroom, as shown here).

**I'm now at the stage at which I need to appeal to you, as a professional, to help me/them.**

- I/we feel unwell because of this situation
- It's hard for me/them to talk about this
- I/they feel alone and need support
- Other people don't seem to understand
- I/they feel distressed, and/or indecisive about what to do to make things better
- I've/They've become secretive/ withdrawn about this situation

**CLUTTER IMAGE RATING SCALE (bedroom)**



**I/they feel anxious and/or depressed because: (tick all that apply):**

- I/they worry about my/their safety/wellbeing/risk of abuse
- My/their self-confidence/self-esteem is very low
- I/they feel very uncomfortable about/reluctant to change
- It can be hard for me/them to live normally/work/study/travel/pay bills/make or keep friendships and relationships
- I/they have been notified by the Local Authority/my Landlord/other agency that action will be taken if I/they don't do something soon (explain which agency - eg. bank, landlord, Environmental Health, Family Liaison, boss, etc)
- Family/friends/neighbours have taken (or have threatened to take) matters into their own hands
- I/they don't feel I/they have anyone to talk to who would actively listen empathetically and/or non-judgementally to my/their concerns
- I feel out of my depth with my knowledge of how to help and/or support my relative/ friend/colleague, or myself



**Please talk me through the types of help and support that could empower me to feel better**

### INFORMATION FOR MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

- In 2018 the **World Health Organisation (WHO)** classified **Hoarding Disorder** as a **mental illness**, and it has included it in **ICD-11**.
- Managing hoarding behaviours and clutter-related issues requires a **person-centred, collaborative and integrated approach** between agencies.
- **The Care Act 2014** recognises hoarding behaviours as one of the manifestations of **self-neglect**, and requires all public bodies to **safeguard** people at risk.
- For information and guidance about **hoarding protocols**, refer to your local **Hoarding (and Self-Neglect) Protocol, Guidelines or Safeguarding Policies**.
- **Local agencies** (such as Social Workers; the Fire & Rescue Service; Environmental Health Officers and Professional Hoarding Practitioners) should be familiar with the **Clutter Image Rating Scale**.
- Not everyone who owns lots of possessions exhibits hoarding behaviours.
- A **combination** of factors can result in hoarding behaviours or accumulating lots of possessions. Examples include **life events** (eg. bereavement); **traumas** (eg. Adverse Childhood Experiences - **ACES**); **mental health issues** (eg. Anxiety; Depression; PTSD; OCD; Dementia); **neurological conditions** (eg. ADHD; Autism; Dyslexia; Dyspraxia; Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/ ME); conditions related to **frontal lobe impairments** (eg. Acquired Brain Injury - ABI), and, anything likely to affect **Executive Functioning. Executive Dysfunction/ Dysregulation** can inhibit a person's ability to plan; organise; prioritise; start/finish tasks; make decisions; be flexible with their thinking; remember things; control their impulses; self-monitor; and regulate their emotions.
- Living in a **chronically disorganised** home can be as overwhelming, incapacitating and disabling as living in a hoarded home, and **there may still be safety or self-neglect issues**.

#### Resources

##### **Insightful book**

**"Understanding Hoarding"** – by Jo Cooke of **Hoarding Disorders UK CIC** (Sheldon Press) ISBN 978-1847094537

##### **GP leaflet about hoarding**

<http://hoardingawarenessweek.org.uk/resources/>  
**"A Psychological Perspective on Hoarding"** – Sophie Holmes (The British Psychological Society 2015)  
[https://www1.bps.org.uk/system/files/Public%20files/a\\_psychological\\_perspective\\_on\\_hoarding.pdf](https://www1.bps.org.uk/system/files/Public%20files/a_psychological_perspective_on_hoarding.pdf)

**Hoarding Support Groups** – HoardingUK (charity)

<https://hoardinguk.org/support/support-groups/>

[www.hoardingicebreakerform.org](http://www.hoardingicebreakerform.org)

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**HELP FOR HOARDERS**

Hoarding Disorders UK  
Community Interest Company



**Life-Pod**



**Hoarding UK**  
The UK National Charity for People Impacted by Hoarding Behaviours