

# CLUTTER, DISORGANISATION, COLLECTING, COMPULSIVE SHOPPING, HOARDING

## Ice-Breaker Form

Complete the information and then give it to your GP or other healthcare professional

### Dear Medical Professional

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

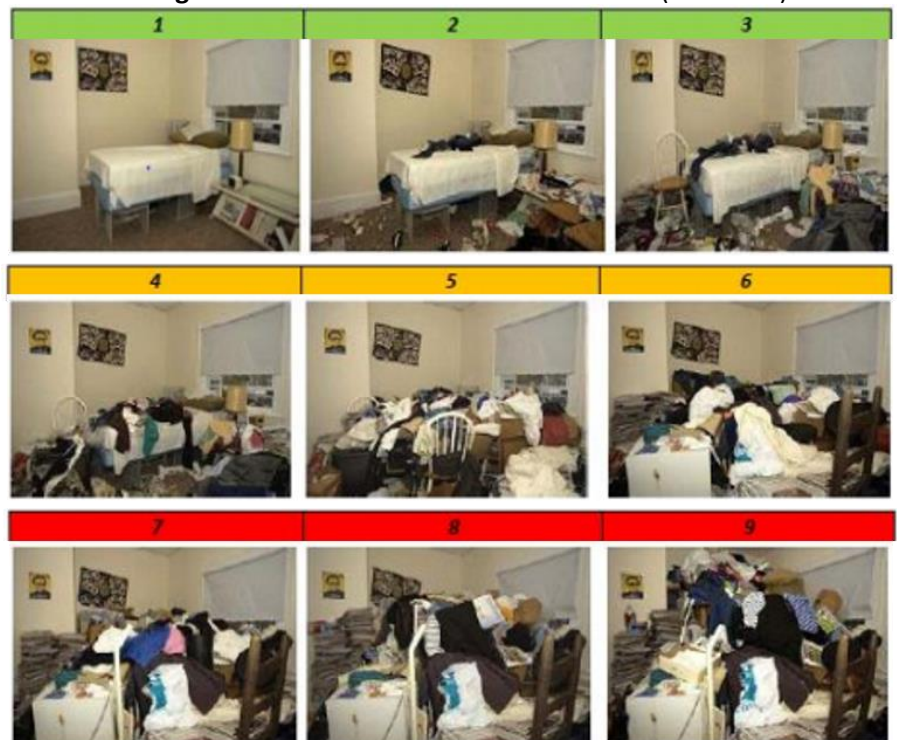
I think I have / I live with / I know someone who has a problem with compulsive shopping / collecting / cluttering / hoarding / disorganisation

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 and clutter 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; no hot water/heating/lighting, etc).
- Safety dangers in the home caused by clutter (eg. slip/trip/fall hazards and/or fire risks)
- Severe difficulty with things like prioritising, planning, time-keeping, organising paperwork or paying bills regularly

Figure 1 - CLUTTER IMAGE RATING SCALE (bedroom)

The most cluttered area of my home is rated \_\_\_\_\_ on the Clutter Image Rating Scale (it can be any room or outside space, not just a bedroom, as shown in Figure 1)



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- I've/They've become secretive/ withdrawn about this situation

**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**

#### TO MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

- **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.
- Managing hoarding behaviours generally requires a person-centred, collaborative and integrated approach between agencies. For more information about protocols and local agencies, refer to your local **Hoarding Protocol** or **Safeguarding Policies**, or contact your **local authority social services team**.
- Most agencies (for example, Environmental Health, Mental Health, the Fire & Rescue Service and Professional Hoarding Practitioners) should be familiar with the **Clutter Image Rating Scale**.
- Not everyone who owns lots of possessions exhibits hoarding behaviours – **Chronic Disorganisation** can be caused by numerous factors which inhibit a person's ability to plan, organise or declutter, including medical conditions such as:

- **Autism** – obsessions, repetitive behaviour & routines - [www.autism.org.uk/about/behaviour/obsessions-repetitive-routines.aspx](http://www.autism.org.uk/about/behaviour/obsessions-repetitive-routines.aspx)
- **ADHD** - [www.adhdandyou.co.uk/impact-of-adhd-on-life/adult-adhd/](http://www.adhdandyou.co.uk/impact-of-adhd-on-life/adult-adhd/)

These organisations have kindly endorsed the use of this [ice-breaker form](#) which can be downloaded from their websites.

#### Resources

- **“Understanding Hoarding”** – by Jo Cooke of [Hoarding Disorders UK](#) (Sheldon Press) ISBN 978-1847094537
- **GP leaflet about hoarding** <http://hoardingawarenessweek.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/GP-Info.pdf>
- **“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** – OCD Action - <http://www.ocdaction.org.uk/support-groups#zoom=6&lat=53.47602&lon=-2.29932&layers=00000T00000000B0>

