

PROBLEM HOARDING

how to help

Helping someone to cope

The key to helping someone is to assist them to become aware of the need for change. Forcing a person to change could upset them. Rather, we need to help people to become motivated to change.

What to do

- Respect their right to change or not change
- Be a good listener
- Focus on having a positive and respectful relationship
- Explore uncertainty by discussing these issues:
 - > The positives of overcoming hoarding
 - > The negatives of the current situation
 - > The past - how and why the problem arose
 - > The future - their goals, dreams and hopes
 - > Core feelings, beliefs and values
 - > What's important to them right now
 - > The emotional power of attachment to collected items
- Boost their confidence by recognising successes and strengths
- Let them know that support is available
- Encourage and be patient with them
- Take small steps so you and they don't both become overwhelmed
- Assure them you are there if they need support

What **NOT** to do

- DO NOT judge or criticise - this will only make them defensive and less likely to change
- DO NOT tell them how they should feel - they have a right to their feelings. You may not understand why they feel the way they do about their possessions, but their feelings are legitimate
- DO NOT argue about their hoarding - this will hinder change and recovery
- DO NOT try to make decisions for them - they have a right to make their own decisions
- DO NOT try to do too much - it's important to take care of yourself so you both don't become overburdened with the problem
- DO NOT touch or move anything without permission - this could cause them increased distress and resentment, which could damage trust and your relationship with them and make it more difficult to support them in the future

Accessing Professional Support

Support can assist people to develop skills and the stability needed to experience safety and wellbeing in their homes. There are different levels of professional support available, ranging from short-term, allowing for the development of strategies, through to long-term assistance. For more information about getting started:

- **Your Local GP** - the **Better Access** initiative
- **Your Local Primary Health Network**
- **Lifeline** 13 11 14
- **BeyondBlue** info line 1300 224 636 /// www.beyondblue.org.au
- **Local hoarding support services**
- **Hume Community Housing Association website**
www.humecha.com.au

Depending on the person's type of accommodation, assistance might be available from the **local Council**, their **landlord** or **real estate agent** and **local tenancy support services**.



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