

PROBLEM HOARDING

what is it?

Problem hoarding involves an excessive accumulation of possessions together with persistent difficulty discarding. A person experiences distress at the thought of losing their collected items because of the perceived value and a deep urge to save and keep them.

Problem hoarding may have harmful impacts - emotional, physical, social, financial or legal - for the person, their family members, friends, neighbours and pets.

It's not clear how and why hoarding starts. However family experiences, grief and loss, personal traits, trauma, abuse, poverty and homelessness and other stressful life events are being studied as possible causes. It can affect anyone, regardless of age, gender, education, postcode or economic status.

Problem hoarding may occur on its own. It may also co-occur with people's physical illness or injury, depression, panic attacks, post traumatic stress (PTSD), learning and attention difficulties or disability.

We don't know how common a problem hoarding is. Agencies and families report it to be increasing. That's partly because people often don't recognise it as a problem and so, do not seek assistance. It is important to know that effective support and psychological therapies are available.

Information and Help

- **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

PROBLEM HOARDING Common Signs may include

- Difficulty discarding any possessions
- Severe distress when attempting to discard items
- Procrastination and difficulty organizing possessions
- Feeling overwhelmed, embarrassed or ashamed
- Difficulty in deciding what to keep or where to put things
- Suspicion of other people touching items
- Overpowering thoughts and emotional attachment, eg, fear of running out of an item or of needing it in the future; checking the trash for accidentally discarded objects
- Daily problems, including loss of living space, social isolation, relationship tensions, financial difficulties, health and safety hazards
- Loss of quiet space and enjoyment of home
- CHAOS - Can't Have Anyone Over Syndrome

PROBLEM HOARDING Complications may include

- Conditions at home that pose a risk to health and safety
- Increased risk of falls
- Injury or being trapped by shifting or falling items
- A fire hazard
- Difficulty with daily tasks, such as bathing, cooking, cleaning, work or study and finding things
- Relationship conflict and loneliness
- Harm to pets
- Financial problems
- Legal issues, including fines, eviction and court orders



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