



HOARDING **ICE-BREAKER FORM**

Empowering people whose health has been negatively affected by clutter, disorganisation, compulsive shopping or hoarding to start a conversation with their GP

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
 (delete as applicable)

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

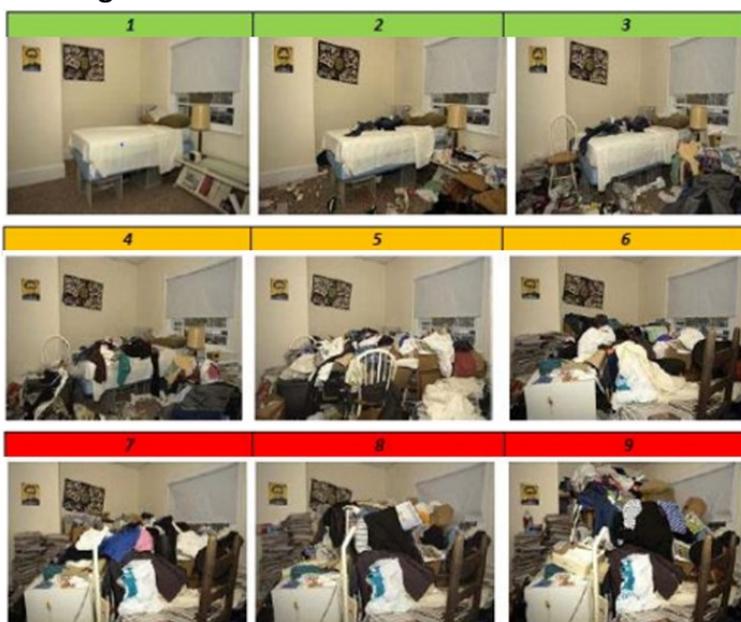
- A difficulty stopping acquiring things and accumulating them at my home
- Persistent difficulty discarding or parting with personal possessions
- Strong urges to save items
- A large number of possessions that fill up the active living areas of the home, workspace or other personal surroundings, and 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)
- Severe difficulty with things like prioritising, planning, time-keeping, organising paperwork or paying bills regularly

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- I've/They've become secretive/ withdrawn about this situation

Figure 1 - CLUTTER IMAGE RATING SCALE



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 has included it in **ICD-11**.
- Managing hoarding behaviours 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 about **protocols and guidelines**, refer to your local **Hoarding (and Self-Neglect) Protocol** or **Safeguarding Policies**, or contact your **local social services team**.
- Most agencies – including Social Workers; the Fire & Rescue Service; Environmental Health Officers; Mental Health professionals and Professional Hoarding Practitioners - are 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 & ADHD/ADD
 - Fibromyalgia & Chronic Fatigue Syndrome
 - Mental illness—eg. Anxiety; Depression; PTSD; Bipolar Disorder; OCD

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/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

Hoarding Support Groups – OCD Action -

<http://www.ocdaction.org.uk/support-groups>

Download the **Hoarding Ice-Breaker Form** from **Facebook**, as well as these websites*



Clouds End CIC



HELP FOR HOARDERS



Hoarding Disorders UK
Community Interest Company



Life-Pod

hoarding
uk

The UK National Charity for People Impacted by Hoarding Behaviours

*Life-Pod's version for Scotland may differ slightly