

Resource B. Building Your Conceptual Model of Hoarding

Personal and Family Vulnerabilities

Family history of hoarding

- Mother/father
- Other family immediate
- Other family extended

Comorbid Problems

Depression

- Because of loss of life options
- For other reasons
- Family history of

Social anxiety

- In the past
- In the present

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder Symptoms

Anxiety

- In the past
- In the present

Compulsivity

- In childhood
- In adolescence
- In adulthood

Compulsions

- Washing/cleaning
- Counting
- Checking
- Demanding reassurance
- Repeating actions numerous times
- Arranging and making objects appear orderly

Obsessive thoughts, images (repeated, unwanted, persistent)

- Contamination
- Dirt
- Repeated doubts
- Lack of symmetry
- Lack of orderliness
- Aggressive/horrific impulses of hurting someone close
- Sexual images
- Decision-making problems: considering too many facts
- Ambivalence

- Fear of making mistakes

Impulses

- Shouting obscenities or inappropriate words
- Avoiding situations that could trigger this shouting
- Replaying pornographic images in the mind
- Hand washing to the point of dermatitis
- Skin picking that leads to lesions
- Hair pulling that causes hair loss

Possible contributing factors

- Family history of OCD
- Stressful life events
- Past pregnancy

Parental Values and Behaviors

- Acquiring
 - Difficulty discarding
 - Clutter in home
 - What was acquired?
 - What motivated the excessive acquiring?
- Control over decisions

- Values about wasting
 - What items?
 - What motivated these specific values?
- Sentimentality
 - About what?
 - What motivated?
 - What form did it take?

Physical Constraints

Health

- Physical
- Psychological
- Spiritual
- Social

Time

- Scheduling constraints
- “Must” ways to spend time
- “Want” ways to spend time
- Sufficient for reflection?
- Sufficient for sleep?

Space

- What are the essential uses of your space?
- What are the criteria for how much of each type of space?

What Helps

Life easers

- What makes your life easier?
- What do you think would make your life easier that you haven't tried?

Things you love

- What are they?
- What are the criteria for how much of each?

Things you want

- What are they?
- What are the criteria for how much of each?

Surplus

- What are they?
- Is there enough room?
- Is there a specific free spot?
- Other ideas for your surplus items?

Traumatic Events

Losses

- Family
- Friends
- Pets
- Things
- Other, e.g., separation or divorce

Assault (nonsexual)

- Emotional
- Privacy
- Personal space
- Mental space
- Respect

Assault (sexual)

- Childhood
- Adolescent
- Adult
- Betrayal of trust

Deprivation

- Physical

- Emotional
- Privacy
- Personal space
- Mental space
- Respect
- Sexual
- Betrayal of trust

Moving

- Loss of home or a preferred place
- Other moving-related loss

Information-Processing Problems

- Attention: difficulty sustaining attention on a challenging task
- Categorization: problems with grouping and organizing objects
- Memory: poor verbal or visual memory; reliance on visual cues
- Perception: failure to notice clutter; strong visual attraction to objects
- Association: tendency to generate many ideas about or uses for objects
- Complex thinking: inability to separate important and unimportant details

Utility/ uniqueness

- Seeing the usefulness of virtually anything
- Seeing opportunities (objects) others don't

Sentimental

- Attaching emotional significance to objects

Comfort

- Perceiving objects and related behaviors, such as shopping, as providing emotional comfort

Safety

- Seeing objects as a source of safety (i.e., possession signals safety)

Identity or Potential for Identity

- Beliefs: objects are part of the person; objects represent who the person can become
- Control: concerns that others will control one's possessions or behavior
- Mistakes: perfectionist concern with making mistakes
- Resourcefulness: perfectionist concern with the use or potential use of possessions

Responsibility/wastefulness

Strong beliefs about

- not wasting
- not polluting the environment
- using possessions responsibly

Completeness

- Postponing action until you feel right or complete

Validation

- Objects help validate your self-worth

Socializing

- Buying or collecting items provides social contact not available in other ways

Emotional Reactions to Objects

Positive

- Joy
- Pleasure
- Comfort
- Satisfaction

Negative

- Anxiety
- Guilt
- Grief
- Sadness
- Anger

Learning Process

Positive reinforcement

- Produces emotions that promote acquiring or saving

Negative reinforcement

- Promotes escape or avoidance of negative emotions

Hoarding Behavior

- Prevents the opportunity to test beliefs
- Prevents the opportunity to develop alternate beliefs
- Promotes escape and avoidance of negative emotions, further supporting indecisiveness and saving