

## **Resource E. Hoarding Fact Sheet**

### **What Is Hoarding?**

- Hoarding is an excessive accumulation and failure to resolve the accumulation while keeping a safe and healthy balance in the environment. Accumulation can be things and/or animals.
- Activities of daily living are negatively affected because spaces cannot be used for the purpose they were intended.
- Someone is actively distressed or would have cause to be if they knew the truth about the condition of the environment (for example, fire department, bylaw or code enforcement officers, supervisors of property standards, children's services, mortgage company, property insurance company, landlord, neighbors).

### **Key Hoarding Messages**

- Hoarding occurs in all cultures, income, and education levels, and for many different reasons.
- Hoarding interventions can be complicated, costly, and time consuming.
- Hoarding situations will continue to deteriorate until the health and safety of the individual and community are put at risk.

### **Key Message for Successful Solutions**

1. Get people help for the *reasons* they hoard.
2. Clean up the property of accumulations caused by untreated behavior.

### **Hoarding Consequences**

- Impaired activities of daily living
- Unhealthy living conditions
- Unsafe living conditions

### **Not Just a Mental Health Issue**

Hoarding, while accepted as a mental health disorder, can also be a legal issue and a public health and safety problem. Hoarding situations often result in recurring unsafe conditions for both the individual and those living nearby.

### **How Prevalent Is Hoarding?**

Conservative estimates<sup>1</sup> indicate that approximately 5-6 percent of the general population has hoarding problems. Animal hoarding unfortunately has less reliable data. People with hoarding disorder are likely to continue to deteriorate without treatment, and their living conditions will continue to deteriorate without supportive interventions.

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<sup>1</sup> Timpano, K. R., Exner, C., Glaesmer, H., Rief, W., Keshaviah, A., Brahler, E., & Wilhelm, S. (2011). The epidemiology of the proposed DSM-5 hoarding disorder: Exploration of the acquisition specifier, associated features, and distress. *The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 72(6), 780-786.

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