Compulsive Hoarding
Randy O. Frost, Ph.D.

SPEAKERS
Dr. Frost is currently the Harold Edward and Elsa Siipola Israel Professor of Psychology at Smith College, in Northampton, Massachusetts. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Kansas in 1977 and has published numerous scientific articles and book chapters on the topic of compulsive hoarding. His work has been featured in an award-winning documentary film Secret Fears produced by the Canadian Broadcasting Company, as well as television news programs including 20/20 Downtown, Good Morning America, MSNBC, BBC/Discovery channel, and the National Public Radio Program, The Infinite Mind. Later in the spring his work will be featured in an episode of Dateline.

QUESTION & ANSWER SEGMENT
With Patricia C. Carleton, LICSW, staff member, Massachusetts Chapter, NASW. Previously worked for ten years with public health nurses in a community agency.

PROGRAM
Compulsive hoarding is a disorder that is often vexing and difficult to treat. It is now recognized as part of the Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder spectrum. It can cause significant impairment in a person’s function and public safety officials can become involved.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand the nature of compulsive hoarding and it’s subtypes
- Appreciate the Cognitive Behavioral Model in conceptualizing treatment
- Learn specific techniques for treating this complex disorder
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Definition of Compulsive Hoarding
Acquisition of, and failure to discard possessions that appear to be useless or of limited value
Cluttered living spaces.
Significant distress or impairment in functioning.

Manifestations of Hoarding
Acquiring
Saving
Disorganization

Cognitive Behavioral Model of Compulsive Hoarding
Information Processing Deficits
Attention
Categorization
Memory
Decision-making

Problems with Emotional Attachments to Possessions
Fear-based attachment
Grief-based attachment –
Guilt-based attachment –
Sentimentally-based attachment

Problems with Emotional Attachments to People
Dependency
Social Phobia
Isolation

Erroneous Beliefs
Beliefs about emotion, loss & value
Beliefs about identity
Beliefs about responsibility & waste
Beliefs about Memory

Behavioral Avoidance
  Emotional Upset
  Decisions
  Loss of important attachments, information, or opportunities
  Putting things out of sight

Motivational Deficits
  Insight
  Depression
  Task Aversion
  Absence of Feedback
  Absence of Pressure

Non-Treatment Interventions
  Creating Common Goals by Emphasizing Dys-function
  Creating Common Goals by Using Official Pressure
  Critical Features of Official Pressure
  Forced Intervention

Treatment for Compulsive Hoarding
  Organization Problems
    Category Reduction
    Putting things out of sight
    Decision-making training (questions)

Compulsive Acquisition
  Nonshopping imagery
  *In vivo* Nonshopping

Discarding
  Exposure to Discarding
  Cognitive Restructuring

Changing Beliefs
Making Predictions
Asking Questions

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Bibliography on Treatment and Related Issues:


