



**Moving Along...**

*Your Way!*

*Specialized Support For  
Life's Changes*

**Bowen & Associates Inc.**

# What Does Our Team Look Like?

**Our Team of qualified professionals bring practical help to seniors, individuals and families facing change.**

- **Project Managers are always on call for advice and support.**
- **Home Management Coaches help with hoarding, disposing of extreme amounts of clutter and weight loss events to reduce fire loads threatening building structures.**
- **Disability Tax Credit Advisor help clients save money.**
- **Registered Nurse facilitates on-site psychiatric consultation.**
- **Psychiatrist provides mental health recommendations.**
- **Move Coordinators.**
- **Cleaners, Packers and Movers**



# “No Room To Spare” Report - Ottawa

*“The best things in life are not things,  
But moments with loved ones,  
Moments with nature,  
Moments of spirituality, creativity, growth, success, romance,  
Or, discovery for the sake of things  
- or so it seems.”*

*Making Peace with the Things in Your Life by Cindy Glovinsky*

**When asked “What has been most helpful to you in dealing with your hoarding situation?” one senior responded:**

**“Reading this phrase”!**



# What is Ottawa's Hoarding Coalition?

- **310 Community Service Providers in Ottawa met in 2004 to collaborate, address the escalating issue of hoarding and form a Coalition.**
- **In 2005 the Coalition captured the public health staffing costs associated with 94 hoarding cases referred to the City of Ottawa and exposed a staggering total cost of \$133,328.00. What is not included in this figure is the time of Fire, Police, and By-law Officers or Community Support Workers. Nor does this amount include the cost of each of the 94 clean ups!**
- **Ottawa's Community Response To Hoarding Plan was created in 2006.**



# What Is Your Answer?

**What do you do when a senior you are working with is threatened with an eviction because of their hoarding behaviour?**



# What Is Compulsive Hoarding?

**Dr. Randy Frost, PhD, Professor in the Department of Psychology at Smith College in Northampton, MA defines Compulsive Hoarding as involving 3 distinct behaviours:**

- 1. The acquisition of, and failure to discard a large number of possessions that appear to be useless or of limited value.**
- 2. Living spaces sufficiently cluttered so as to preclude activities for which those spaces were designed.**
- 3. Significant distress or impairment in functioning caused by the hoarding.**



# What Other Diagnosis Are Involved?

- **Hoarding is usually considered a manifestation of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). It may occur alone or in the context of other disorders such as dementia, schizophrenia, eating disorders, developmental disabilities, autism and obsessive-compulsive personality disorder.**
- **Social phobia, depression and addictions have also been found to be closely associated with compulsive hoarding and are linked to findings of isolation and limited social networks among elderly hoarders. Compulsive hoarders have an obsessive need to acquire and save many objects.**



# What Are Examples?

- **Seniors have tremendous anxiety about throwing anything away.**
- **They see themselves as savers and collectors.**
- **Seniors often have emotional attachments to items.**
- **In some instances, animals such as dogs and cats are hoarded. Animals begin to replace family members.**
- **Seniors who are unable to discard newspapers want to read them thoroughly and/or commit them to memory.**



# Why Do Seniors Hoard?

**Many symptoms of hoarding intensify over time and are more common in seniors than in older adults.**

**Causes that can trigger a senior to hoard include:**

- **Fear that they will not be able to replace an item.**
- **Unresolved grief (items represent a significant period of loss in their life e.g. death of a family member).**
- **Anxiety about living in poverty (grew up during a depression and worry that extreme poverty can happen to them again).**



# What Guidelines Drive Next Steps?

The following are Risk Assessment Guidelines:

- When capacity and functioning are high, the senior's right to self-determination should be respected.
- When a senior's capacity and functioning is moderate and his or her risk is moderate, psychosocial interventions that are geared toward encouraging the use of Home Management Coaching and participating in community support groups should be pursued.
- When capacity and functioning are low and risk is high, intervention is required, even to the extent of involuntary guardianship.



# What Are The Impacts Of Hoarding?

- **Communities can spend thousands of dollars to clean out a home that is the site of hoarding, only to discover the same senior is living in the same situation a few months later.**
- **Financial disaster, eviction and homelessness for that senior are frequent outcomes.**
- **Helping a senior living with compulsive hoarding is a slow process.**
- **Hoarding creates situations that are often considered dangerous or unsafe for fire, health and safety reasons.**
- **Cluttered living space to the point of precluding use of the kitchen, bathroom and bedroom can put the health and safety of the senior who hoards and neighbours at risk.**
- **Fire hazards abound.**
- **Rodent or insect infestations provide a medium for diseases.**



# How Do We Develop Compassion?

- **Respect the importance and attachment a senior has to their possessions.**
- **Deepen your sensitivity by listening to their stories.**
- **Understand that due to their desire for perfection, elderly compulsive hoarders frequently take a long time to do even small chores.**
- **Increase your tolerance because seniors are often fearful of making a mistake, chronically disorganized, socially isolated and embarrassed about their clutter.**
- **Appreciate the fact that seniors are often lonely because friends and family have not entered their home for years.**



# How To Prevent An Eviction Notice?

- **Speak to a senior directly, with respect and recognize them as adults.**
- **Assess what kind of hazard their hoarding presents by using the Clutter Screening Questionnaire.**
- **Implement the Risk Assessment Guidelines.**
- **Work together but expect changes to be slow.**



# What Strategies Are To Be Avoided?

- **Do not use sarcastic or negative comments.**
- **Do not tease or be critical of a senior's living conditions.**
- **Do not force an intervention.**
- **Always inform a senior about their need for help.**
- **Do not assume that because a senior hoards they are incompetent and unable to make informed decisions.**



# What Are Common Code Violations?

**An eviction notice will identify the following code violations:**

- **Blocked Egress (hallways, stairs).**
- **Fire load (weight of items on the structure of the home).**
- **Fire hazards (items in oven, near heat source).**
- **Trip hazard (fall prevention concerns).**
- **Infestation (pests, little critters).**
- **Plumbing not functioning (health and cleanliness).**
- **Sanitation concerns (rotting food, feces, maggots).**



# What Is A Case Example?

**A 67-year old lifelong hoarder wanted her son to move in and share the rent. He wouldn't until she cleaned up the basement space. Our Home Management Coaches worked hard while it snowed like crazy outside. They wore white safety suits, gloves and blue slippers. Some items were too smelly, old and damaged for resale. Her grandson decided that he wanted to take these items to the dump and so he piled them around a corner where they couldn't be seen. The snow helped cover them because it was falling thick and fast. Our crew left knowing that we had done a tremendous job – even the client was assisting in the end. Unfortunately the grandson did not follow through. The next day we became aware that our client went outside and dragged every single item back into her home.**



# What Is Our Answer?

**A successful eviction intervention includes the following:**

- **Help a senior complete referrals to Home Management Cleaning Programs funded by the city.**
- **Follow through is extremely important.**
- **Treat each situation differently.**
- **Individualize your approach.**
- **Work as a Team with family, faith members and friends.**
- **Assist a senior with negotiations re: eviction notice.**
- **Contact housing advocacy services such as Housing Help if a senior is forced to leave their home.**
- **Abide with the eviction notice in a timely manner (within 5 days) to have the eviction notice revoked to keep a senior in their home.**



# Moving Along... **Your Way!**

*Our mature and qualified team also brings compassion and expertise to those grieving or managing mental health challenges.*



# Specialized Hoarding Support

**Change is inevitable!**



Contact Us: We will send you the Clutter Screening Questionnaire!

*Help When It's Needed*



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