Engaging individuals in dealing with their hoarding

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Aims for today

• To understand engagement issues and dealing with the complexities
• To develop creative ways of engaging individuals
• To improve the quality of life for these individuals
What are the challenges faced by individuals when dealing with their hoarding issues?
Challenges identified
What do we know now?

- New classification in DSM V
  Persistent difficulty in discarding or parting with possessions
  - Perceived need for this items
  - Perceived distressed experience
- A psychological condition and not social
- It is not a symptom of OCD but may have OCD which makes it more complex - a different kind of hoarding (items are different)
Definitions

- Acquisition of and failure to discard possessions which appear to be **useless or limited value** (Frost & Gross, 1993)
- Significant distress or impairment in social, financial and occupational functioning caused by the hoarding - (Frost & Hartl, 1996)
- Compulsive acquisition
- Living spaces sufficiently cluttered preclude activities for what they are designed for
Continuum

Normal saving  Clutter  Hoarding
Similarities and Differences

Individual with hoarding behaviours and non hoarding behaviours and non hoarders save the same things except in the:

- Quantity
- Emotional attachments (sentimental)
- Perceived use of object (instrumental)
- Over valued beliefs about items and self
- The object as an extension of self
Manifestations

2 subtypes:

- Compulsive acquisition - bringing items in e.g. buy 1 get 3 free, good value, may need for self or others

- Non compulsive acquisition - difficulties in discarding
The Power of the Visual Image

- Introducing an image creates the opportunity for a more detailed narrative
- Depth, clarity and focus
- An opportunity to reflect
- An opportunity to express thoughts and feelings
- ...which may lead to a better understanding of the situation.
Value of photographs

• Visual representation is a powerful tool to aid engagement and motivation
• The use of pre and post photographs motivates the individual to work on their issues and be open to explore their difficulties e.g. of letting go
• Provide a record how much has been achieved- the mind is accustomed to disqualify
Our study

• 12 Participants
• Range of photographs of their environment
• Neutral environment
• Home environment
• Used the H.O.A.R.D. acronym tool.
• We were interested to know the impact it had for them
5 Key questions developed from our first study using visual methods:

- **H** Tell me what **HAPPENED** in this picture?
- **O** What would you like to **OVERCOME** and what are your goals?
- **A** Can you imagine life without **ALL** of this stuff?
- **R** How is your life and **RELATIONSHIPS** affected by this problem?
- **D** What would you like to **DO** about it?
Findings

➢ Feeling isolated and vulnerable
➢ Losing and misplacing
➢ Lifestyle disruption
➢ Metaphor and clutter
➢ Rationalising the acquisition hoarded items
➢ Failed previous support
➢ Beneficial group support
Exercise

We would like you to look at the photographs that you have brought along- pick one and use the HOARD acronym tool to answer the five questions. You do not have to share your photographs with anyone.
Feedback

Having done the exercise what did you experience?
Visually
Emotionally
Motivationally

How has it helped you make sense of your difficulties?
Next steps

Having used the H.O.A.R.D. acronym tool what are your next steps? Write them down - remember small steps
DVD

Using the HOARD acronym tool and feedback from participants and family
Colour and Hoarding

• Excessive clutter removes light from the environment
• Plastic bags, cardboard boxes etc make the environment dull, drab and achromatic
• Colour from furnishings (carpets and seating etc) disappears amidst the clutter
• Poor light and colour in the environment can exacerbate negative rumination and impact on motivation to change
Our recent study

- 15 Participants chose a coloured sheet of card
- Choice: Red Yellow, Orange, Green
- Use it in their home environment
- We were interested to know which colour they chose and why
- We were interested to know how they used the card
Findings

• Most popular choice was green (n=8)
• Then yellow (n=4)
• Then orange (n=2)
• Then Red (n=1)

• The card was most commonly placed in the kitchen (perhaps because of the association with the need for good hygeine)
Qualitative Findings

• Three Major Themes

Practical motivator → Clarifying Intentions → Metaphorical connections
Practical Motivator

• “It’s like having a spy, reminding me to keep going with the clearing”
• “I use it as a marker to remind me where to clear up - not too much at a time, but it’s a reminder”
Clarifying intentions

• “I can’t avoid it, it reminds me that this pile needs sorting”
• “It helped me realise that I need colour in my life”
• “I almost felt guilty looking at the card because it reminds me that I have to clear up this pile of stuff”
Metaphorical connections

• “It alerts me of things to be done, just like a traffic light in the street”
• “Like a traffic light....get ready....go!”
• “Green is positive fresh and eye catching, it helps me declare war on clutter”
Some key conclusions from our study

• The coloured card served as a reminder that items were gradually being removed.
• The permanent visibility of the card was important in motivation
• Colours previously hidden were revealed
• The need for colour and vibrancy was appreciated
Colour card additional applications

• Individuals with hoarding disorder may have associated ADHD- difficulties in maintaining or sustained the focus on a task
• Distraction tends to be feature of avoidance in hoarding disorder- rather engage in activities that are not stressful/emotional- reengaging
• Progress in made if a continued and sustained focus on a particular task or area is maintained
Using the colour card (1)

• Select a colour that is bright and has a personal significance to the individual—often it brings back memories of a happy time—can use these memories to help deal with the difficult emotions

• Identify an area to be worked on—place the colour card over the area e.g. above the pile to draw attention that this is the area to be worked on (photograph)
Using the colour card (2)

- Individuals can write personal statements on the card, draw arrows etc to help them
- Work along side with them, draw their attention to the card to help with the focus and getting used to the concept of focusing on a specific area
- Once an area has been cleared photograph it and move the card to the next area
Drawings

• Non threatening, non stigmatising, non-judgmental, allows appropriate disclosure (safe)
• If shared it allows engagement through discussion and exploration, development of trust and joint working
• It empowers the individual- they are in control
Drawings

• It provides hope- a direction as how they would like their room to look like
• Allows the planning of stages and areas of work they would engage in
• A record of their progress
• Monitoring of the work they have done
How to do drawings?

• Provide a rectangle to represent the room they want to work on
• Instruct them to draw out the furniture, items in the room and shade the areas that are cluttered (can use different colours)
• Draw out a second as to how they would like the room to look like (end product)
• Draw and shade on a weekly basis to monitor progress
Exercise

• I would each of you like to draw out the layout of one of your rooms and shade the areas that are covered with things
• Draw a second one with how you would like your room to look like?
• Now list the steps that you would need to take to get from how it is to how you would like it to be.
Clutter Rating Scale
Clutter Rating Scale

• Tool to assess and measure degree of clutter usually administered by professional

• In this instance the individual to undertake the rating- empowerment, full involvement and responsibility

• Use the rating imaged for change e.g. current is 8 and would like to be 5

• Write the steps that need to be undertaken to get to rating 5
Clutter Rating Image scale

• Use the CRI scale to monitor progress
• Helpful as it has a visual end product to aim for which is motivating
• Gives the individual control and empowerment and autonomy in dealing with their problem, helps develop skills to problem solve
Plan

Having discussed the Clutter Imagine Rating Scale write down how you could use it in helping you deal with your hoarding issues?
Conclusion

• Hoarding/ cluttering disorder is a complex and difficult condition to deal with
• Remember beneath the hoarding problem is a person-
• Be aware of your own prejudices- ability, others, services
• Engagement with the your hoarding issues is vital to help you deal with it.
Conclusion

• Engagement is based on understanding, trust, mutual respect and being non judgemental

• Developing a shared compassionate understanding of the problem is vital in engagement

• The HOARD acronym tool is an useful tool to help individuals emotionally and physically distance themselves from their hoarding/clutter
Conclusion

• The distancing allows the an individual to step back and acknowledge their issues- helps with engagement

• The colour card is an excellent tool to help focus on the areas are to be cleared- distraction in an avoidance
Take away message from today

We would like you to reflect on your participation in this mini workshop today consider:
How would you use these tools to help you with your hoarding issues?
How would you put that into practice?
Thank you

Thank you for your participation in the workshop today.
If you need to contact me:

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References


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