

Hoarding in Renfrew County

Community Hoarding
Action Team

C.H.A.T.

Presentation by: Lisa Schuler, Mental Health Services of Renfrew County

What is Hoarding?

Things that come to mind when you hear someone say “HOARDING”

Laziness * A life-style choice * A collector *
Someone from the depression era * A
symptom of OCD (Obsessive compulsive
disorder) * Pack-Rat * Eccentric



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Did anyone think
“Mental Illness”?
In 2013 ‘hoarding’
became classified as
a mental illness.

It is an illness that 2-5%
of CANADIANS
struggles with
everyday.

Chances are, you know
someone who has a
hoarding problem.



Dr. Randy Frost defines hoarding as

1. The acquisition of, and failure to discard, possessions
2. Living space cluttered to the point of not being able to use the space as intended

3. Significant distress or impairment due to hoarding



Clutter and Squalor

Clutter

A confusing or disorderly state or collection, and possible symptom of hoarding

Squalor

“A state of being extremely dirty and unpleasant, especially as a result of poverty or neglect,” and may be a symptom of hoarding

CHAT

Our Vision: To provide resources to educate, create and maintain safe and functional living environments

- In 2013 Mental Health Services partnered with Renfrew County Housing Corp. to assist a mutual client who had a hoarding problem.
- Around that time the Arnprior Fire Dept. contacted MHS and asked if we had hoarding supports.
- The three agencies met to discuss hoarding and out of that meeting we began Community Hoarding Action Team (CHAT).
- Since then we have added many services to our team and we are branching out across Renfrew County, assisting people who struggle with hoarding.

Our Mission:

CHAT is a team of independent organizations who strive to provide a collaborative strategy to improve the health and safety of those living in the community who struggle with hoarding.

Working with hoarding

When a referral is made for hoarding support, the CHAT System Navigator completes a home assessment.



Recovery Plan

- * CHAT is assessing for safety risks (to both the client and those living in close proximity)
- * Together with the client, we develop a recovery plan with clear goals, deadlines, and supports.

Hoarding Recovery

Recovery is possible for people who struggle with hoarding.

Mental Health Workers use a combination of:

- * Cognitive Behavioral Therapy,
- * Exposure Therapy, and
- * Motivational Interviewing

These therapeutic strategies help combat the overwhelming impulse to acquire as well as challenging the distorted thinking patterns.

Recovery Story

When we first met Client X she could no longer enter her apartment because every room was packed to the ceiling and she was facing possible eviction.

It took 8 months of (almost) daily therapy, reinforcing new thinking patterns and learning to cope with the constant desire to acquire.

Where is Client X now?

She lives back at home.

She knows her triggers and how to challenge her thought patterns.

A fire fighter completed an in-home safety inspection and educational meeting with her.

She has monthly monitoring appointments to help her maintain her recovery.

How you can help...

- * If you work for an agency that encounters hoarding, you can **join your local CHAT**.
- * You can **donate money to CHAT** so we can assist more people.
- * You can **donate services**, dump passes, volunteer hours for cleaning, or money to your local CHAT

If you have a friend or family member who struggles with hoarding you can:

1. Recognize this is an **illness not a choice**.
2. **Don't touch** or remove their belongings as this is often very traumatic for people.
3. **Let them know there is help** out there and encourage them to connect with CHAT.

How to access hoarding services

All referrals to CHAT are made through the Mental Health Services Central Intake and Referral Line

1-800-991-7711

Or

613-732-8770

Lisa Schuler

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Co-Chair and System Navigator for CHAT**

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1-800-991-7711 ext 5709