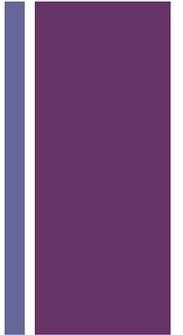


Hoarding Task Forces: Finding Hope for Those Lost in Clutter

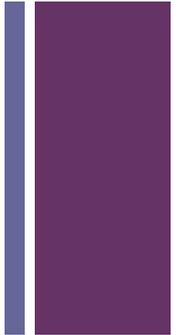
Elspeth Bell
March 28, 2014

+ Disclosures



- I co-authored the chapter “The Gaithersburg Hoarding Task Force: A Model of Collaboration” in *The ICD Guide to Collaborating with Professional Organizers* (St Louis: Institute for Challenging Disorganization, 2014).
- I received no compensation for writing this chapter.
- I will freely distribute copies of this chapter to those who are interested.

+ Objectives



- Describe the mental health professional's role in Hoarding Task Forces
- Identify ways in which mental health professionals can connect with public and private sector agencies to address hoarding issues
- Develop strategies for creating an effective Hoarding Task Force

+ Components of a Task Force

Agencies / Organizations

- Government Municipalities
- Mental Health Professionals
- Social Service Agencies
- Professional Organizers
- Nonprofit Organizations

Types of Roles

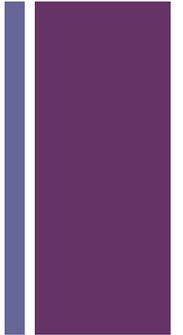
- Code & Safety Compliance
- Mental Health Support
- Family member Support
- Clean up Coordination
- Service Coordination



A Story of Hope

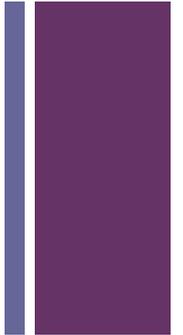
How the Pieces Came Together

+ For the Task Force



- Educate about hoarding behaviors
 - Task force members
 - Community
- Develop and implement intervention plans
 - Assess the impact of psychiatric issues
 - Provide effective interventions that create change in the space yet are sensitive to the needs of the individual

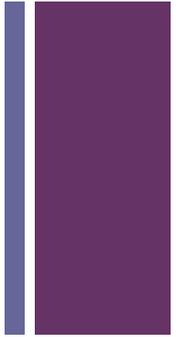
+ For the Client



- Assist with co-morbid psychiatric issues
 - Anxiety
 - Depression
 - Cognitive processing deficits
- Support clients during times of stress
 - Clean-up efforts
 - Introduction of new services
- Interventions
 - Make home visits for the hands-on practicing of decluttering skills

+ For the Family

- Offer education, support, and insights
- Understand the family-specific situation
- Provide access to community resources
- Model supportive and understanding behaviors
- Reassure the family they are not alone
- Outline possible techniques and interventions



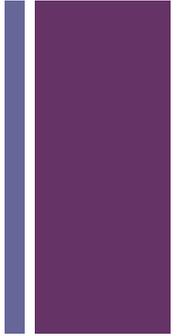


Working with Code Enforcement



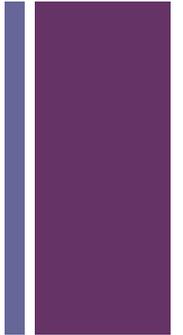
- Strict requirements for the conditions of the home
 - Ability to exit in an emergency
 - Fire concerns
 - Sanitation
- Time restriction or compliance date
- Rarely involved in clean up efforts
 - Up to the individual to ensure code compliance through cooperation with the Task Force
- Use code for guidelines and motivation
 - Can provide consequences for non-compliance with the Task Force's interventions

+ Working with Professional Organizers



- Coordinate in vivo work
 - Implementing treatment plans
 - Practicing CBT skills
- Access resources (other professional organizers, cleaning companies, junk haulers, movers)
- Supervising volunteers and others facilitating clean up process

+ Lessons Learned



- Leadership is essential
 - Task Force structure
 - Individual cases
- Reach out to anyone who has a stake or interest
- Educate yourself and others on the nature of the disorder and best practices
- Develop a clear work flow
 - Don't drop the ball
- Task Force members come from different organizational cultures
 - Modify expectations
- Plan as a team



Thank You!

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