If Your Friend Or Family Member Is Ready To Talk About Hoarding

Respect. Acknowledge that the person has a right to make their own decisions at their own pace.
Have Sympathy. Try to understand that their items are important to them.
Encourage. Come up with ideas to make their home safer.
Team Up With Them. Don't argue about what to discard; instead, find out what will help motivate the person to discard or organize.
Reflect. Help the person recognize that hoarding interferes with their goals or values.
Ask. To help develop trust, never throw anything away without first asking permission.

Hoarding is an anxiety disorder best treated by a mental health professional.

Resources

City Of Tempe Counseling Program

Tempe Public Library (2nd Floor)

3500 S. Rural Rd.

480-350-5400 for appointments.

International OCD Foundation

617-973-5801

http://www.ocfoundation.org/hoarding/

Arizona Hoarding Task Force

623-876-2932 or 623-876-2931

http://wallacewatchers.com/azhoarding/communityandpersonal.html

Clutterer's Anonymous

http://sites.google.com/site/clutterersanonymous/Home

Meeting information: 310-281-6064

Arizona Children of Hoarders Support Group

http://www.meetup.com/az-children-of-hoarders/

Animal Hoarding

ASPCA

30 North 40th Place
Phoenix, AZ 85034
602-273-6852

CARE 7
Crisis Response Team
PO Box 5002
Tempe, AZ 85280
480-350-8004

Compulsive Hoarding

CITY OF TEMPE

Compulsive Hoarding

What is compulsive hoarding?

Compulsive hoarding is when a person collects and keeps a lot of items, even things that appear useless or of little value to most people. These items clutter the living spaces of the home and prevent the person from using their rooms as they were intended. Most often, people hoard common possessions, such as paper (e.g. mail, newspapers), books, clothing, and containers (e.g. boxes, paper and plastic bags). Some people hoard garbage or rotten food. More rarely, people hoard animals or human waste products.

Signs of Compulsive Hoarding:

- Difficulty getting rid of or organizing items.
- A large amount of clutter that makes it difficult to use furniture or move around the home.
- Losing important items like money or bills in the clutter.
- Unusually strong positive feelings (joy, delight) when getting new items or unusually strong negative feelings (guilt, anger, fear) when considering getting rid of items.
- Strong beliefs that items are valuable or useful, even when other people do not want them.
- Denial of a problem even when the clutter clearly interferes with a person's life.

Animal Hoarding

- Failure to provide minimal standards of sanitation, space, nutrition, and veterinary care for the animals.
- Inability to recognize the effects of this failure on the welfare of the animals, human members of the household, and the environment.
- Obsessive attempts to accumulate or maintain a collection of animals in the face of progressively deteriorating conditions.
- Denial or minimization of problems and living conditions for people and animals.

The Dangers of Hoarding

- Severe clutter threatens the health and safety of those living in or near the home.
- In addition to health problems, hoarding can cause structural damage to the home, fires, and even death.
- Firefighters face dangerous conditions when they respond to a structure fire. In the event of a medical emergency, firefighters may not be able to easily access the patient.
- Expensive and emotionally devastating evictions or other court actions can lead to hospitalization or homelessness.
- Conflict with family members and friends who are frustrated and concerned about the state of the home and the hoarding behaviors.

How Can I Help A Hoarding Friend Or Family Member?

- Attempts by family or friends to help with the decluttering may not be well-received by the person who hoards.
- Keep in mind that until the person is motivated to change, they may not accept an offer to help.
- Motivation cannot be forced.
- Everyone, including people who hoard, has a right to make choices about their objects and about how they live.
- Attempting to clean out the homes of people who hoard without treating the underlying problem usually fails.
- Hoarders whose homes are cleaned without their consent often experience extreme distress and may become further attached to their possessions. This may lead to their refusal of future help.