

This Full House



**Information for
older adults whose “stuff”
fills their houses
and
limits their lives...**

When Saving Becomes a Problem ...

Saving meant survival in earlier times. In later life, saving may threaten survival.

Houses full of saved items often result in falls and injury, loss of friends, isolation, and emotional distress. Sometimes there is a risk of fire or eviction.

Some older people become overwhelmed and don't know where to begin with all this stuff.

Hope and help is available through a variety of approaches and understanding resources.

*This material was developed
by the*

DANE COUNTY HOARDING TASK FORCE

*Area Agency on Aging of Dane County
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Change Takes A Team

You can seek medical and emotional evaluation and treatment for this problem.

It is possible to get medications and other treatments that can help to reduce the collection and retention of things.

Even if you just want to find out more information before you ask for help, you can seek the assistance of understanding professionals.

Some of those professionals can be found in the agencies listed in this web page.

Changes CAN Be Made!

Excessive saving may be immobilizing. Change is challenging but it is possible with time and understanding assistance from others.

Here are some ideas and approaches:

1. Seek assistance. The problem won't go away by itself.
2. Develop an organizational plan to make the space more functional and safe.
3. Be patient - take small steps.
4. Work in one area sorting items into three boxes that hold things in these categories: most, moderate, and least valuable.
5. Reduce the acquisition of new possessions.

From: **The Dane County Hoarding Task Force**

Hoarders experience two or more of the following:

- Saving or collecting continues beyond what is needed or usable – even though the house and additional storage space are full.
- Value, uniqueness and sentiment is found in “stuff” that others do not find valuable, such as old papers, containers, and food items.
- Strong emotional attachments are formed with many items for comfort or safety.
- Efforts to stop collecting or to discard things are unsuccessful, leading to a sense of anxiety, emptiness, vulnerability, and more collecting.
- The fear of losing things prevents discarding them or gives rise to putting them away, out of sight.
- “Stuff” interferes with safe and functional use of the home for sleeping, cooking, bathing and socializing.
- Others see the “stuff” as bothersome and dangerous.
- Savers may see the “stuff” as acceptable or may be too overwhelmed to respond.

You Are Not Alone!

Call:

Senior Hotline to Help: 266-9007

Elder Abuse and Neglect Helpline:
224-3666

Mobile Outreach for Seniors Team:
280-2480

Local Senior Service Agencies:

Belleville Senior Center	424-6007
Colonial Club-Sun Prairie	837-4611
DeForest Area Senior Cntr.	846-9469
E. Madison/Monona Coal.	223-3100
Fitchburg Senior Center	270-4290
McFarland Outreach	838-7117
Middleton Senior Center	831-2373
N/Eastside Mad. Coalition	243-5252
NW Dane Senior Outreach	767-3757
Oregon Senior Center	835-5801
South Madison Coalition	251-8405
SW Dane Senior Services	437-6902
Stoughton Senior Center	873-8585
Verona Senior Citizens	845-7471
Wauwaukee Area Senior Cntr.	849-8385
West Madison Sr. Coalition	238-7368

For help sorting and “letting go,” you can also locate private psychological services listed in the Yellow Pages under the heading “Organizers.”