

## Signs that Help for Hoarding is Needed

- There's no room to sleep in bed
- Interference with cooking, bathing, and socializing
- Homecare services will not provide services
- Appliances not working
- No water
- No working toilet
- Furnace not working
- Fire code violations
- Someone is threatened with eviction
- Safety and health risks are evident
- Strong odors
- Restricted or blocked exits, heating ducts or electrical outlets
- Clutter spilling out around the house, yard, garage
- Spoiled food
- Animal waste/bugs/rodents are present



Pamela M. Krawczyk,  
Commissioner

Erie County Department of Senior Services

95 Franklin St--13th Floor  
Buffalo NY 14202

Phone: 716 858 8526

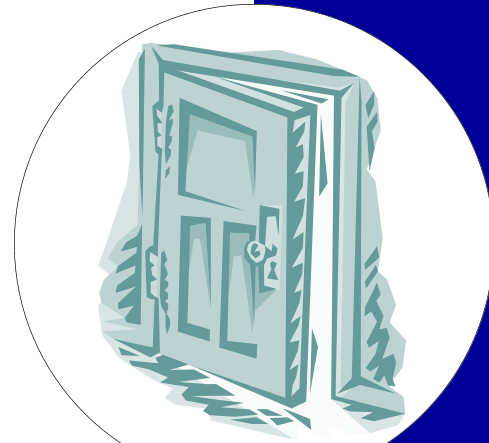
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the New York State Office for the Aging, and Erie County

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**When does it become  
"too much" stuff?**

*Has keeping  
things become  
a problem?*

*What would  
you like to do  
in your home  
that you  
cannot do  
right now?*

Erie County Department  
of Senior Services

(716) 858 8526

**Causes of Hoarding**  
**Collecting useless objects that  
interfere with living space and  
safety**

"Things make me feel comfortable & safe."

"I'm overwhelmed."

"I have physical limits."

"I have money problems."

"It was on sale so I bought 20."

"I might need it later, and  
won't be able to afford it."

"I suffer from mental illness."

(depression, obsessive-  
compulsive disorders)

Some have problems with thinking  
(cognitive problems),

Some don't know where to turn for  
help.

**Reach Out**

For information.

For understanding.

Medications and other treatments.

## Hope & Help to Reorganize

Yellow Pages listings for "organizers" to  
help with sorting and "letting go"

Cleaning Agencies

Clutterers Anonymous  
([http://www.clutterersanonymous.net/  
index.html](http://www.clutterersanonymous.net/index.html))

## Local Agencies

Erie County  
Department of Senior Services  
Information & Assistance  
(716) 858-8526

Erie County  
Department of Health  
Environmental Field Offices  
Buffalo 961-6800  
Hamburg 649-4225  
Lancaster 683-6487  
Tonawanda 874-1070

SPCA of Erie County  
Emergency Hotline  
559-1780

Building Inspectors  
Contact municipal offices

Erie County  
Adult Protective Services (when a person  
who hoards is at risk of harm) (716) 858-  
6877

Our gratitude to the leaders who have established  
Hoarding Task Forces in their communities (Dane  
County, WI and New York City, NY and Fairfax, VA)  
and those who are involved in research to provide  
assistance that is effective and respectful.

## Why worry?

### Saving things

- Can mean problems if they interfere with living space and safety
- In full houses can cause falls and injury
- Can lead to the loss of friends/entertainment opportunities, loneliness, unhappiness and feeling overwhelmed and ashamed

## What can I do with my stuff?

- ✓ Use it up
- ✓ Give it away to family & friends
- ✓ Sell it
- ✓ Donate it to charity
- ✓ Discard it

### Hoarding\*

- Saving or collecting continues beyond what is needed or usable—even when 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
- Savers may see the “stuff” as acceptable or may be too overwhelmed to respond
- Others see the “stuff” as bothersome and dangerous

\* From the Dane County Hoarding Task Force, Madison, WI

#### More helpful information:

[http://www.cornellaging.org/gem/hoarding\\_index.html](http://www.cornellaging.org/gem/hoarding_index.html)

<http://www.disposophobia.com/>

<http://www.newsroom.ucla.edu/page.asp?RelNum=5218>

### Take Action

Seek help

Make a plan for a functional and safe home

Take small steps and be patient

When sorting through “stuff”, ask

- Have I used this in the past year?
- What is broken or useless?
- What am I keeping for others?
- What do I really treasure?
- What is the cost of keeping things? (insurance, fees, storage space, relationships, emotional pain)

Avoid getting more possessions

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