

Changes CAN be Made!

Change is challenging but possible with time and understanding assistance from others.

Ideas and Approaches...

- Seek assistance. The problem won't go away by itself.
- Develop an organizational plan to make the home more functional and safe.
- Work in one area a time. Sort items into categories: most, moderate and least valuable.
- Be patient – take small steps.
- Reduce the buying and collecting of new possessions.

Change Takes a Team

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

Age & Opportunity, Inc. is able to provide assistance in cases of hoarding for individuals 55 years of age and older. In some instances, financial assistance for cleaning services may be available.

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

For more information please call Age & Opportunity's Intake line at (204) 956-6440.

THIS FULL HOUSE



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

We gratefully acknowledge the Dane County Hoarding Task Force for granting permission to adapt their information for our clients.



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When Saving Becomes a Problem...

Many people enjoy collecting things and have a hard time throwing items out. They may feel an emotional attachment to their personal belongings, or they may like to save items for possible later use.

However, some people save things to the point that they become overwhelmed. They collect so much stuff that they don't know where to start with cleaning up and clearing out.

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.

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

What to look for...

Many people collect special items, but those who excessively save or hoard are different. People with hoarding problems collect and keep so many things that their living space becomes unlivable and dangerous.

What is "Hoarding"?

There is a word for gathering and keeping a lot of stuff and being unable to part with it. The word is "hoarding." Hoarding means collecting useless objects to the point where the collection crowds living space and safety.

Why be Concerned?

Hoarding behavior can lead to other problems. Some people lose important relationships and become isolated.

Other people are at a greater risk for falls and fires. Still others go through the trauma of losing their homes through eviction.

Hoarders Experience the Following...

- Saving or collecting continues beyond what is needed or useable – even though the house and additional storage spaces are full.
- Value, uniqueness and sentiment are 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.
- "Stuff" interferes with safe and functional use of the home for sleeping, cooking, bathing and socializing.
- Others see the "stuff" as bothersome or dangerous.
- Fear of losing things prevents discarding them.
- Savers may see the stuff as acceptable or may be too overwhelmed to respond.