

Why Would Forensic Personnel Want to Know About Hoarding?



INTRODUCTIONS

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Outline & Goals

- Introduction
- An Overview of Hoarding & Cluttering
- Who Does Hoarding Impact?
- Legal and Psychological Aspects
- Scenario
- Collaborative Problem-Solving
- Forming a Task Force
- Discussion of Hoarding Alliance
- Question & Answer Session

An Overview of Hoarding & Cluttering

- What is Hoarding?
- Symptoms of Hoarding?
- Co-occurring mental illnesses
- First signs in identifying hoarding
- How does a forensic team member become involved?

What is Hoarding?

- Compulsive Hoarding Syndrome (Frost and Hartl, 1996)
- Acquiring, and failing to discard, a large number of possessions
- Living spaces so cluttered they can not be lived in
- Significant distress or impairment in functioning

Hoarding: 3 Main Components

- Acquisition:
 - Compulsive buying, or acquiring free things.
- Saving:
 - Inability to discard anything.
- Clutter:
 - The end result of acquisition and saving.
 - It is a symptom of the disorder.
 - It is a symptom of a disorder of cognition *and* behavior

Hoarding is a Health Risk

- Fire hazard
- Fall hazard
- Inability to prepare food
- Unsanitary conditions
- Rodent infestation
- Parasites (fleas, scabies, etc.)

Commonly Hoarded Items

- Papers (newspaper, magazines, books)
- Clothing
- Containers (bottles, cans, bags, boxes, milk cartons, etc.)
- Mail
- Personal papers (notes, lists, old school work, writing samples, etc.)
- Furniture
- Animals

Hoarding Is A Brain Disorder

- Dysfunction in:
 - Limbic system (instinctual)
 - Frontal lobes (planning, judgment, problem-solving, etc.)
- Hoarding is genetic
- Prevalence: 0.5-2% of the population
- Age of onset: as early as 10 years
- Course: chronic, unremitting
- Severity increases with age

Associated Disorders

- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
- Social Anxiety
- Attention Deficit Disorder
- Impulse Control Disorders
- Autistic Spectrum Disorders
- Neurodegenerative Disorders

What Motivates Hoarders?

- Fear of losing important items
- Excessive emotional attachment
- Beliefs about the importance of objects
- Fear of making the wrong decision
- Excessive sense of responsibility
- Grief-like loss at getting rid of things

Hoarders have "Processing Deficit Disorder"

- They don't process their surroundings
- Unaware of their person (hygiene, dress)
- Problems making decisions
- Procrastination
- Perfectionism
- Prioritizing

Why Hoarding Is Hard To Treat

- Brain disorder
- Intense anxiety associated with getting rid of hoard
- Cognitive/processing problems
- Poor insight
- Poor motivation
- Hoarding is notoriously resistant to treatment
- Medications do not work
- Standard "talk" therapy does not work

Things To Remember...

- Hoarders are:
 - Depressed
 - Anxious
 - Afraid of people
- Hoarders have an extreme lack of insight
- "Common Sense" will NOT work

Who Does Hoarding Impact?



Who Does Hoarding Impact?



Who Does Hoarding Impact?

Files, maggots, rodents, insects, and associated smells



Environmental Health, Vector Control, Planning/Code Enforcement, Sanitation

Who Does Hoarding Impact?



Family, Environmental Services, Waste Management




Parking Enforcement


Who Does Hoarding Impact?

Who wants to handle this?!

Not Me !!



Who Does Hoarding Impact?




Who Does Hoarding Impact?



Awww

Why Would Forensic Personnel Want to Know About Hoarding?

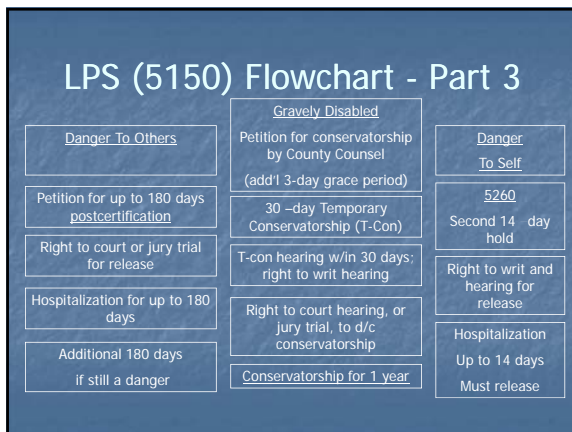
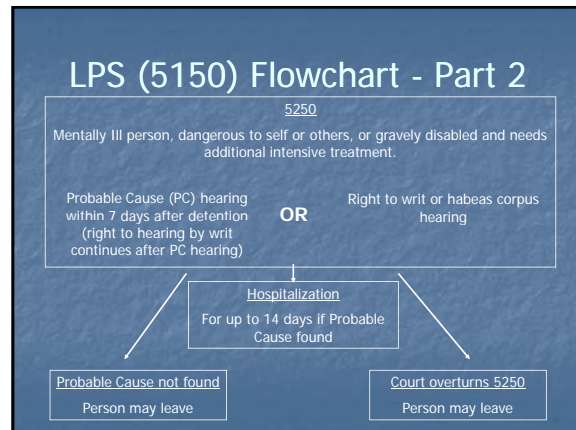
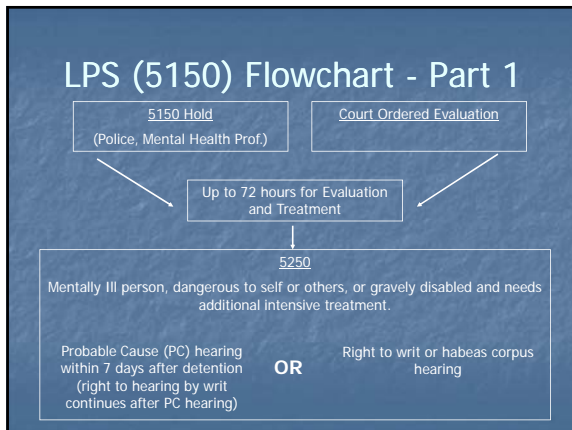


Legal Aspects

- Fourth Amendment
- Consensual Contact vs. Detention vs. Arrest
- Probation
- Parole
- Consent
- Different Limits for different agencies
- Different perceptions

Psychological Aspects

- CIT Officer considerations
 - Dealing with people with Anxiety Disorders/OCD
 - Motivation Adaptation, Treatment Resistance, Crisis Intervention
 - Lack of Insight
 - High Recidivism Rate
 - Elderly Clients
 - Genetics



Scenario

- 70 year-old female
- Living independently in a rental home
- Call from neighbor, concerned about her
- She has difficulty ambulating
- Neighbor has seen her slip and fall several times.
- Neighbor has not seen the dog "in a long time."





When Does Hoarding Require a Multi-disciplinary Team?

- Who wants to take on the "Whole Enchilada?"
- Problem-solving by individual agencies only solves one part of the problem.
- Different agencies' goals often conflict with each other.
- Progress is limited, frustration increases.
- Splitting by the client is more likely.

How Do Multi-disciplinary Teams Work?

- Communication
- Collaboration
- Coordination

Forming a Task Force

- Getting the people together
- Setting the structure of meetings
- Development of Goals
 - Short-term
 - Mid-term
 - Long-term

Forming a Task Force Short Term Goals

- Naming the Task Force
- Development of a Five Minute Plan
- Development of Protocols
- Providing Education to the Public
- Development of an Assessment Team
- Production of a Field Guide

Forming a Task Force Mid-Range Goals

- Resource Booklet
- Identification of Financial Resources
- Identification Recycling Options
- Addition of Landlord Representative
- Addition of Attorney/Legal Aid Rep.

Forming a Task Force Long Term Goals

- Development of a Website
- Hosting a Hoarding Conference in our County
- Identification of Hoarding Training Opportunities
- Identification of Legal Resources
- Train an Outreach Team

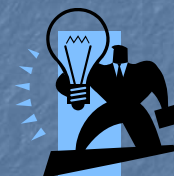
Hoarding Alliance of Marin Current Status

- Monthly Meetings
 - Peers as team members
 - Confidentiality
 - Case Presentations
 - Struggles
 - Benefits
- Networking
 - Training my members about their specialty.
 - Understanding each other's limits
 - Using each other's strengths

Marin Hoarding Alliance 2009 Goals

- Education
 - Presentations to Agencies and Community Groups
 - Host a conference on Hoarding & Cluttering
 - Reproduce Field Guide
- Resources/Peer Support
 - Therapy – Individual and Group
 - Connecting Professional Organizers with Clients

Questions & Answers



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