

Sorting Through Hoarding: Getting Started

Tips for the Occupant

Work with your landlord to make sure you understand the expectations and timelines. Break down the tasks given to you into smaller goals. Write them down in your own words in a notebook. Use this notebook to keep a record of your goals, thoughts, lists and all things related to this project.

START RIGHT NOW!

1. Start with the highest priority target. (think: health & safety first, or visible to complainant/landlord)
 - There is no perfect time or space to start – just start!
 - We recommend that you work in small areas and short time frames (20 minutes or so)
 - Try to complete the target area in the 20 minutes. If you can't, the goal is too big.

2. Make sure you set yourself up for success.
 - You will need a place for:
 - Trash
 - Recycle
 - Eco Station
 - Donate (anything you want to give to a specific recipient can be in this pile also)
 - Any “KEEP” items will have to be put away at the end of each 20 minute session.
 - Understand and acknowledge the discomfort of this process. How can you best calm and manage the anxiety?
 - Knowing that you will have to reduce the volume of possessions, what items can you discard with the least amount of anxiety? Discard those first!

3. Help with decision making:
 - Make pre-decisions where possible, for example: “anything broken can be discarded” or “anything I haven't used in 5 years can be donated”
 - What questions can you ask yourself about items to help you make decisions?
 - How many of these do I already have/need?
 - Do I have a plan to use this item within a reasonable & specific timeframe?
 - When was the last time I used it?
 - Is it of good quality?
 - Do I have space for it? Where is it's place?
 - Do I actually have time to repair it?
 - **Will discarding this item help to get everyone off my back?**

4. Keep coming back.

- At the start of each 20 minute session, return to previous target areas to make sure they are maintained.
- String your target areas together so that you can see your progress.

5. Do a minimum of one focused – 20 minute session **every day**. But don't limit yourself to one – do as many as you can.

6. Get Help!

- Recruit as many team members as you can. (most people can only give a small amount of time – any help you can get is better than tackling the whole thing alone):

Who can you recruit to be a part of your support team?

Name, contact info, relationship (family, friend, agency, etc.) commitment (ie: 2 hours on Saturday)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

- Make sure your team members know your rules, systems, limitations, etc. You may want to create a document that you can share with the members of your support team. Here is an example:

THANK YOU for your willingness to help me with this project. There are some things I'd like to share with you to make this process a little easier for all of us.

- I may get distracted and need a little help staying on track.
- Sometimes I'm not sure how to make a decision on a specific item. Please don't make decisions for me, I invite you to ask questions that will help lead to a decision.
- Please understand that this is difficult for me and I need a cheerleader 😊
- Please don't argue with me, it will only serve to make me angry.
- It's ok to walk away if you start to lose patience or feel you need a break!

Thanks again for your support, I really appreciate it!

REMEMBER PROGRESS CAN BE SLOW. PLEASE DON'T WAIT TO GET STARTED. IT IS CRITICAL TO KEEP WORKING ON IT UNTIL ALL TARGETS ARE MET!

GOOD LUCK!

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