

# HOARDING

## Where to go when you're looking for help

Hoarding is about saving stuff and having difficulty discarding it. Most of us save certain things we care about, but for someone with a hoarding disorder difficulty getting rid of things becomes more extreme, and can make the home unsafe or uncomfortable.

People may hoard anything from clothing to collections (e.g., records, figurines), newspapers, magazines and even animals. This clutter can create conflict with family members, and the person may end up isolated because they are embarrassed to have guests over, and feel stressed and unhappy about living in clutter.

People who hoard often have additional complex mental health struggles that may be a combination of depression or anxiety, OCD, ADHD and/or bipolar disorder—sometimes with a history of trauma and a tendency to perfectionism. They may feel considerable shame and embarrassment about their hoarding and become withdrawn and isolated as a result. People who hoard may also have difficulties with compulsive shopping and acquiring, as well as financial problems.

## What are the recommended treatments?

Like many other anxiety conditions, hoarding typically responds to a combination of:

- cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT)—so as to gradually learn to discard possessions with less distress, and with less desire to hold onto them. The person may also learn to set limits on acquiring.
- medications—primarily SSRIs, a form of antidepressants to help with comorbid difficulties.
- skills training—organizing, problem solving

While there are resources that offer services to clean up and declutter homes, underlying mental illnesses are often not addressed with these programs, and symptoms and clutter can increase following the service. Therefore, it is important to find resources that address both.

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If any of this information is incorrect or outdated, or if there are additional organizations or programs that would be helpful to include, please e-mail the information to us at [access.resources@camh.ca](mailto:access.resources@camh.ca).

*This resource list is for information purposes only and does not constitute an endorsement by CAMH or guarantee any particular outcome.*

## CBT for Hoarding

### Dr. Lesley Miller & Associates

3060 Mainway Drive, suite 104, Burlington, ON

905 335-5300

[www.lesleymiller.ca/about.php](http://www.lesleymiller.ca/about.php)

**Services offered:** Provides assessments and treatment for hoarding disorder—various therapists that specialize in CBT for hoarding disorder

**Fees:** Vary by service provider: psychologist \$190/hour, therapist \$140/hour, master’s student (under supervision) \$125/hour

### Catholic Family Services of Hamilton—Gatekeepers Program

201—447 Main St. E., Hamilton, ON

[intake@cfshw.com](mailto:intake@cfshw.com)

905 527-3823

<http://www.cfshw.com/gatekeepers>

**Services offered:** Connects clients to case workers who provide support and referrals to cleaning and other resources that address hoarding

**Eligibility:** Age 60 years and older in Hamilton, and age 49 years and older in Halton; clients typically display extreme personal or domestic neglect, show signs of excessive hoarding, are socially withdrawn, refuse assistance and/or have a lack of concern about living conditions

**Referral:** Complete referral form on website and fax to 905 546-5779 (Hamilton) or 905 546-5770 (Halton)

### St. Joseph’s Healthcare Hamilton—Anxiety Treatment & Research Clinic

St. Joseph’s Healthcare, Hamilton, ON

905 522-1155 ext. 33697

<http://www.stjoes.ca/health-services/mental-health-addiction-services/mental-health-services/anxiety-treatment-and-research-clinic-atrc>

**Services offered:** A 16-week CBT group on hoarding runs once a year in January

**Referral:** Physician referral required. Form can be downloaded from the website. For more information, please contact patient services co-ordinator at 905 522-1155 ext. 33697

**Note:** Pre-program screen required

### Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, Thompson Anxiety Disorders Clinic

2075 Bayview Avenue, Toronto, ON

<http://sunnybrook.ca/content/?page=oed-resources-information>

416 480-6100

**Services offered:** Clinic offers psychiatric consultations, 16-week CBT group counselling, with new groups starting twice a year

**Eligibility:** Ages 18 to 65, living between Bathurst (west), Sheppard (north), DVP (east) and St. Clair (south)

**Referral:** Physician referral found online; can also call intake co-ordinator at 416 480-4002 and press 100

**Note:** No individual therapy offered

**Waitlist:** Up to 9–12 months waitlist for initial consultation

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## Support Services

### Birchall Consulting

<http://www.hoarding.ca>

613 492.0700, Toll free 1844 334-6273

**Services offered:** Assessments, counselling for hoarding disorder and chronic disorganization, clutter coaching, intensive emergency clean-ups, support and consults for professionals

**Eligibility:** All ages

**Fees:** Therapy \$225/session (1.5 hours), clutter coaching \$80/hour (minimum 2 hours)

### Mood Disorders Association of Ontario Toronto Drop-In: Clearing the Clutter

36 Eglinton Ave. W., suite 602, Toronto

416 486-8046, telephone line support—1 866 363-6663

[www.mooddisorders.ca/](http://www.mooddisorders.ca/)

**Services offered:** A peer support group for people living with hoarding tendencies: see their online calendar for programs and dates

1st, 3rd & 4th Thursdays of each month from 7:00–9:00pm

**Fees:** Free

**Note:** No registration required

### Toronto Hoarding Support Services Network

VHA Home HealthCare

30 Soudan Ave., suite 600, Toronto

416 482-4622

[info@torontohoardingnetwork.ca](mailto:info@torontohoardingnetwork.ca)

<http://www.torontohoardingnetwork.ca/>

**Services offered:** Co-ordinates services for 14 partner agencies in Toronto: services include strategies and support, referrals and assessments

**Referral:** Call their main number

## Hoarding Clean-Up Specialists

### Fresh Start

<http://freshstartclean.com/extreme-cleaning-service/>

416 504-4262

**Services offered:** Extreme cleaning services

**Eligibility:** West of Yonge in Toronto, must have received an “N5—Notice to terminate a tenancy early” form from the landlord

**Fees:** Initial cleaning free for people who have received an N5. Clients who have not received an N5 form can pay for the service.

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## VHA Home HealthCare

[www.vha.ca/extreme-cleaning](http://www.vha.ca/extreme-cleaning)

416 489-2500 (cleaning)

**Services offered:** An extreme cleaning program that helps people regain control of their living space and life by providing trained cleaners who can work with clients and family members to meet public health standards for their home; they spend two to three days cleaning, including infestation extermination; weekly follow-up cleaning support after the initial cleanout to avoid relapse; referrals and links to other local community resources for long-term needs; and developing a plan to address the source of hoarding tendencies and barriers to de-cluttering

**Eligibility:** Residents west of Yonge Street in Toronto who are at risk of facing eviction due to hoarding; no self referrals accepted

**Fees:** Cost is \$45 per hour per worker for a minimum of three hours. Subsidized services may be available to eligible vulnerable and isolated seniors with age-related health conditions and/or mental illness, who are facing eviction or institutionalization because of their unsanitary living conditions. Clients can choose to pay for this service if they do not meet eligibility

## Next Steps Solution

27 Kilberry Dr., Whitby, ON

905 666-8930, 905 706-9608 (crisis phone)

[www.hoardingcleanupspecialists.com](http://www.hoardingcleanupspecialists.com)

**Services offered:** Moving management. Specialized hoarding services training and workshops for hoarding and family of hoarders

**Fees:** sliding scale

**Eligibility:** Greater Toronto Area, Durham Region, Peterborough, Hamilton, Peel, York

## Toronto Hoarding and Extreme Cleaning Service

<http://torontohoardingservices.ca/>

416 569-0846

**Services offered:** Restores living space to a safe and healthy condition; works with lawyers, landlords and condo management to ensure proper service

**Fees:** No-cost consultation, fee for service

## Toronto Public Health

416 338-7600

**Services offered:** Nurses can assist hoarders by assessing the situation and providing education and emotional support; and connecting hoarders to appropriate community resources and supports such as cleaning services and mental health agencies

**Eligibility:** A hoarder who is vulnerable (e.g., a senior, someone with a mental health problem) and is willing to accept assistance and consent to a home visit

**Fees:** Determined after inspection, may be free

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## Resources for Family Members

### Publications

Tolin, D., Frost, R.O. & Steketee, G. (2014). Buried in Treasures: Help for compulsive acquiring, saving, and hoarding. New York: Oxford University Press

Tompkins, A. & Hartl, T. L. (2009). Digging Out: Helping your loved one manage clutter, hoarding, and compulsive acquiring. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications

### Children of Hoarders

<http://www.childrenofhoarders.com>

**Services offered:** Information and links to online support groups for children of hoarders

**Languages:** Website available in Spanish

### International OCD Foundation

<https://iocdf.org>

**Services offered:** Link on the home page of their website to a page on hoarding with information about this condition, what families need to know, and a resource directory with where to go to find help