HOARDING 101
Understanding the Mess
MATT PAXTON

- Extreme Cleaning Specialist on the Emmy-nominated HOARDERS
- Founder of Clutter Cleaner & Legacy Navigator
- Author of The Secret Lives of Hoarders
- Cleaned over 2,000 hoarded homes
- 15 years of failure
WHAT TO EXPECT TODAY

• Goals
  – Help gain a general understanding of people affected by hoarding
  – Highlight some of the new hoarding insights we are working on
  – **Give helpful communication tips to use in the field**

• Interaction
  – If you have a question or comment – **SPEAK UP**
UNDERSTANDING HOARDING
WHAT IS HOARDING?

Hoard ing is a mental disorder marked by an obsessive desire to acquire a significant amount of possessions.

There is ALWAYS a reason.
WHAT IS HOARDING?

Collecting

Something you do with your family.

Hoarding

When your collection IS your family.

We must understand HOARDING before we can help the HOARDER.
IS HOARDING HERE TO STAY?

Growth of Hoarding & Aging Seniors

# of Hoarders (in millions)

- 2006: Approximately 2 million
- 2012: Approximately 10 million

Comparison: The number of hoarders has increased significantly from 2006 to 2012.
Generations & Their Stuff
Some people hoard items for survival or pure emotion. Others hoard items simply to fulfill an impulse to purchase.
WHO/WHY PEOPLE HOARD

- 50% Male/Female
- Not just the elderly
- Incredibly intelligent
- Careers
  - Teachers, Nurses & Social Workers
- They are NOT lazy, crazy or sloppy
- There is always a trigger
  - Grief, divorce, abuse, empty home, accident or loss of job
- They are looking for self-worth & happiness
• Self worth & happiness
  - Positive (faith, volunteering, exercise, etc)
  - Negative (drugs, alcohol, beanie babies, etc)

• We can hide our secrets

• We believe we are "going to get to it…"

• We avoid the "NOW"

• We hold onto the past
  - Why do we hold on
  - We think things were better…

HOW WE ARE ALIKE
WHY PEOPLE HOARD

No matter how sad it is or how frustrating it is, ALWAYS remember:

– No one would choose to live this way
– No one wants to be this way
– This is a horrible life to live
– You must keep the highest level of compassion - no matter what
– No judgment – ever
– Total love & support

It’s NEVER about the stuff.
UNDERSTANDING THE PILES & THE PERSON
The mess is a blueprint of time

The progression is the time stamp of WHEN the house fills up

Each room represents a different mental state and time in the hoarder’s life

Remember each room started off CLEAN

They don’t all fill at the same time and pace
TYPES OF HOARDS

Volcano
Reverse Volcano
Red Sea
Rolling Hill
Cave
Check dates in each room
- Magazines or mail at the bottom & top of the pile show when/where the house filled up
- This gives you a time stamp of physical and emotional hoard

Know where to start and navigate BASED on mental history
- Will save everyone $$$
- And it’s the right thing to do
COMPARING THE PILES

Which one will be easier to clean?
HOW TO PROPERLY COMMUNICATE
PERCEPTION

The hoarder thinks:

- You don’t like them.
- The family doesn’t like them.
- Their hoarding is still a secret.

How you combat this:

- Equalizing
- Show and tell how you are the same.
- Dress the part.
• Front door communications:
  • Stand in the right place
  • Invite them to come outside
  • 5 min conversation
  • Wait to be INVITED inside

• Word choice:
  • “This isn’t so bad. I’ve seen a lot worse.”
    • What if this is the worst thing you’ve ever seen?
  • “…but I wouldn’t want my mom to live like this.”
Communcations – Walk-Through

Word Choice - Walking through the door:

• Have the client lead you through the home
• If you get into a dangerous situation and you need to get on safety gear, say:
  • “Insurance mandates I have to wear gear when I walk through your house.”
• Acknowledge that you might be the first person in that home in 10 years
COMMUNICATIONS – WALK-THROUGH

• Ask questions to learn more, but keep it vague:
  – “Tell me about ________.”

• Ask permission for everything:
  – Over-exaggerate (can I put my hand here, can I put my foot here)

• Give compliments when they are real:
  – “nice china…”
  – “beautiful paintings”
LET’S PRACTICE!
HELPING THE HOARDER THROUGH THE PROCESS

Anyone can throw trash away.

Understanding the mental part is what differentiates us from EVERYONE else.

It’s all about compassion, trust, respect & communication.
Legacy Navigator is a full-service company working with estate settlements or estates in transition.

Our goal is to minimize a family's stress while maximizing the value of the estate.
Grief is complicated...

We make it easier by providing Guide Services

We make it affordable by providing Financing
By offering clients a choice, we minimize a family’s stress and maximize the estate’s value.

Blog featuring DIY tips and how-tos from me, grief help from CPO Pete Shrock, probate and estate settlement information from our probate expert.

Don’t want to miss a thing? Follow us:

@iamMattPaxton
@LegacyNavigator

Contact Information:

www.LegacyNavigator.com
Info@LegacyNavigator.com
800-913-7747