

The background features a complex network of thin white lines that intersect to form various geometric shapes, including triangles and polygons. These lines are scattered across the black field, creating a sense of depth and structure.

BEYOND OUR BELONGINGS:

SUPPORTING PEERS
SERVING THOSE AFFECTED BY
UNMANAGEABLE (DISORDERED)
CLUTTERING
(HOARDING DISORDER)

Kimberly Adams

Director of Peer Support,
Peer Voices of Los Angeles
CA Certified Peer Support Specialist

Chair, Orange County Task Force on Hoarding
Cofounder, Beyond Our Belongings, Peer Support Group
Owner, Room For Hope, Help for Individuals Who Clutter

WITH SPECIAL GUEST

Dana D.,
Peer in Recovery





BREAKOUT

6 MINUTES

1. How much do you know about 'Hoarding'?

2. How would you approach a situation where someone appears to have 'Hoarding' behaviors?

WHAT IS
DISORDERED
CLUTTERING?
A PEER
TRAINING





DISORDERED CLUTTERING

Disordered Cluttering is a Peer-preferred term for 'Hoarding Disorder' (reference TV shows that treat a mental health disorder as entertainment)

'Hoarding Disorder' is a unique mental health diagnosis in the DSM 5

CLUTTER/COLLECTING VS. DISORDERED CLUTTERING

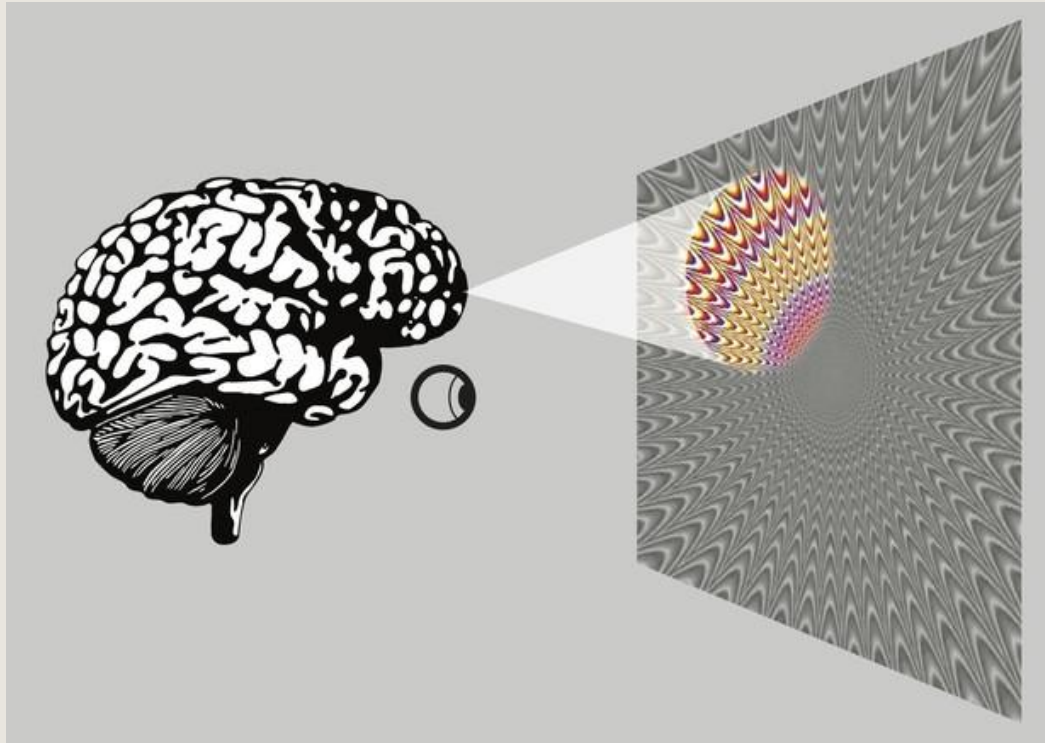


BUSTING MYTHS

- Disordered Cluttering is not the result of “going without” as a child or as an adult during the depression
- Disordered Cluttering is not the result of a death of a loved one
- Disordered Cluttering is not depression
- Disordered Cluttering is not laziness
- Disordered Cluttering is not due to inherited belongings
- Disordered Cluttering is not ADHD
- Disordered Cluttering is not greed
- Disordered Cluttering is not Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
- Disordered Cluttering is not using possessions to keep you physically safe
- Disordered Cluttering does not only occur in the elderly
- You think you can spot a clutterer – you can’t
- Disordered Cluttering is not always dirty
- Real value of belongings can range from trash to treasure

A PERFECT STORM

BEHAVIOR: COMPULSIVELY ACQUIRING, INABILITY TO DISCARD, AND DISRUPTION TO LIFESTYLE



- Brain differences
- and
- Trouble with executive function, information processing deficits, focus, attention, and organization (chronic disorganization)
- and
- Trauma, loss, physical limitations and/or,
- Co-morbidities and/or,
- Possession inheritance and/or,
- Genetics and/or,
- And more...



WHO ARE WE?

- ✓ 2-5% of the population (1 in 20)
- ✓ Individuals with Disordered Cluttering represent all socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Many have advanced degrees and responsible jobs.
- ✓ Age 13/14 and older
- ✓ Disordered Cluttering does not discriminate - the challenge is worldwide
- ✓ Intelligence & creativity

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS

Those with Disordered Cluttering:

- Have excessive beliefs and emotional attachments to objects and possessions
- Experience distress and avoidance when confronted with choices
- Have distorted beliefs about the importance or value of possessions
- Struggle with:
 - Organization
 - Poor Insight
 - Focus & Attention



IMPACT

- ✓ **Overwhelm**
- ✓ **Isolation**
- ✓ **Shame**
- ✓ **Stigma**
- ✓ **Severe despair**
- ✓ **Procrastination**

- ✓ Physical illness
- ✓ Strained relationships
- ✓ Financial burden
- ✓ Unsanitary and unsafe living conditions
 - ✓ Rodent infestation
 - ✓ Deterioration of home
 - ✓ Heightened threat of fire
 - ✓ Restricted mobility
- ✓ Emotional reactions to change
- ✓ Reinforcement behaviors (avoidance)

- Nag
- Complain
- Criticize
- Show distaste
- Talk more than listen



- Question the value of a belonging
- Touch or discard items without permission
- Forced cleanout (profound trauma)
- Clean up when the client is away
- Wear protective gear unless absolutely necessary
- Announce the problem to others
- Be gruff or insensitive
- Help clean or organize without emotional support/treatment
- Expect a quick fix or minimalist outcome

FRIENDS, FAMILY, AGENCIES

- ✓ You can play an integral role in the life of someone struggling with Disordered Cluttering. The approach must be educated and compassionate
- ✓ Truly unconditional support
- ✓ Privacy
- ✓ Patience
- ✓ Find common ground
- ✓ Build trust
- ✓ Assemble a team/community.
- ✓ Assessment for insight is critical
- ✓ Judgement must be set aside

Focus on the
person, not
the stuff



A graphic on a dark gray background. Two black silhouettes of hands are shown from the top, reaching down to hold a white outline of a heart. A white ECG line runs horizontally across the heart, with the heart shape positioned between two of its peaks. The text 'TREATMENT & RECOVERY' is written in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the middle of the heart and ECG line. On the left side of the image, there is a cluster of white, overlapping, tilted rectangular outlines.

TREATMENT
& RECOVERY

STRATEGY

- Treatment involves understanding the core beliefs and vulnerability of the individual
- Clinician vs. Peer efficacy
- Mental health assessment
- Address co-morbidities
- Neuroplasticity & Therapeutic Sorting – every successful sort is a new neural pathway

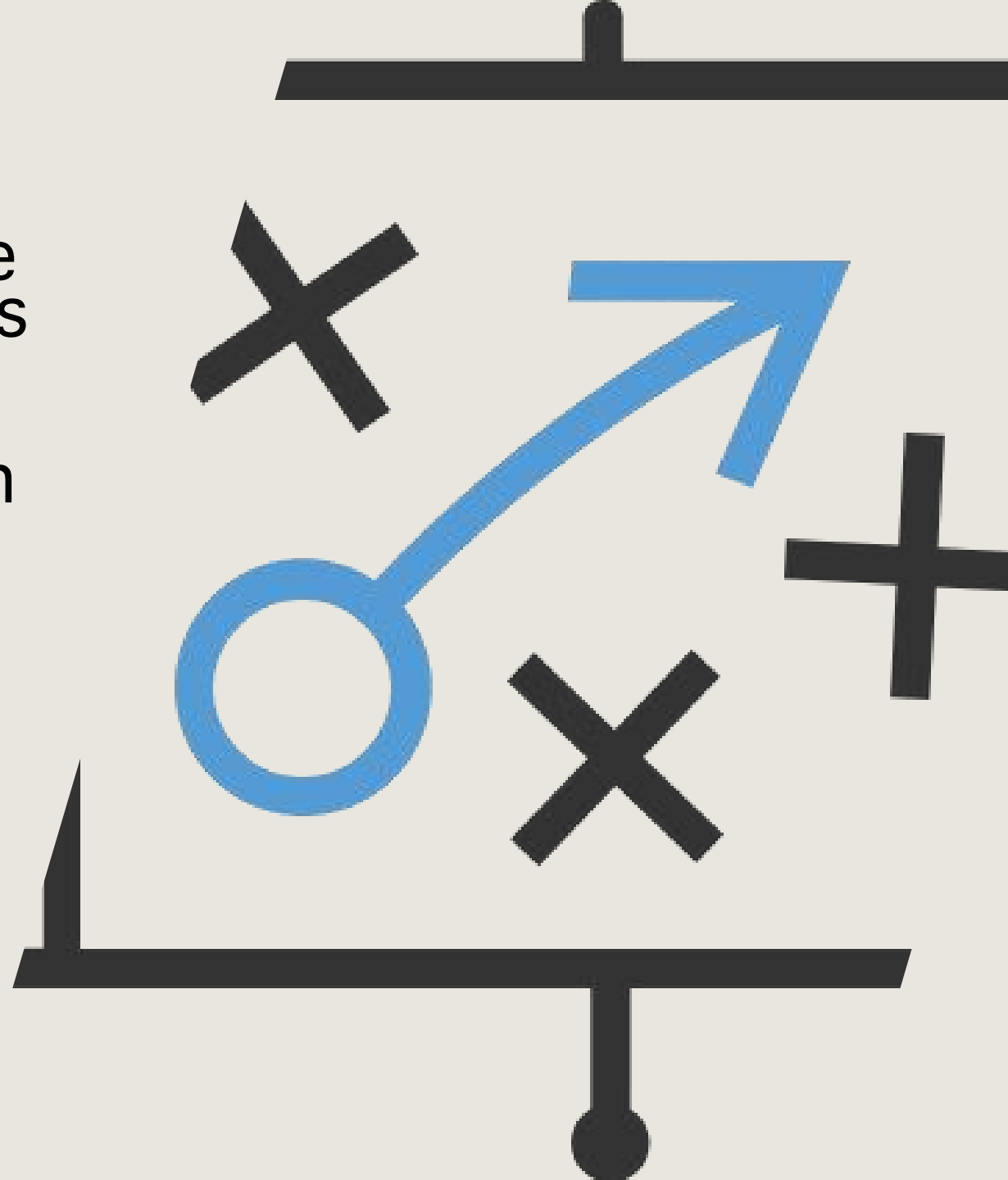
RECOVERY: RETRAINING THE BRAIN

- Motivational Interviewing and change (OARS)
- Exposure & Response Prevention
 - Tolerate negative emotions and challenge beliefs about acquiring/discarding
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (BiT)
 - Notice thoughts that create feelings about possessions in acquiring/discarding - reframing
- Peer support & services



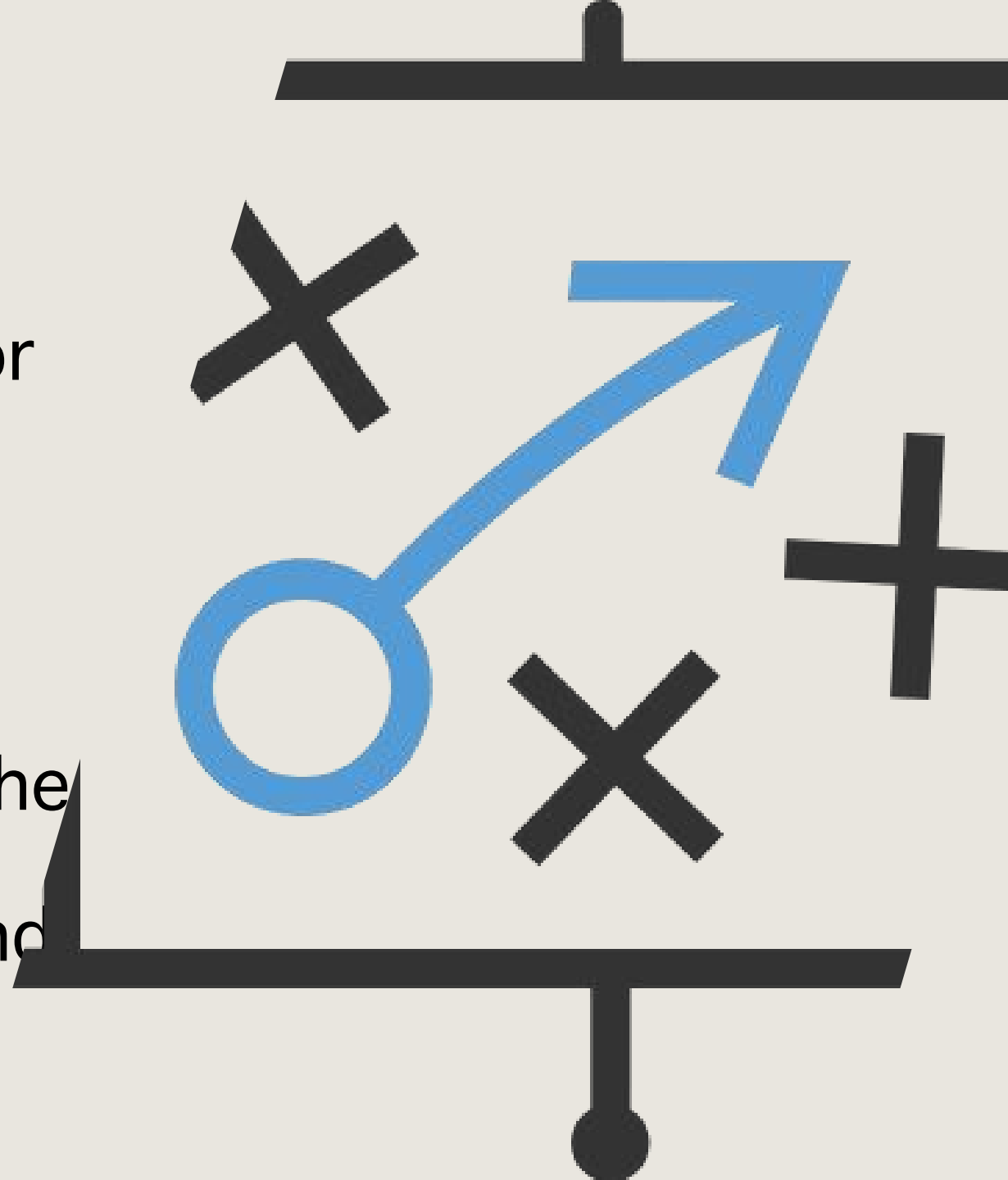
APPROACH

- ✓ Strategy #1 – Challenge thoughts and beliefs about the need to acquire and save items
- ✓ Strategy #2 – Curb acquisition by practicing restraint (rules, practice non-shopping trips)
- ✓ Strategy #3 – Therapeutic Sorting to discard and recycle clutter (rules). Practicing the removal of clutter, first with the help of a clinician or coach/”clutter buddy” and then independently. Repetition.



APPROACH

- ✓ Strategy #4 - Finding and joining a support group and/or treatment with a clinician is essential
- ✓ Strategy #5 - Understanding that relapses can occur and the development of strategies to prevent future acquisitions and clutter is necessary



Buried in Treasures **Authors: David F. Tolin, Randy O. Frost, Gail Steketee**
14 to 16-week virtual guided workshop on Zoom
Targeting those experiencing Disordered Cluttering and supporting recovery
roomforhope@yahoo.com

SUPPORT GROUPS:



Beyond Our Belongings Saturday Support Group
Second Saturday of the month @10:00 am
Hybrid: In-person (Orange) and on Zoom
roomforhope@yahoo.com

Beyond Our Belongings Thursday Support Group
Peer Voices of Orange County
Every Thursday @6:00 pm
On Zoom
roomforhope@yahoo.com

Orange County Task Force On Hoarding
(Under the Mental Health Association of Orange County)
(714) 547-7559



**SUPERVISING
PEERS IN DE-
CLUTTERING
SERVICES:
A UNIQUE AFFAIR**

BOUNDARIES

- Effective services
 - Blurred lines – casual setting
 - Self-disclosure
- Countertransference
 - Sorting can be emotional and Peers can be triggered
 - Enabling: The tendency to acquire and save is strong, and can reinforce the client's inclinations (Peer does not provide optimal services or gently challenge)
- Burnout
 - Progress is slow and the work can be overwhelming
- Comfortability



ETHICS

- ✓ Confidentiality
- ✓ Gifts
 - ✓ The entire process of Peer services revolves around 'stuff' – it is tempting for a Peer to acquire from the client in the sorting process
- ✓ Theft
 - ✓ Termination
- ✓ Building and maintaining trust
 - ✓ No meaningful relationship exists without trust
 - ✓ Clients are tired of others wanting to discard their belongings and are wary of help



SAFETY



- Physical safety concerns
 - Cluttered spaces
 - Jobs involving squalor (degradation or neglect)
 - Protective gear
 - Cleaning companies
- Emotional safety
 - Debriefing with trusted individual
 - Self-care
 - Supervision

HAZARD

QUALIFICATIONS & READINESS

- ✓ California Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist training
 - ✓ Ethics
 - ✓ Boundaries
 - ✓ Values
 - ✓ Motivational Interviewing and change
 - ✓ Open-ended questions
 - ✓ Affirming
 - ✓ Reflecting
 - ✓ Summarizing
 - ✓ Certification
- Training
 - Certification
 - Rules/Agreement
 - Pay
 - Insurance
 - Heavy work
 - Cleaning
 - Shadow/Volunteer



PANELIST

Dana D.





Q & A



1. How much do you
know about
Disordered Cluttering?


BREAKOUT

6

MINUTES

2. How would you
approach helping
someone with
Disordered Cluttering
behaviors?





Disordered Cluttering is a disorder...
not a
decision.

THANK YOU

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One-on-one help:
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