

Stages

Stage 1



- One or more piles of items haven't been moved in more than a month
- A collection is starting to take over the house
- The hoarder saves items for a future plan, but struggles to complete the plan
- Closets overstuffed
- Can access every room in the house

Stage 2



- An appliance is broken
- Junk mail is thrown into a drawer or box instead of being piled up
- A storage room, basement, or attic is full
- Weekly cleaning has stopped, and dust is starting to build up
- There are pet smells on the furniture and in the litter box
- More items are coming into the home than are leaving

Stage 3



- Damage to the house is visible from the outside (long grass, sheets on windows, filled car, etc.)
- Hoarding extends to porch and yard (boxes)
- Kitchen is starting to be inaccessible
- Electrical outlets are blocked, and it is getting difficult to move through house
- Pets are allowed to use the bathroom inside of the house

Home

Mind

- All members of family are healthy
- Family is able to maintain a pet
- Finances and job are intact
- Anxiety is starting to mount because piles are starting to form
- Housekeeping is not at the level desired
- Everyone starts off at stage 1

- Inaction is justified
- Condition of house is becoming embarrassing
- More interest is being shown in "extensive collections"
- Hoarder starts to be more removed from friends and family, but still functional at work and home
- Depression and loneliness are becoming noticeable and the void is being filled with new and use items or pets

- Hoarder compromises some daily activities (eating, bathing, socializing)
- Performance at work starts to suffer
- Diet and physical exercise are fading and physical changes in body are evident
- Family is starting to get concerned and ask questions
- Hoarder is starting to switch human interaction with pets because it is easier

Stages

Stage 4



Home

- House has structural problems
- Mold, cobwebs, and water damage exist throughout the house
- Living conditions might include bad air quality, rotten food, feces, and vermin
- There is little access to the house, probably only one room left
- Things are no longer stored where they should be
- True fire hazards and dangers exist
- Now living in a “cockpit” as bedrooms and furniture are not accessible

Mind

- Family has tried to intervene and been pushed away
- Usually job loss and financial problems are starting
- Hoarder is fully withdrawn, depressed, and not following societal rules; including not paying bills or bathing
- Losing track of pets and reality (perfect past and fake future)

Stage 5



- House is no longer safe
- Complaints have been filed or local official are already involved
- Water and power have been cut off resulting in less than favorable restroom options
- Hoarder is now living on top of the last cockpit or been pushed out to the car
- May have goat trails between “great walls” of clothes
- The 6 to 8 ft piles may be covered in trash, it is a sign that the person has completely given up

- Hoarder has very limited, if any, relationships with family and friends
- Signs of other mental issues and confusion have set in
- No separation of day and night
- Takes a bunch of 1-hour naps and experiences pure exhaustion
- Often personal relationships are with people no longer in their lives
- Reality is gone
- Hoarders entire day revolves around menial tasks; getting food, going to the bathroom, or trying to find an item
- Often in complete isolation from the world except for social services