



Compulsive Hoarding and Acquiring

Compulsive hoarding and acquiring involves the acquisition of, and inability to discard, a vast number of possessions. Compulsive hoarding is distinguished from collecting, or from normal household clutter, in three ways: The items collected appear to be useless or of limited value, that rooms in the household of someone living with compulsive hoarding are so significantly cluttered that they can no longer be used for the purpose they were designed for and the impact of a person's hoarding behaviour causes significant distress or impairs their ability to function in everyday life. Items that are commonly hoarded include old newspapers and magazines, junk mail, receipts, food wrappers, lists and containers. The homes of people living with hoarding are hazardous; the clutter serves as a fire hazard; individuals are at increased risk of falling, or having items fall onto them and collected waste can lead to unsanitary conditions. Consequently, people with compulsive hoarding are often too embarrassed to have people visit their homes, and as a consequence, have limited social interactions,

Hoarding behaviour has a strong relationship with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and it is estimated that 25-30% of individuals diagnosed with OCD have symptoms of compulsive hoarding. It is estimated that OCD affects 1-3% of Australians.

There are few treatments available that specifically target compulsive hoarding and acquiring. However, Psychology Clinic, the Swin-PsyCHE Research Unit and clinical psychologist Dr Christopher Mogan are now working in collaboration to provide a low-cost group program for compulsive hoarding to the community.

Compulsive Hoarding Group Therapy Outline

The Compulsive Hoarding and Acquiring Group is a 12-week program that uses cognitive behavioral therapy to address the thoughts and behaviors that lead to, and maintain, hoarding behaviour. The program targets decision making deficits, emotional connection to items hoarded, the avoidance of storing items appropriately and the avoidance of discarding items. The program challenges the beliefs that participants have about the nature of their possessions.

Eligibility

To be a part of the Compulsive Hoarding and Acquiring Group individuals are required to complete a 3 hour assessment with a counsellor at the Psychology Clinic and obtain a referral and mental health care plan from their doctor.

Program Dates

The Compulsive Hoarding and Acquiring Groups are run a number of times throughout the year. 2011 dates are still being finalised. Due to limited places, waiting lists may apply. For more information on program dates please contact the Clinic.

Fees

There is a \$25 fee to be assessed for the Compulsive Hoarding and Acquiring Group. A \$420 up-front fee is required for the group, for which you may be eligible to receive a Medicare rebate.

Application Procedure

To register your interest in this program or to find out more information please contact the Project Officer on **9214 5528** or psychprojects@swin.edu.au

About the Psychology Clinic

The Psychology Clinic was established at Swinburne University of Technology in 1990 to provide a range of low-cost psychological services to the community. An initiative of the Psychology Department, and with the patron Professor Allan Fels, it has achieved an enviable reputation not only for the services it provides, but also for its teaching and research.

The Clinic provides a high level of quality assurance with all work being supervised by experienced psychologists who are registered with the Psychology Board of Australia. Services provided by the Psychology Clinic are devised from empirical research and evidence-based practice. The quality of its services is also ensured by drawing upon the research skills of its practitioners, who continually assess the effectiveness of programs. Based on this model of practice programs are revised on an ongoing basis, to ensure clients receive state of the art treatment.

