

The ANXIETY & STRESS MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

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FAQs about the Hoarding Support & Skills Group

Q: How often does the group meet and is there a commitment?

A: The group meets weekly, and there is an 8 session commitment.

Q: How can I get started with the group?

A: An intake session is required before prospective members can join the group. To schedule an intake session, please call the Haniyyah Taufique at ASMI at 770-953-0080 ext. 312.

Q: What is the cost of the intake session and the group meetings? Can the intake be done by phone?

A: The intake session is at a reduced fee from the usual individual session fee and must be done in person. Please verify the current fee with the Intake Office when you call to schedule an intake session. The fee for group sessions is currently \$45/week.

Q: How large is the group?

A: I have experimented with running a large group, and I've attempted to run more than one group as well. Because the fluctuation in the availability of members increases as the number of members increases, I have decided to run only one group and cap it at 9 members. If the group is full, I will create a waiting list or refer you to another reputable hoarding therapist or group.

Q: How is the group run? How am I expected to participate?

A: This group is intended to be an adjunct to individual therapy, and as such, it is not a therapy group (i.e., emotional or interpersonal processing) in itself. The group is a goal-oriented support group where members set weekly de-cluttering goals for themselves and report back to group each week on their efforts and experiences.

Q: How do members interact?

A: The group provides encouragement and supportive accountability to members to help them stay motivated while coping with 1) the overwhelming nature of trying to de-clutter over the long-term, 2) the emotional experiences that come with letting go of things, and 3) the external pressures of family, friends, neighbors, and/or government agencies.

Q: What do I get from being in a group that I won't get from individual therapy?

A: A group of people going through similar experiences provide feedback and encouragement that feels more authentic and real. The group also exposes one to talking openly about something that is often considered embarrassing or shameful. Lastly, the group provides a "strength in numbers" approach to staying motivated. If you're feeling down one week, the group is there to uplift. When you're feeling good about your work, you're there to uplift others, which is a wonderful experience for those who have isolated from shame or fear of judgment.

Also, as an adjunct service, the group allows you to maximize your time in individual therapy sessions to explore your emotional experiences in group, in de-cluttering, in your world, and in your growth without using valuable time for goal-setting and checking in.

Q: How do I know if I'm really hoarding or if this is due to something else like depression or being a collector?

A: Clutter can accumulate for many reasons, and for the purposes of the group, the reason for the clutter is secondary to the dedication to de-cluttering. The intake session will help you determine if the group is right for you, and if you will be a contributing member of the group. More exploration about the reasons can happen in that session and continue in either individual therapy (more intensive) or in snippets within the group check-ins.

[My quick definition of hoarding is 1) there is enough distress or anxiety about letting go of things that 2) enough clutter has built up (or potentially could if not for someone else clearing it) that 3) negative consequences exist in matters of safety, daily functioning, relationships, finances, legal liability, child or pet care, employment, or emotional states/mood.]

Q: What kind of people can I expect in group?

A: The group has been consistently diverse in age, race, gender, and other factors. The group also has been consistently kind, supportive, and encouraging regardless of similarities or differences. Those who hoard are typically creative and very compassionate, and it shows in the group.

Q: What do I do if I need additional information before deciding to schedule an intake session?

A: You can use the www.atlantahoardingforum.com website and/or email haniyyah@stressmgt.net directly. Please provide a list of specific questions, and I will do my best to answer them in a timely and effective manner. Please note that if I feel the questions are of the nature of those typically asked in an intake session, I will direct you to schedule the session for that information.