

## Appendix H1

### **Principles of Harm Reduction**

This handout includes material from Chapter Two in: Tompkins, M.A., & Hartl, T.L. (2009). *Digging out: Helping your loved one manage clutter, hoarding & compulsive acquiring*. Oakland, CA US: New Harbinger Publications.

*1) Do no harm.*

The family member should not help in a way that would cause the loved one more harm than caused by the hoarding problem itself. It may be difficult to tell whether you are doing more harm by helping than by not helping, but the goal is to try to keep in mind the costs and benefits of helping.

*2) It is not necessary that your loved one stop all hoarding behavior.*

The goal of harm reduction has to do with making the loved one's home safer and comfortable, taking small steps to improve the hoarding behaviors. Making small changes is still considered successful and shows progress in the right direction.

*3) No two hoarding situations are identical.*

Hoarding behaviors may develop because of various cultural, biological, ethnic, and social influences. However, the role these various influences play differs from person to person. Because these factors interact differently in everyone, the harm reduction approach that each situation is unique is effective. As each situation is viewed as unique, no two harm reduction plans are the same and thus a personalized and reasonable plan is one that will be most beneficial to the loved one.

*4) Your loved one is an essential member of the harm reduction team.*

Allowing the loved one to be an active member of harm reduction may result in less anxiety and more openness to accept help in the future. With the loved one involved, they may devise harm reduction solutions that no one else had considered. In addition, the loved one may be more likely to follow a suggestion that they created, rather than one someone else created.

*5) Change is slow.*

Changing a habit is often difficult, regardless what the habit is. As the loved one may have been engaging in hoarding behaviors for many years, the behaviors may be that much more difficult to change. However, this is not as problematic in harm reduction because any step in the right direction, no matter how small, is considered a success.

*6) Your loved one may have other, more pressing problems than the hoarding problem.*

These problems could include facing eviction, being depressed, being unemployed, unable to do basic daily tasks like bathing or eating, and/or having a health problem. These other problems may serve as opportunities to help the loved one accept help and an effective harm reduction plan also includes these problems.

## Appendix H2

### **Four A's to Seeking Forgiveness**

This handout includes material from Chapter Three in: Tompkins, M.A., & Hartl, T.L. (2009). *Digging out: Helping your loved one manage clutter, hoarding & compulsive acquiring*. Oakland, CA US: New Harbinger Publications.

#### *1) Acknowledge*

Recognize the feelings of your loved one with hoarding in response to your actions. For example, your loved one may feel hurt or betrayed because you tried to throw away some of his or her possessions. Strongly consider letting your loved one know that you regret these actions and that the actions did not work.

#### *2) Assign reasons*

You should explain why you did what you did, while also not making excuses for the behavior. It is not necessary that your loved one accept or agree with your reasons for doing something. It is only necessary that he or she understands why you did what you did.

#### *3) Assure your loved one that it will be different now*

This means that things will not happen again the way they did in the past. It is important to only make these assurances and promises if you are certain you will follow through.

#### *4) Ask for forgiveness*

This means asking the loved one to try and understand your behaviors, how much you care for the loved one, and how important the forgiveness is to you. It is important to remember that the loved one may not forgive right away. You might have to be patient.