

**Goal:** Create a concise, actionable plan to recognize triggers, respond to setbacks, and restore progress related to clutter and hoarding.

**1) Name / Date:**

- Person (Friend, Loved One): \_\_\_\_\_
- Created: \_\_\_\_\_
- Last reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

**2) Warning signs (early, observable)**

- Increased avoidance of sorting/cleaning
- Keeping duplicates/adding new items rapidly
- Spending more time browsing or buying
- Skipping scheduled sessions
- Rising anxiety, shame, or irritability
- Other

**3) Common triggers (personalize)**

- Major life stress: \_\_\_\_\_
- Bereavement or loss: \_\_\_\_\_
- Illness or health changes: \_\_\_\_\_
- Transition (move, downsizing): \_\_\_\_\_
- Financial stress: \_\_\_\_\_
- Conflict with family/caregiver: \_\_\_\_\_

**4) Immediate safety checks (do first)**

- Clear at least one 36" pathway to exit
- Remove fire hazards (blocked exits, overloaded outlets)
- Ensure access to kitchen, bathroom, bedroom essentials
- Trash/biowaste removal if present
- If imminent danger or suicidality, call emergency services

**5) Short-term goals (next 72 hours — specific & measurable)**

- Goal A: e.g., clear one chair for sitting in living room (time: \_\_\_\_\_, who: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Goal B: e.g., sort mail pile into keep/shred/recycle (15 min) (time: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Goal C: e.g., schedule one 20–30 min session with supporter or pro (time: \_\_\_\_\_)

**6) Coping strategies (when urge to acquire or save spikes)**

- Pause and breathe: 5 deep breaths + 2-minute delay
- Use “urge log”: note time, trigger, intensity 1–10, action taken
- Do a 15–30 minute alternative task: \_\_\_\_\_
- Text/call support person: Name/Number: \_\_\_\_\_
- Set a 24–48 hour “cooling-off” rule for nonessential purchases

**Session #9: Online Discussion Group – Helping with Hoarding and Clutter**

Digging Out – Helping Your Loved One Manage Clutter, Hoarding & Compulsive Acquiring  
(Tompkins & Hartl, 2009)

**7) Support network & roles**

- Primary supporter: Name / Contact / Role
- Backup supporter: Name / Contact
- Professional contacts: Therapist: \_\_\_\_\_ / Organizer: \_\_\_\_\_
- Agreed boundaries (e.g., no removal without consent; supporter may refuse enabling purchases): \_\_\_\_\_

**8) Concrete behavioral plan (step-by-step)**

- Step 1: Choose one small area (size: e.g., 2 sq ft or one drawer)
- Step 2: Set timer for 15–30 minutes
- Step 3: Use 3-box method: Keep / Maybe / Remove
- Step 4: Photograph before/after
- Step 5: Remove “trash/recycle/donate” box within 24 hours (trash/recycle/donate)
- Step 6: Record progress in log

**9) Accountability & review**

- Daily check-ins: time/place: \_\_\_\_\_ (5–10 min)
- Weekly review meeting: day/time: \_\_\_\_\_ (review wins, obstacles)
- Reward for meeting weekly goals: \_\_\_\_\_

**10) Re-escalation plan (if repeated setbacks or safety issues)**

- Increase professional involvement: contact Organizer/Therapist by: \_\_\_\_\_
- Consider home health or social services referral: \_\_\_\_\_
- If severe psychiatric symptoms (depression, suicidality, psychosis), contact emergency/mental health crisis line: \_\_\_\_\_

**11) Self-care for supporters**

- Limit-setting statement: “I will help for X hours per week; I will not...”
- Back-up support for caregiver (friend/therapist): \_\_\_\_\_
- Boundaries about personal items and space: \_\_\_\_\_

**12) Signatures (agreement)**

- Person (Friend, Loved One): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- Primary supporter: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- Therapist/Organizer (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Use this template as a living document; review and update after any setback.

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