

Collaborative Approaches to Addressing Hoarding:

Team and Community Models

Housing First Partners Conference – Atlanta, GA

April 2024



Today's Objectives

- 1) Increase awareness of hoarding disorder and the impact of stigma
- 2) Explore team and community approaches, designing a multi-layered approach
- 3) Discuss how to build coalitions to address hoarding more proactively



Who We Are

SHIP has championed the fundamental right of housing for over 30 years.



SHIP is a nonprofit, accredited, housing and health service provider. For over 30 years, we have been delivering services to the Region of Peel, County of Dufferin, West Toronto and most recently the Region of Waterloo. We promote the well-being of vulnerable and at-risk populations and we work closely with individuals in our community, enabling them to embrace their full potential.

What's Happening in Canada? *Eh!*

- Multi-service, non-profit in Southern Ontario, Canada
- Our catchment area population is approximately 2.2 million, *larger than the whole state of New Mexico*
- 5.5% of Canada's population
- 14% of Ontario's population



Service Model

Housing and Service Continuum

We aim to address the issue of homelessness by providing a spectrum of housing & service options to individuals experiencing mental health challenges

Preventative Services

Shelter diversion
Wait List support
Raising awareness

Emergency Shelters

- Peel Family Shelter
- Safe Beds
- Kitchener Men's Shelter

Transitional Housing

- Peel Youth Village
- Recovery Residence
- Peace Ranch

Supportive Housing

- Supportive Housing
- CHO
- High Support

Affordable Market

- Hansen

High Intensity /
severe and complex

mild to moderate

Low intensity / well



Hoarding Disorder

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What do we assume about people who hoard?

In general, the public holds a negative perception of people who are impacted by hoarding difficulties, assuming that they are unclean, lazy and strange.

What is the truth?...

**Hoarding is a
mental health
disorder**



SHIP

Services and Housing
In the Province

Overview of DSM-IV Hoarding Disorder

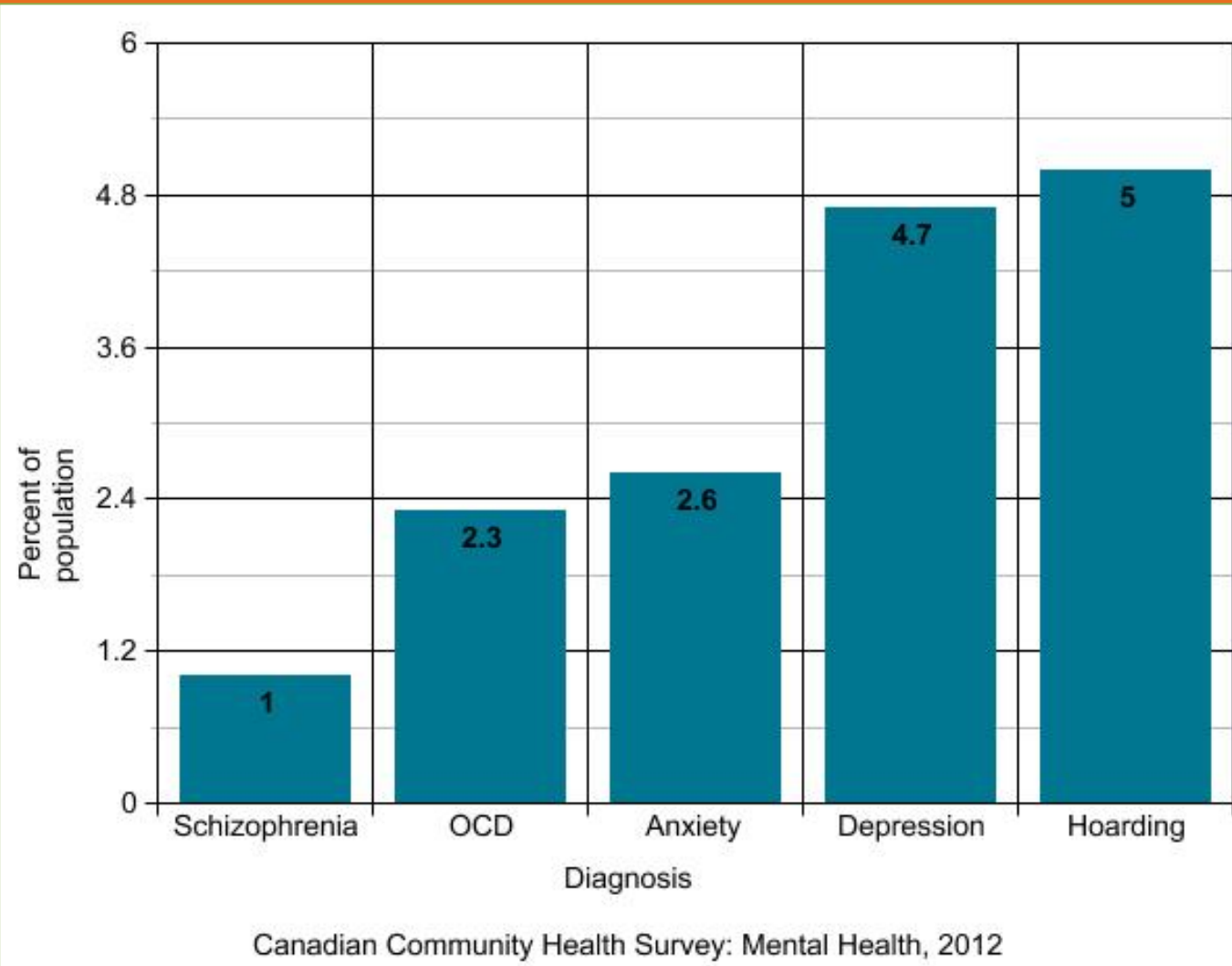
Diagnostic criteria (DSM-V) for Hoarding Disorder:

1. **Persistent** difficulty discarding or parting with possessions, **regardless of their actual value** due to a **perceived need** to save the items and the **distress** associated with discarding them.
2. Results in the **accumulation of possessions** that **clutter active living areas** and **substantially compromise** their intended use.
3. Causes **clinically significant distress** in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning (including maintaining a safe environment for oneself and others).
4. Not attributable to another medical condition.
5. Not better explained by the symptoms of another mental disorder.

Clutter

Poor organizational skills Impulsivity
Perfectionism Family History
Employment Genetics Cognitive deficits
Motivation Maladaptive Beliefs
Shame Indecisiveness Trauma
Procrastination Memory
Anxiety Stress
Social Isolation
Financial Strain

Prevalence



2-6% of the population
(123,860 - 371,580
in Atlanta)

92% comorbidity rate

Hoarding at the Crisis Stage

Definition of crisis:

- A time of intense difficulty, trouble or danger (*Oxford Dictionary*)
- An unstable or crucial time in which a decisive change is impending (*Merriam Webster Dictionary*)
- Hoarding becomes a **known crisis** when the state of someone's living space is observed by others or reported to enforcement providers
- Individuals may be living among a **hidden crisis**, silently suffering and unsure of what to do

Why is help so important?

Chronic or worsening
course

Significant impairment
to activities of daily
living

Social isolation and
strained relationships

Legal and financial
problems

Risks to health and
safety

Eviction and
homelessness

Fire hazards and
sometimes death

Overall impact on
the quality of
human life

Why is help for hoarding refused?

- Low insight
- Fear
- Different solutions in mind
- Hopelessness or burnout
- Mistrust or resentment



Prevention

- Reduce stigma
- Increase public knowledge (individuals & communities)
- Become aware of early signs
- Direct individuals to the appropriate help at the first signs of a hoarding problem
- Accessible and available services

Working In Teams

A top-down view of various construction and safety tools laid out on a dark wooden plank surface. In the top left is a bright yellow hard hat. Next to it are a pair of tan leather work gloves. Below the gloves are a pair of clear safety goggles with black straps. In the center is a black and white headlamp with a white lens. To the right of the headlamp is a rolled-up white blueprint with technical drawings and measurements. Below the headlamp is a yellow and black knee pad. At the bottom are several folding rulers of different lengths and colors (white, yellow, black). A brown leather work boot is partially visible in the bottom right corner. A large, semi-transparent white circle is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the title and text.

What Doesn't Work

Large clean outs with or without the client's permission

May be necessary when managing risk (i.e., eviction)

Mental Health Options

Case Management

- Harm Reduction
- Coordinating services
- Supportive, step-by-step reduction of clutter
- In-home behavioural coaching

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

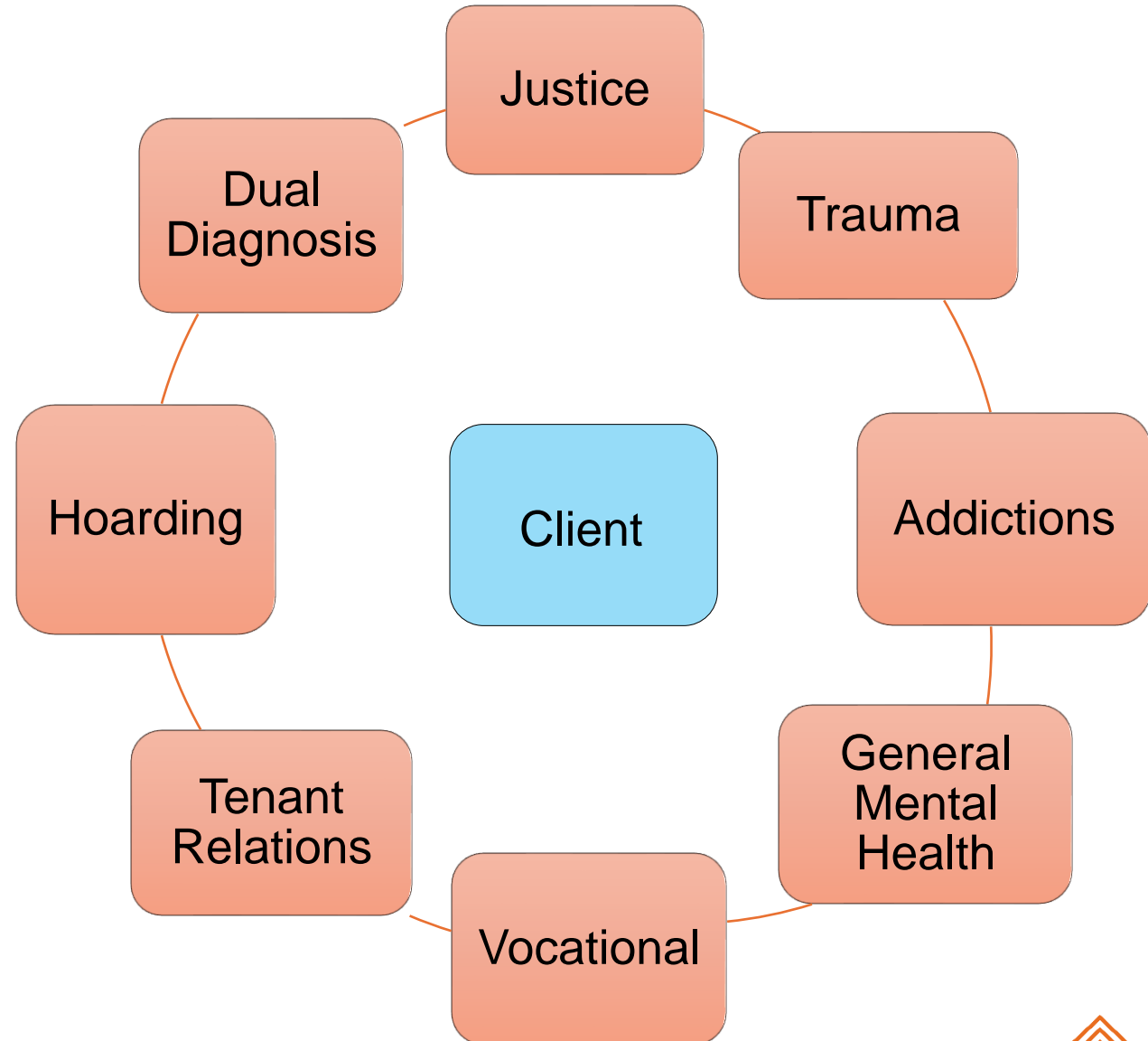
- Evidence based interventions to address unhelpful beliefs and create new perspectives

Buried in Treasures Group

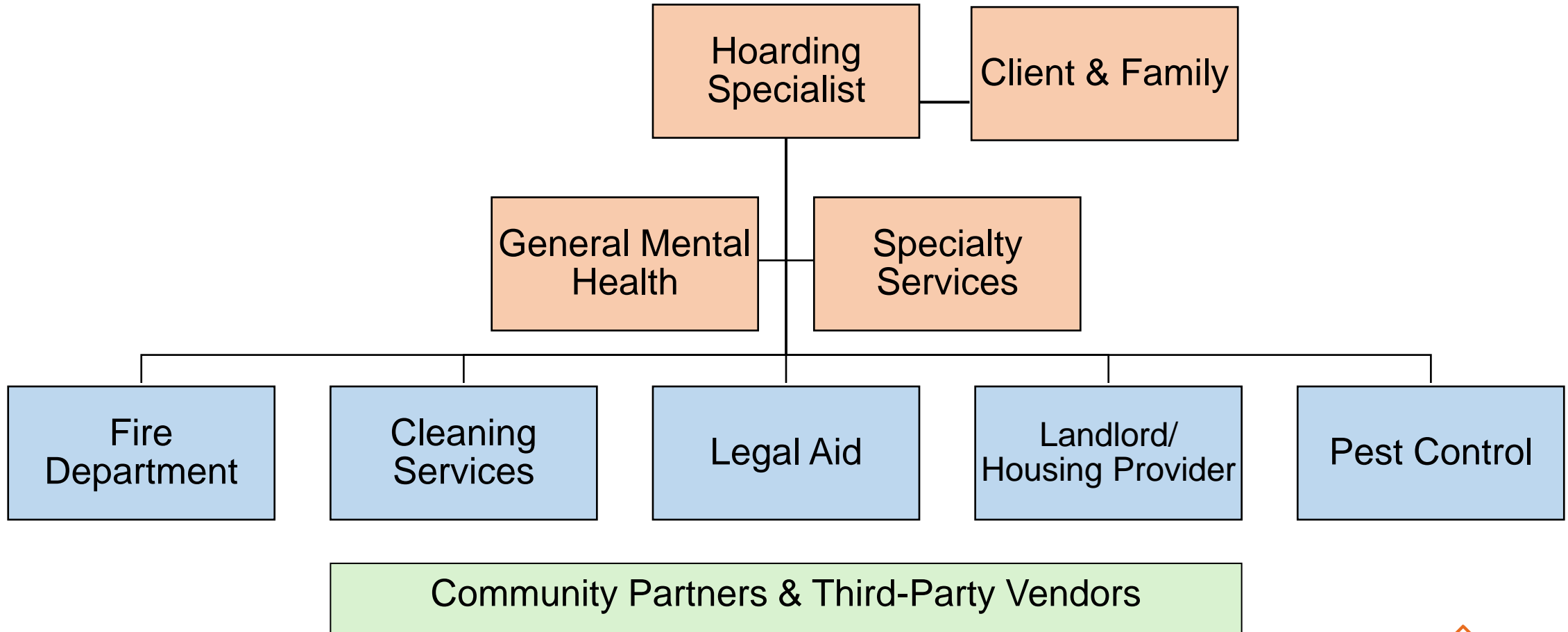
- Self-help
- CBT skills focused

Supportive Housing

Multidisciplinary Team Model



A Team Approach



Working with Community Partners

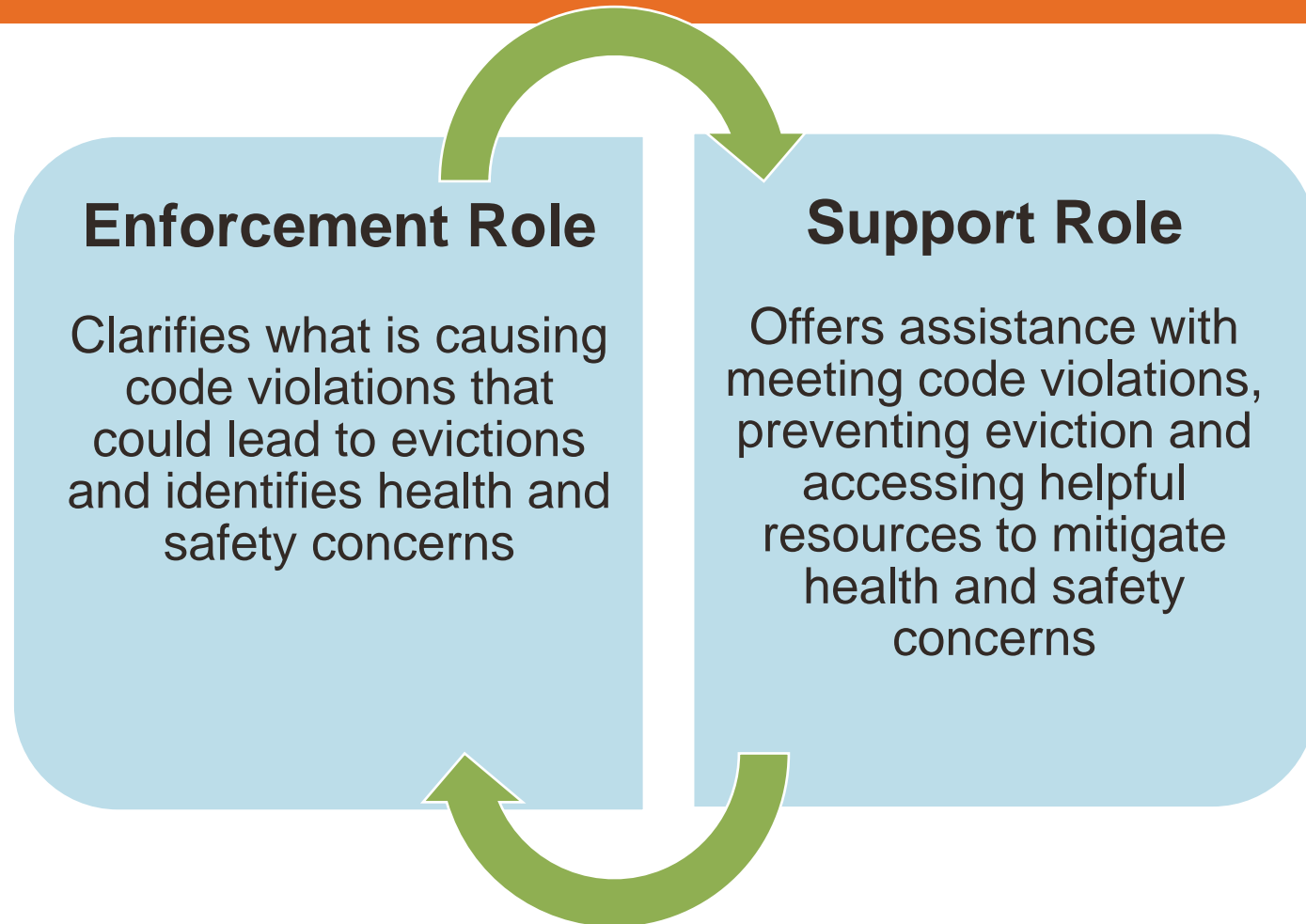
Forming a Hoarding Coalition

Coalition:
a temporary alliance
of distinct parties,
persons, or states for
joint action



Fire Department
Police Department
Animal Services
Pest Control Service
Extreme Cleaning Services
Public Health
Bi-law Enforcement
Waste Management Services
Health Care Professionals
Emergency Medical Services
Mental Health Agencies
Landlords/Property Management
Housing Providers
Municipal Workers
Lived experience individuals
Legal Aid

Primary Intervention Roles



2020 Research Report



HOARDING IN THE REGION OF PEEL: A COLLABORATIVE RESPONSE TO A COMPLEX ISSUE

Prepared for the Coalition on Hoarding in Peel

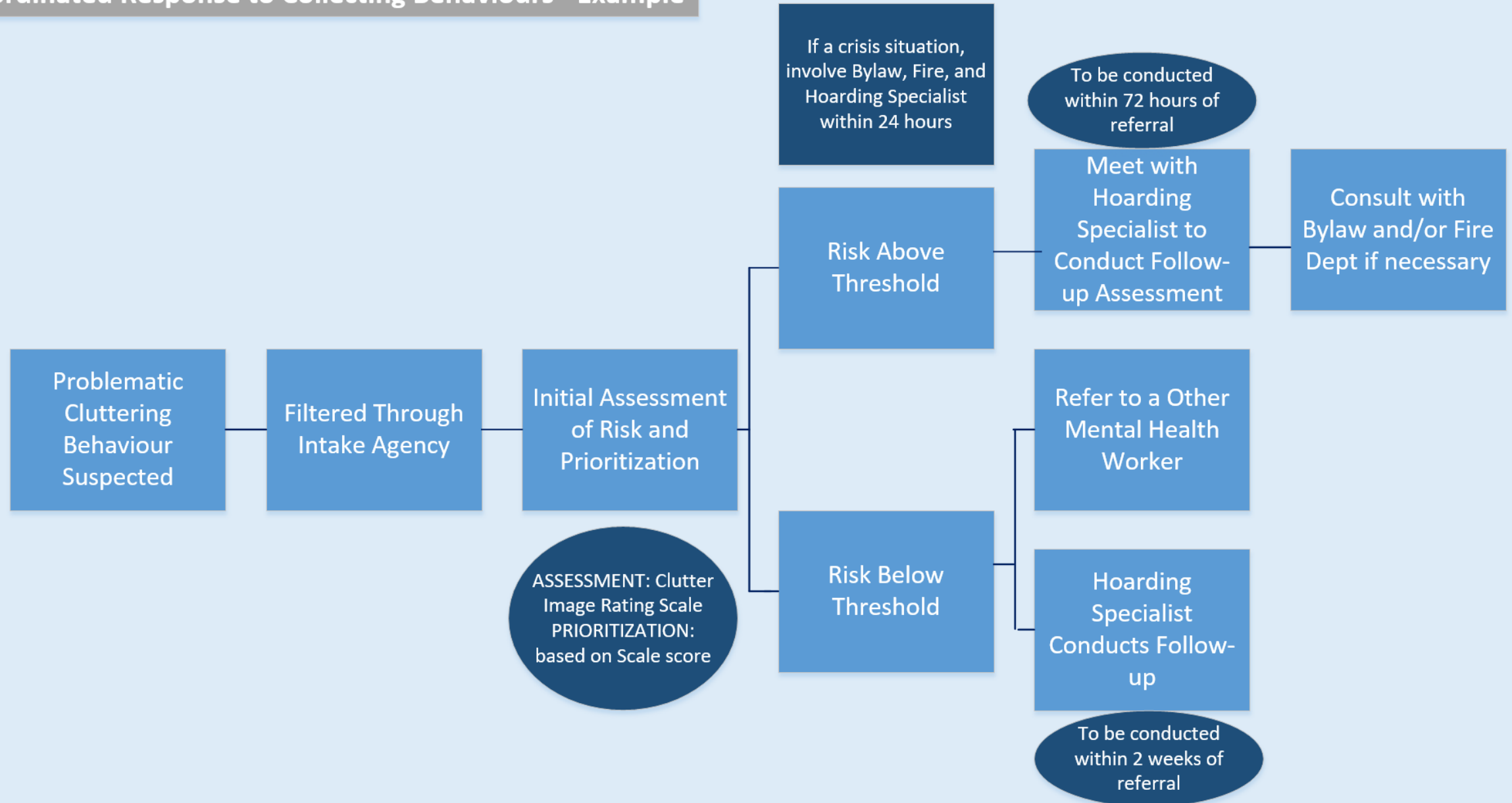
Prepared by Carter Sehn, Jenny Lam, John Ecker, and Anika Mifsud, Hub
Solutions, Canadian Observatory on Homelessness



2020



Coordinated Response to Collecting Behaviours - Example



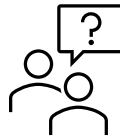
Brief Case Study

The Client:

- 61 YOA female
- Loss of father
- Mental health, cognitive decline, physical ailments
- Good insight
- Receptive to support



Problem: Eviction, health and safety hazards, fire code violations, limited ability for EMS to enter and respond to health crisis if needed



Solution: Hoarding Specialist involvement, collaboration with community partners, negotiations with landlord, increased mental health support, focused on overall wellness and housing stability



Result: All health and safety violations were eliminated, client remains housed, increased mental health support – focus on maintenance, improvement to mental health and overall quality of life

Who helped?

Families

Neighbours

Fire Department

Police Department

Animal Services

Pest Control Service

Extreme Cleaning Services

Public Health

Bi-law Enforcement

Waste Management Services

Health Care Professionals

Emergency Medical Services

Mental Health Agencies

Landlords/Property Management

Housing Providers

Municipal Workers



Maintaining Progress

- Client buy in & consent
- In-home visits from case managers
- Promote independence
- Acknowledge when regression is occurring
- Referrals to ongoing support (i.e. Buried In Treasures & Support Groups)

Community Initiatives

Coalition on Hoarding In Peel (CHIP)

Mission to ensure safer homes and safer communities through:

- Raising public awareness
- Education & training
- Eliminate stigma
- Advocate for services and support

Ontario Provincial Hoarding Network (OPHN)

- Education & training
- Community engagement



Conclusion

- Hoarding is a mental health disorder that is highly prevalent within our communities but is often vastly under serviced
- This population remains misunderstood and stigmatized due to a lack of public awareness and education
- Hoarding has an impact on individuals, communities and service providers
- Supporting the client with moving from crisis to calm often requires a team approach (within organizations and among community partners)
- Coalitions are an effective way to begin discussing how a community approach can help the hoarding population

Questions



Thank you!

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For more information, visit us at www.shipshey.ca

