



SECTION 5

LECTURER'S CONTRIBUTION



Am I suffering from obsessive compulsive disorder?

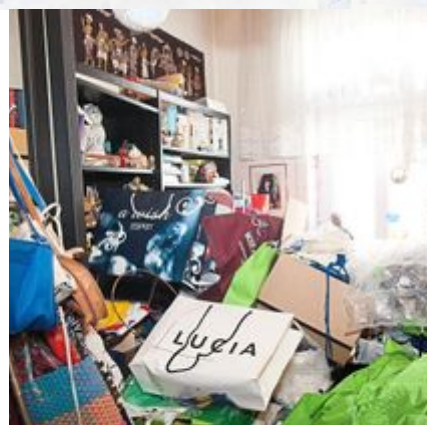
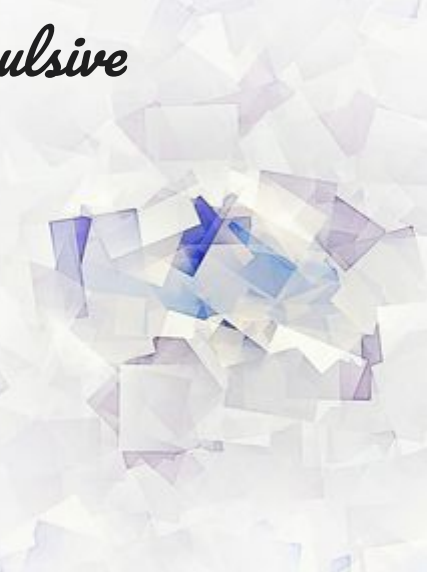
By Emily Jothee Mathai

Collecting items is an interesting hobby. Items can easily be made up of stamps, money, old memorable things such as phones, cameras etc. Apparently, accumulating items of interest sounds reasonable but having a stockpile at home so to speak that "these collectors" can't use their home for the intended purpose - becomes problematic.

That is what we call - HOARDING. Is it normal to gather uncountable items and be classified as untidy or is it a serious disorder? According to the American Psychiatric Association (2013) people with hoarding disorder have persistent difficulty getting rid of or parting with possessions due to a perceived need to save the items. Attempts to part with possessions create considerable distress and lead to decisions to save them. The resulting clutter disrupts the ability to use living spaces.

Therefore, collecting and hoarding are two separate situations altogether. Collecting usually is more structured. Items collected are subject to being organized, admired, and displayed to others. Objects collected by hoarders on the other hand lack a consistent theme. They are more impulsive and lack organization which leads to a messy clutter!

Hoarding is not a habit anyone would love to develop yet ONE hoards. Why is that so? Do they gain a kick out of it? The answer is a definite 'no'. The dark side of hoarding is despite the many other factors related to it; depression is one of it. Dr Sabine Koehler, a professional Association of German Neurologists chairwoman, stated that hoarding is classified as a compulsive disorder and is more common in people with other psychological disorders, such as depression.



Depression is a painful affair. Hoarders themselves are predominantly aware yet they are unable to break free from it. They need supportive friends and family members to help them escape from the gloom. Loved ones should focus more on showering love with kind words and deeds, rather than narrowing down to the mess resulting from hoarding.

Ridiculing or compelling a hoarder to tidy their space is far from managing the issue. Likewise, tidying up the place for them doesn't help either - in fact hoarders would be more upset as it is an infringement of their privacy and can lead to bigger conflicting issues.

Any normal person can say - "Ultimately it is all in the head", but it is not plain sailing to the hoarder in fact it could be life-threatening. Hence, it is always best to get to the crux of the issue - depression. As the maxim goes - you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink. On that account, helping hoarders get rid of depression be it involving professionals can eventually cast out HOARDING miles away!

References

American Psychiatric Association, 2013. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition*. American Psychiatric Association Publishing, Arlington, VA.