Addressing the Health, Safety, and Tenancy Preservation Needs of Compulsive Hoarders

Responding to Compulsive Hoarding Among MBHP Program Participants



Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership's Model for Addressing Hoarding Issues

Our Goals:

- 1. To provide tenants with the support needed to maintain healthy, safe, and sanitary housing
- 2. To prevent loss of rental assistance subsidy
- 3. Eviction Prevention
- 4. Education of Staff and Partner Agencies



Section 8 Tools for Addressing Hoarding

- Annual Inspections of the unit
- Statement of Family Obligations
- Reasonable Accommodation Process
- Termination from Section 8 Program for non-compliance



Referral Comes In

Hoarding Team Receives Referral and Schedules Assessment (2 parts)

Home Visit

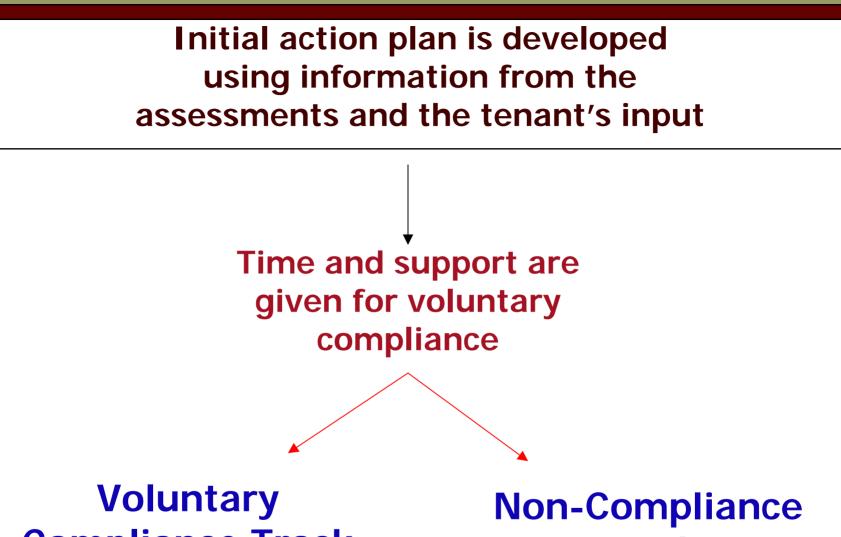
GOAL: To assess condition of the unit and tenant's insight into problem

Hoarding Team member accompanies inspector for reinspection of unit **Office Visit**

GOAL: To use CIR to assess tenant's insight when outside of unit

Case Management Process Begins





Compliance Track

Track



Voluntary Compliance Track

Hoarding team meets to strategize about case management needs

Service Plan and Agreement signed by tenant to address hoarding issue

Case management/home visit; meet with professional organizer; seek treatment; regular check-ins with inspections on progress. *Tenant is given support and time.*

Compliance ↓ Monitoring



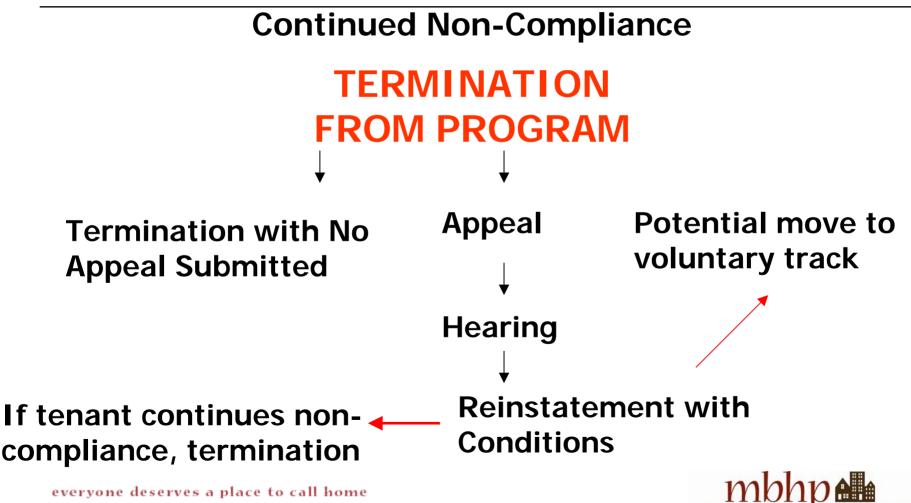


Non-Compliance Track

Case Conference when there is a refusal to cooperate and come into compliance Hoarding case team meets to make recommendations to tenant and to give baseline requirements for compliance **Re-inspection of unit to assess any changes** (positive or negative) Possibility for move Non-Compliance to voluntary track everyone deserves a place to call home

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Non-Compliance Track (cont.)



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Our Referral Process: Field Staff

If our staff are in the field and encounter a hoarding situation:

Photocopy the inspection report

 Write a detailed description of the hoarding situation including severity of hoarding, type of items, access to egress, etc (if there are animals involved, include type and number)

Submit a referral to the hoarding team through the HCEC

The hoarding team will work with staff to determine next steps once the assessment process is complete



Clutter Image Rating: Living Room

Please select the photo below that most accurately reflects the amount of clutter in your room.





Field Staff: When to refer

If field staff can place a unit on the image rating scale just shown at or above the #4, then make a referral to the hoarding team.

If we can get involved while the rating is low, we have the opportunity to intervene before housing stability becomes an issue.



Case Management Example

- Name: "Angel"
- Age: late 50s
- Location: Suburb north of Boston
- Apartment: 1 Bedroom, Multi-family building
- Marital Status: Divorced
- Family: Mother and daughter live in state



The Initial Home Visit

- Majority of unit not accessible
- □ No egress path
- No use of shower, limited access to bathroom sink
- □ No access to oven/stove
- □ Space on bed for sleeping



The Action Plan

- □ Learning about categorization
- Building sorting skills
- Deciding what to do with items
- □ Sensitization to discarding/donation
- Understanding the emotional impact of clearing the egress paths
- □ Plan for minimizing or preventing re-cluttering



The Bathroom (initial visit)

- Doorway blocked by2 ft wall of "stuff"
- Toilet only space accessible
- 5-6ft of items in
 bathtub
- Client had not used shower in 3 years



Bathroom Action Plan

- Divided the bathroom into manageable tasks
 Sport time during consistent focusing on **quality**
- □ Spent time during session focusing on **quality** of skill building rather than speed of work
- Increase amount of homework done by client between sessions



The Bathroom (After)





Monitoring

After compliance, MBHP monitors clients for one year. We will slowly reduce the frequency of home visits as the client maintains their unit for longer periods of time in a safe manner. The reduction of home visits is based on the needs and comfort of the client and MBHP

MBHP is also available after the year of monitoring if the client needs assistance getting "back on track" or has concerns about re-cluttering.



Challenges

- Tenants will backslide and stall in their progress
- □ Cleanout and organizing costs
- Case management is time and resource intensive



What Works

- Early identification and intervention
- Post-compliance monitoring
- □ Staff and community education
- Building community and provider partnerships
- Working to understand why the "stuff" is important to the client
- Helping client to learn to set limits and self-monitor their hoarding
- Setting specific and realistic timeframes

