



SUE'S NEWS:

'We Organize It!' *is...*

The Cure for the Common Clutter!



July 2005

Just Clutter, or a 'Hoarder Disorder?'

In April of this year, I attended the *National Association of Professional Organizers Annual Conference*, as well as the *National Study Group on Chronic Disorganization*.

Dr. Sanjaya Saxena, Director of the Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder Research Program at the UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute in Los Angeles, spoke about his research on compulsive hoarding.

So when I came across this short article at Saxena's website describing the differences between *having clutter* and *being a hoarder*, I thought I'd share it with you:

"Some people believe themselves to be hoarders, but fortunately, only a very small percentage of people are truly hoarders. According to medical professionals I have interviewed, less than 1% of the population hoards. While hoarding can only be diagnosed by a psychiatrist, here

is a brief discussion of the differences between hoarders and clutterers.

A hoarder cannot make rational decisions about what is useful and what is not. Thus, the hoarder often saves garbage or soiled items. If you don't you probably aren't.

A hoarder obsesses about her stuff and is compelled to collect it. A clutterer just lets it pile up. We don't give it much thought. It seems to flow into our lives without any effort on our part.

A hoarder is usually unaware of anything being wrong. If you are concerned about your clutter, you are in good shape.

A clutterer becomes overwhelmed by her stuff and has emotional attachments to her possessions but does not save garbage. A clutterer often has some of the following symptoms: low self-esteem, difficulty in making decisions, fear of loss and

failure, mild depression, belief that she doesn't deserve any better. A clutterer holds onto items and relationships that do not serve her because of these beliefs.

If it is a family member's clutter that is overwhelming you, then you should consider the differences before labeling her. As always, professional help can be a big boost in recovery, but unless a person is willing to make changes, odds are she won't.

Hoarding needs to be treated by a psychiatrist and medications are often prescribed."

For more information about hoarding and OCD in general, there is not a better source than the OC Foundation. Email: info@ocfoundation.org. Web site: www.ocfoundation.org. Their address is: POB 70, Milford CT 06460. PH: is 203-878-5669.

DID YOU KNOW?

- ◆ Eight million Americans, (2-3% of every city), are diagnosed with a compulsive hoarding disorder.
- ◆ Hoarding is a family affair-85% percent of hoarders have family members who also hoard.
- ◆ Anxiety disorders cost more than \$42 billion a year, almost one third of the \$148 billion total mental health bill for the U.S.

Donate, Donate, Donate!

Are you taking advantage of the weather by doing some spring cleaning? Why not consider donating your unused items to organizations meeting the needs of underprivileged women and children? There is no shortage of organizations depending on your help!

For instance, I recently had the pleasure of meeting Libby Wright, Director of *The Giving Tree*, a non-profit, faith-based organization which serves the needs of homeless or abandoned babies and children by providing meals,

transportation, and referrals to community services.

Wright doesn't stop there. Each month, more than 100 underprivileged adults and children also receive hot meals, clothing, and toiletries, along with community referrals from *The Giving Tree*.

If you'd like to donate your new or gently used toys, baby seats, cribs or clothes to *The Giving Tree*, contact Libby Wright at 520-320-KIDS or 4kids@dakotacom.net.

Reader's Tips:

- ◆ Pre-stamp and label note card envelopes and you're set to send notes at a moment's notice. (Pat Christopher, Mary Kay Cosmetics)
 - ◆ Storing spring-loaded tongs in cardboard tubes in the drawer keeps them neat and in sight. (Barbara Burns, Silpada Jewelry Designs)
 - ◆ If you work a flexible schedule, run 2 errands a day for your spouse, and when the weekend comes the errands are already done! (Dave, 3M)
- Thanks, readers! Keep sharing!