INSTITUTE FOR CHALLENGING DISORGANIZATION®
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FACT SHEET INFO

What is Chronic Disorganization?

Chronic disorganization (CD) is a type of disorganization that presents three characteristics: it persists over a long period of time, frequently undermines quality of life, and recurs despite repeated self-help attempts. Chronic disorganization is a quality-of-life issue, not a mental or medical condition. CD may be present with brain-based challenges such as ADHD, anxiety, depression, hoarding disorder, PTSD, TBI, and more.

Some common characteristics of individuals affected by chronic disorganization include:

- Accumulation of large quantities of possessions, papers, or digital files
- Indecision or difficulty parting with things and letting go
- A wide range of interests and many uncompleted projects
- Needing visual "clues" as reminders to take action
- Frequently gets distracted or loses focus
- Struggles with time management

While hoarding characteristics may occur in individuals experiencing chronic disorganization, but they are not always present among them. Furthermore, chronic disorganization does not represent a progression toward hoarding disorder.

Hoarding Behavior

Hoarding behavior is characterized by accumulating things, resulting in an overabundance and difficulty letting them go. Although discarding is difficult, the relationship with the possessions doesn't reach the clinical threshold for a disorder. The individual is aware of clutter and can recognize it as an issue.

Hoarding Disorder (HD)

Hoarding Disorder (HD) is a mental disorder characterized by compulsive acquisition of items, persistent inability to discard possessions, resulting in clutter and congestion in living spaces and causing significant distress to the individual. The individual commonly has little to no insight into the situation, and frequently, coexisting conditions accompany this complex disorder.

Severe Domestic Squalor

Severe domestic squalor pertains to a living space, not an individual. It describes unsafe and unsanitary environmental conditions resulting in extreme filth, mold, pest infestation, and structural distress, which may be linked to animal hoarding, hoarding disorder, or Diogenes syndrome.

Diogenes Syndrome

Diogenes syndrome is characterized by extreme self-neglect, social isolation, and severe domestic squalor, often (but not always) accompanied by hoarding behaviors.

Chronic disorganization may not go away, but it can get easier

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