**Database of Hoarding-Related Projects/Interventions: RBG**

**Project Title**:

Buried in Treasures Workshop (structured hoarding CBT peer support group using Frost and Steketee’s Hoarding-specific CBT protocol)

**Project Location**:

Royal Borough of Greenwich, London, England

**Project Lead**:

Ian McPherson, Social Worker

**Lead Organization**:

Royal Greenwich Health & Adult Services (i.e. Adult Social Services)

**Other Organizations involved**:

Also supported by Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust (local NHS Mental Health service provider)  
London Fire Brigade  
Other local authority directorates, including Royal Greenwich Tenancy Enforcement Teams

**Project Start date**: September 2023

**Project end date**: Ongoing (as part of Self-Neglect & Hoarding Pilot Project)

**Funding obtained from?**

Royal Greenwich Health & Adult Services are currently funding the peer support group initiative as part of their wider Self-Beglect & Hoarding Pilot (N.B. a small amount of funding was also provided by Royal Greenwich Public Health to help with purchase of materials including the ‘Buried in Treasures’ book for each participant.

**Project Outline**

**Aims**:

Hoarding-specific CBT (H/CBT) is the best evaluated treatment intervention currently available and has been extensively empirically evaluated. It has been manualised in an accessible self-help book, ‘Buried in Treasures’ authored by the academics who designed the protocol. A primary aim is to introduce participants to this CBT protocol by us slowly reading through Buried in Treasures and then discussing the each chapter as a group. This includes participants completing various psychometric tests contained in the book. So a major aim of the Buried in Treasures Workshops are to introduce PwHBs to the strategies outlined which help them to challenge the maladaptive thoughts, feelings and behaviours they exhibit towards the possessions they own.

A secondary aim of the support group is to provide participants with a safe space to discuss their hoarding behaviours without fear of judgment or ridicule. An important aim is to help de-shame and destigmatise the issues surrounding problematic hoarding.

**Procedure**:

The Buried in Treasures Workshop is facilitated by a social worker rather than a mental health clinician. As such, the Non-Clinician’s Facilitator’s Guide is used. This provides anyone with the resources required to successfully facilitate the Buried in Treasures Workshops. This is freely available online.

There is also a clinician’s facilitator’s guide for the same programme for the benefit of any mental health clinician who is facilitating or co-facilitating the group (available to purchase online).

Each group lasts 90 minutes and includes a short comfort break. All new participants are provided with their own copy of the Buried in Treasures book, but are also given the option of being provided with an audiobook version from Audible.co.uk (as long as they have an Amazon account). The local authority pays for these resources and the group is completely free for all participants.

Measures of success?

**Advice to share – Do’s and Don’ts?**

**DO invest in decent tea, coffee and biscuits. It’s worth the added expense.**

**DO make use of your local authority Comms Team to help you promote your new support group.**

**DO expect some participants to be resistant to reading the Buried in Treasures book but still really enjoy coming to the group and sharing their stories.**

**DO consider having multiple facilitators for the group as it can be tricky when the initiative rests on the shoulder of one professional.**

**DO consider providing “cheat sheets” summarising the main points of each chapter which can be useful to those resistant to reading the chapter in the book.**

**DON’T let participants veer significantly off the subject of hoarding. People often want to share anecdotes that are not related to hoarding and speak about their political views and opinions. This needs to be managed as it can potentially offend other participants.**

**DO develop “ground rules” on the first meeting of the group and ensure these are co-produced with all participants.**

**DO consider getting the facilitator to send out regular messages to participants using the WhatsApp Broadcast List feature (which means participants can’t see each other’s contact details). This can help maintain motivation and attendance.**

**DO make it clear to participants that this is a safe space where confidentiality is maintained (subject to the usual rules regarding a safeguarding concern being raised etc.). They need to be able to trust the facilitator, especially if the facilitator work for the local authority.**

**DO consider running the group weekly, if possible. We tried weekly and fortnightly but the programme is designed to be delivered weekly.**

**DO consider running a monthly maintenance group for participants who have “graduated” from the Buried in Treasures Workshop (some may also opt to go through the programme again to ‘bed in’ the message).**

**DON’T tolerate any participants bullying other participants (including being passive aggressive). The facilitator needs to be confident enough to intervene and manage such situations.**

**DO be prepared to meet participants “where they’re at”. 100% attendance may be a challenge for some people, but they often appreciate the facilitator taking the time to call (or even text) them if they miss a session to check in with them and ensure they’re ok.**

**DO get posters and flyers printed up and circulated amongst local GP surgeries, NHS clinics, local libraries etc.**

**Website/other links to the project report (if any):**

Link below is for the Buried in Treasures Non-Clinician’s Facilitators Guide. Along with a supply of the Buried in Treasures book/audiobook, this is all that is required to run a Buried in Treasures Workshop and is very prescriptive in how to facilitate the sessions.

**https://centerforhoardingandcluttering.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Buried-in-Treasures-Facilitators-Guide.pdf**

**Additional thoughts – e.g. what we wished we had done, what was perhaps missing?**