

Cape Cod Hoarding Task Force

General Meeting

August 3, 2017

9:30 – 11:30am

Dennis Police Station

90 Bob Crowell Road

Dennis, MA 02660

In attendance: Erika Woods, BCDHE; Lois Carr, Bourne COA; Sue Dory, Service Master South Shore; Alexandra Gerry, BCDHE; Kevin Grunwald, Harwich COA; Andrea Lavenets, Provincetown COA; Kim Lemmon, NAMI CC&I; Sherri McCullough, Brewster Health Department; Lori Miranda, Dennis Animal Control; Lynn Mulkeen, BCDHE; Carry Schoener, Dennis Health Department; Paul Wild, Elder Services Cape Cod, Patty Watson, BCDHS; Janet Hyslip, Rock Harbor Village

Meeting Minutes

Welcome, Introductions

Updates and Upcoming Events:

CCHTF will be hosting Jesse Edsell-Vetter from Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership to offer level 2 trainings on August 17, 2017 and September 28, 2017. Space is limited and these trainings are for any individual that has completed the level 1 training. However, if there is room then individuals that have not taken level 1 training but have professional experience handling hoarding situations will be considered for registration.

There are four Buried in Treasures workshops being offered this fall throughout Cape Cod.

Falmouth: September 11, 2017 through December 18, 2017 for 14 sessions, weekly on Mondays from 3-4:30pm.

Provincetown: will begin in the fall, there are no specific dates for this BIT group yet.

Harwich: will begin late September/early October and will be on Wednesdays from 2:00-4:00pm.

Mashpee: will begin in the fall, dates are unknown but the group will be held at the Senior Center.

CCHTF will be hosting another panel discussion on Wednesday, August 30, 2017 from 4:30-6:30pm. This event will be held in the Administration Building at the Cape Cod Fairgrounds. We felt this venue would bring anonymity to the event. CCHTF held a similar event in Orleans in June and the event was well received by audience members, we're hoping to bring the same opportunity to residents of the upper cape.

There is a membership form for CCHTF. It does not require you to come to all meetings but provides a better understanding of the number of people interested in the topic. Having membership numbers helps when applying for grants.

Presentation: Ingrid Health-Russ of *New Leaf Transitions*

Ingrid Health-Russ is a Senior Move Manager and owner of *New Leaf Transitions*. Ingrid works mostly with seniors moving out of emergency situations. She gave the example, if someone's parent is getting out of rehab and needs to find a place to stay then she helps to move that parent. This involves assisting with all components of downsizing, organizing and helping to find a place to live.

Ingrid has been the owner of *New Leaf Transitions* for 9 years and has helped over 1,000 clients. Although, not all have been hoarding cases she has experience working with individuals with hoarding disorders. Ingrid told the story of one client with a hoarding disorder that she helped for four years. She went into detail on the conditions of the house when she began working with this individual and the process involved to make the house livable again. After doing all she could for this client but seeing little improvement in her ability to accept the changes made to the house after the cleanup, Ingrid decided she could no longer assist this woman.

This story sparked a discussion of ways to get people motivated to begin the decluttering and cleanup process and maintain that motivation. It also highlighted that there is no failing at helping someone with a hoarding disorder. Providing resources and supportive assistance to the best of your ability is what is needed but ultimately progress is determined by the individual with the disorder.

The audience discussed the stages of readiness, a scale used in BIT. Progress often requires someone to feel uncomfortable enough to make the change and to maintain that desire requires goal setting. However, the challenge remains of getting to people when they are most willing to accept the help. The similarities of treating addiction and treating someone with a hoarding disorder were brought to attention. Paul and Patty mentioned that approaches to treat addiction could be applied to hoarding. Breaking the stigma surrounding both substance use disorders and hoarding disorders is necessary for continued improvements. Patty recently had a stigma sheet for addiction created and suggested CCHTF create one for people with hoarding disorders. It provides a reference of words and phrases negatively linked to addiction and replaces them with more neutral phrasing. To address the challenge Lori gave the example of a drug overdose. After a person overdoses, there is a window of time when they are most accepting of receiving help and treatment. For hoarding cases, this timeframe could be following a serious consequence of their hoarding behavior such as a fire or any emergency health situation.

Sue mentioned that Service Master will clean a home and leave but the problem continues. This would be the ideal time for a trained professional organizer to address the problem. Ingrid said that this is where she could provide her services. If any individual is unable to pay for all her services, then she will try and give them homework or have a family member or friend help.

The conversation led into the topic of protection from contaminants. Patty wondered how wearing a mask would interfere with relationship building. Members responded that wearing a mask is often required as part of their job. Kevin suggested CCHTF offer a contaminants training for professionals.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:15 am.

Next meeting will be held October 5, 2017 at the Dennis Police Station from 9:30-11:30am.