

# Hoarding: An Interpretative phenomenological analysis of participation in daily occupations whilst living in a cluttered environment

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# Can they or can't they?

- Occupational difficulties is well documented . The things they can't do.
- People live in clutter suggesting they somehow manage to function and survive.
- What is currently missing in the literature is the lived experience of the person who lives with clutter from an occupational lens.



# Aim of today's presentation

- Outline a perspective of hoarding in relation to occupation and recovery
- Highlight the results of my research : What is the lived experience of participation in activities in a cluttered environment?
- Recommendations for practice and further research

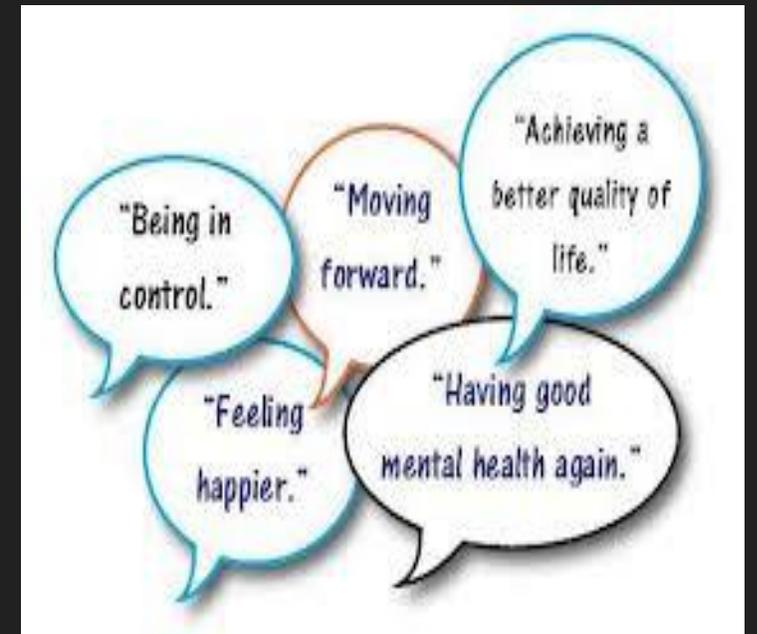
# “To be human is to be occupational”

- “Occupation is what people do minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day, week by week and year by year” (Wilcock, 2001, p. 412)
- Occupational therapy – client centred, promoting health and well being, meaningful daily occupations.



# Recovery

*A deeply personal, unique process of changing one's attitudes, values, feelings, goals, skills and/or roles. It is a way of living a satisfying, hopeful, and contributing life even within the limitations caused by illness. Recovery involves the development of new meaning and purpose in one's life as one grows beyond the catastrophic effects of mental illness (Anthony, 1993).*



# Research Method

## IPA

Interpretative  
Phenomenological  
Analysis

A qualitative research approach offering understanding of how individuals perceive and make sense of their life experiences.



|                   | Age | Marital status | Children                               | Accommodation  | Services                                  | Co -morbidity                     |
|-------------------|-----|----------------|--|----------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| <b>P 1 Male</b>   | 50  | Divorced       | 1 child not living with participant    | Private Rental | NGO<br>Not Hoarding specific              | Depression<br>Anxiety disorder    |
| <b>P 2 Male</b>   | 48  | Divorced       | 2 children not living with participant | Home owner     | NGO<br>Not Hoarding specific              | Psychotic disorder                |
| <b>P 3 Female</b> | 49  | Married        | No                                     | Home owner     | Psychologist<br>Not Hoarding specific     | Anxiety disorder                  |
| <b>P 4 Female</b> | 42  | Married        | 4 children living with participant     | Home owner     | NGO<br>Not hoarding specific<br>Public MH | Bipolar<br>Affective Disorder     |
| <b>P 5 Female</b> | 49  | Single         | No                                     | Public housing | NGO<br>Hoarding specific                  | Dissociative<br>Identity Disorder |
| <b>P 6 Male</b>   | 57  | Single         | No                                     | Public housing | NGO<br>Hoarding specific                  | ADHD<br>Anxiety disorder          |

# Key findings

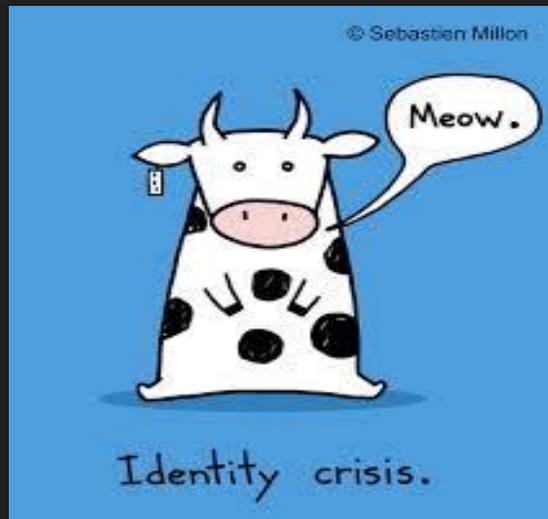
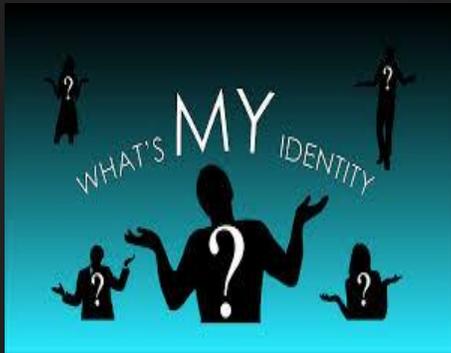


## Themes

- Clutter and relationships and the relationship with clutter
- “I may look like I am doing nothing but really I’m super busy”: The efforts of everyday life
- Organised disorganisation: Adapting the environment to get things done

# Clutter and relationships and the relationship with clutter

- A relationship with clutter: The link between the past and present
- “I’m a collector”: Clutter and identity
- Relationships strained by clutter: Shame, guilt and isolation



*“So I'd love to talk to you and maybe if we could do this exact conversation in a year or two I wonder if it's different. I want to be different. I want to be better. I want to have a better attitude and better surroundings...I'm fucking freaking out. How am I going to cook the meals, how am I going to pick up the kids? Auto pilot - my brain goes negative, negative, negative, you can't do it, don't do it...See this is where my problem is, I don't know if I'm coming or going. I'm a bloody horror. I'm my own worst enemy” (Allison).*

*“So I haven't had an Italian relative here, oh my God, I haven't had an Italian relative, meaning from my community, in over 10 years. It's hard because they're thinking ‘oh gosh she's dirty, oh God she's got a lot of rubbish, gee why do you keep all those plastic bags’. I can imagine people saying that and I'd find it hard because people are judgmental.... and that's why I'd be worried. I'd be worried that one relative would tell another relative and then it would, not that they'd do it nastily, but it would just come out” (Gillian).*

# I may look like I am doing nothing but really I'm super busy: The efforts of everyday life.

- Getting things done
- "You need a homing pigeon": Finding things
- Making decisions about the stuff of life
- Getting help
- Routines and procedures

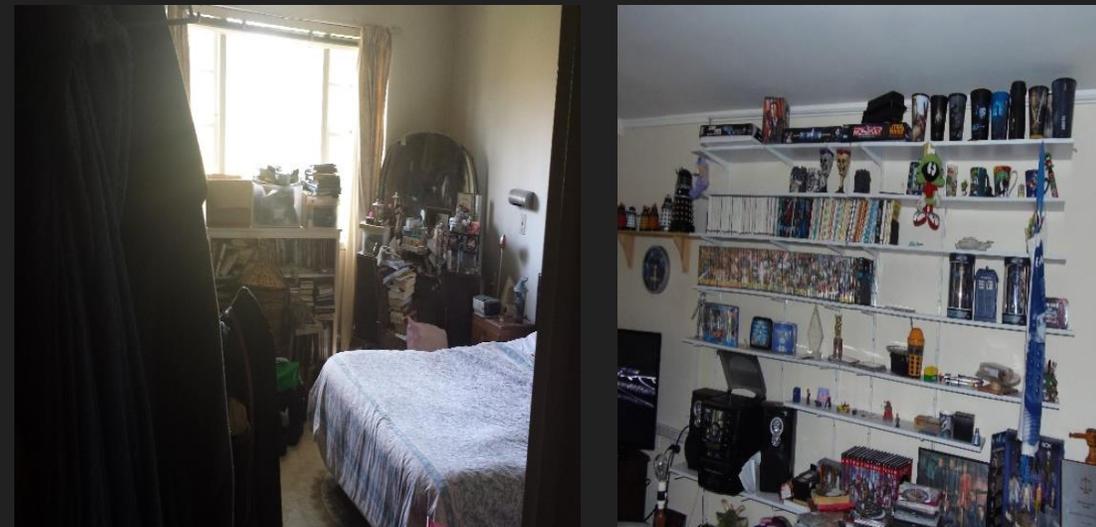


- *“It got to a point where I wasn’t just walking over stuff, I was walking on stuff. It would be like, you know how it’s an effort walking through the bush to get to the camping site to set up your tent? It would be like that going to bed” (Marcus).*
- *“I cannot tell you where it is. I have no memory of what happened to it. You need a friggin’ homing pigeon device on it like an alarm...” (Allison)*
- *“Now with the dishes, that’s the only priority I’ve got. At 1.30pm, you’ve got to clean up the kitchen because cleaning the kitchen time is 1.30 to 2.30pm every single day.... If the dishes don’t get done that day the rule is you must get up at 5.30 the next morning and do those dishes” (Allison).*

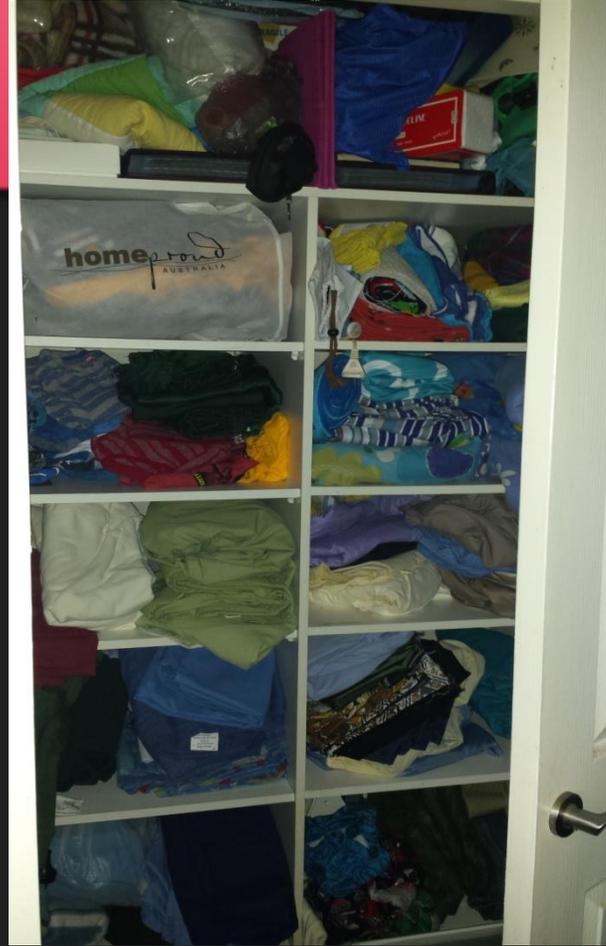
# Organised disorganisation: Adapting the environment to get things done



- Isolated pockets of organised spaces
- Relocating tasks and resources







*“I just recently got one of those Sunbeam electric frying pans and I've had to put that on top of a DVD cabinet I had which stands about three or four feet off the ground. I've had to put a sheet of stainless steel on top of that and then put it on top of that and that's where I've been able to cook using that. I've still got to clean it in there, make sure I can take it outside, make sure I can wash it under the tap outside. That's heat up water that's in it to clean it, put the washing stuff in the frypan, turn it on, get it to the point there, clean it in that stage, take it out and rinse it out under the tap outside” (John).*

# What does it all mean?

- Hoarding is a complex issue in its infancy regarding research
- Treatments focused on behaviour change
- Occupation, occupational therapy and recovery



# Recommendations for practice

- Therapeutic use of self to build trust and rapport
- Cheerleading
- Utilise recovery and strength principles
- Focus on occupations and participation in daily activities
- Rebuilding occupational identity
- Utilise tools and treatments already available



# Directions for future research

- Possessions and identity from an occupational perspective
- Recovery and occupation



Thank you!

The image features the words "Thank you!" in a highly decorative, bubbly font. Each letter is a different color and has a thick, textured outline. The word "Thank" is on the top line, and "you!" is on the bottom line. The letters are surrounded by several stylized flowers in various colors (blue, pink, purple) and a large blue exclamation point. The background is white, and the entire graphic is set against a pink and black border.