



## A New Program for Families of Hoarders at North Shore Elder Services

Do any of these concerns sound familiar?

1. Do you have a family member whose clutter is affecting your relationship with them?
2. Are you worried that their clutter is creating safety issues?
3. Do your attempts to help result in arguments and frustration?

Beginning Monday, March 6, North Shore Elder Services (NSES) is piloting an innovative six week program for family members of individuals who are demonstrating hoarding behaviors. If you answered yes to any of the above concerns, this is a program to support and help you.

“We realized that we had nothing specifically to offer family members who were seeking guidance in coping with someone who is hoarding. It's a highly sensitive topic. It's the secret that adult children may feel they've been hiding for years. Often times there is fear that they themselves will become a hoarder,” says North Shore Elder Services' Family Caregiver Specialist, Kathy Perrella.

This evidence-based educational training program is based on the CRAFT model (Community Reinforcement and Family Training). Dr. Michael Tompkins, a licensed psychologist and founding partner of the San Francisco Bay Area Center for Cognitive Therapy, specializes in the treatment of anxiety disorders and obsessive compulsive disorders. He adapted the CRAFT model to apply to the issue of hoarding.

### Caregiver Resources:

Our Family Caregiver Specialists have identified concerns & questions that are commonly discussed in support groups and counseling sessions. Check our blog at **[www.nselder.org](http://www.nselder.org)** for our monthly Caregiver topic. We'll provide you with some resources & options for handling specific issues.

And like us on Facebook!

[www.facebook.com/  
NorthShoreElderServices](http://www.facebook.com/NorthShoreElderServices)

This is not just a support group. The goal is to teach family how to communicate more effectively. The hope is to maintain better family relationships. "It can be a vicious circle for the family member who is dealing with the hoarding behavior. What they are trying isn't working and in fact, the relationship becomes more strained; the more we nag, plead and threaten, the more the hoarder argues, rationalizes and minimizes," states co-facilitator Gwen Kopka, Clinical Supervisor at NSES.

This group will assure family members that they are not alone. It is frustrating to think you can't help someone but important to understand that you cannot cure the hoarding - that motivation for change has to come from the person who is hoarding. With improved communication, relationships can become less negatively impacted by the hoarding. This in turn can reduce the stress an individual feels and help them feel better about what they are doing.

Our facilitators will provide concrete information on such topics as; past communication patterns, understanding one's own triggers and how the behaviors of a family member impacts the response of the hoarder, positive communication strategies, and how to deal with negative behaviors.

If you are in need of help and support when it comes to coping with a family member's clutter and hoarding behaviors, join this new program beginning Monday, March 6. The sessions will take place at the offices of NSES, 300 Rosewood Drive, Suite 200, Danvers, on six consecutive Mondays from 6pm - 7:30pm. There are no age or geographic restrictions. The cost is \$25 for the series. Inquire about the availability of a scholarship if necessary. The program is sponsored by the North Shore Center for Hoarding and Cluttering in collaboration with NSES' Family Caregiver Support Program. Our group facilitators are Kathy Perrella, LSW, CIRS-A/D, Family Caregiver Specialist, Gwen Kopka, LICSW, Clinical Supervisor, and Julie Parks, MSW Hoarding Intern.

For more information and to sign up to participate, contact NSES' Marnie Matthews, LICSW, at 978-624-2207 or at [mmatthews@nselder.org](mailto:mmatthews@nselder.org).

There are 2 Facebook pages that serve as a closed support group online. Here are the links;  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/TheClutterMovementFamilySupport/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/TheClutterMovementGroup/>

*Jayne Girodat, NSES*