

# Pilot of a written imaginal discarding exercise for hoarding behaviors

Hannah E. Raila, Katie Fracalanza, & Carolyn I. Rodriguez

## INTRO

- Hoarding = common and debilitating
- Affective mechanisms of treatment = poorly understood
- We need ways to augment existing treatments
- Imaginal exposure (i.e., repeatedly confronting a feared outcome in the mind) is a frequently used CBT approach, but has not been studied in hoarding

## METHOD

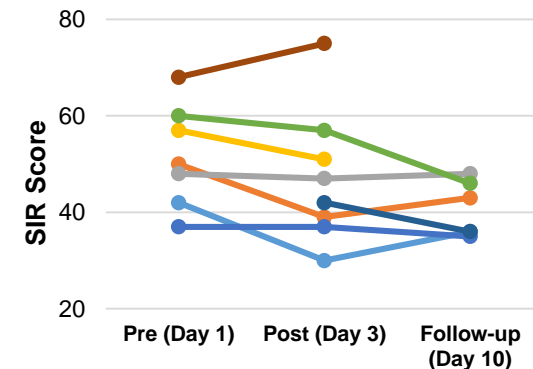
- Exploratory pilot study for adults with hoarding disorder (n = 8)
- Wrote scripts of a worst case scenario about discarding ("I threw out mail that I now need for my taxes")
- Wrote for 20 min on three consecutive days
- Tracked self-reported hoarding behaviors (SIR) plus affective correlates (intolerance of uncertainty [IUS], and avoidance of emotion [AAQ-II]) at pre, post, and 1-week follow-up

## RESULTS

### Behavioral and affective symptom reductions:

Self-report questionnaire:		Pre (Day 1)	Post (Day 3)	F/U (Day 10)	Change (Pre to F/U)	% Change (Pre to F/U)	Cohen's d
Hoarding behaviors (SIR)	M	51.7	47.2	40.7	-5.8	<b>-11.2%</b>	<b>0.78</b>
	SD	(10.7)	(14.0)	(5.7)	(5.4)		
Difficulty discarding (SIR-DD)	M	16.9	14.5	13.0	-3.0	<b>-17.8%</b>	<b>0.80</b>
	SD	(4.1)	(5.2)	(3.2)	(1.9)		
Intolerance of uncertainty (IUS)	M	76.9	71.9	68.5	-2.2	<b>-2.9%</b>	<b>0.08</b>
	SD	(23.8)	(20.5)	(28.2)	(11.6)		
Avoidance of neg. emotion (AAQ-II)	M	31.6	30.1	25.3	-5.2	<b>-16.5%</b>	<b>0.78</b>
	SD	(6.0)	(4.9)	(5.6)	(5.4)		

### Reduction in hoarding behaviors:



Hoarding behavior (SIR) changes by subject

### Usefulness:

In open-ended debriefing, 7 out of 8 participants described the intervention as useful, primarily as a way of confronting negative emotions about discarding

## CONCLUSIONS

- Imaginal exposure to discarding shows promise for hoarding and merits further clinical investigation in a larger trial
- It may engage underlying affective mechanisms that maintain hoarding behaviors

## CONTACT

hannah.raila@stanford.edu