

How do people with hoarding difficulties remember their experiences?



Before deciding if you are interested in taking part in our study, I would like to help you understand the purpose of the research and what it would involve. Please read the information carefully and discuss it with others if you would like. If there is anything that is unclear, or if you would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact me by emailing hoarding_research_study@bath.ac.uk. Take time to consider whether you would like to participate. Thank you for reading this.



What is the purpose of this study?

This study aims to find out more about how people with hoarding difficulties (i.e. people who experience hoarding difficulties struggle to discard their possessions, which can lead to their home being cluttered by their possessions) process their memories. We know that the way in which we recall events and how our memory processes our experiences can greatly impact upon our emotional wellbeing. Research has shown that people with particular mental health difficulties can have particular ways of remembering. No research has studied whether similar patterns of recalling events are experienced by people with Hoarding Difficulties or not.

Recent research has indicated that the more adversity someone experiences in their life, the more difficulties they might have with hoarding. It has also been found that life adversity can impact upon how we remember experiences. By understanding more about this in people who have hoarding difficulties, we hope that we can create new psychological approaches to help people overcome their difficulties with hoarding.

Who can take part?

We are looking for the following people who would kindly be willing to help us with our research aims:

- People with hoarding difficulties
- People who experience obsessions and compulsions/OCD
- People with no current mental health difficulties (so we can compare the experiences of people with and without mental health difficulties)

Some people feel that they have both OCD and difficulties with hoarding. You can still be part of this study if this is your experience. You will be asked near the beginning of the study which of these difficulties you currently feel is most impacting on you.

Is there anyone who cannot take part?

Unfortunately, this study currently isn't suited for anyone who:

- has been diagnosed with any organic brain injury or neurological disorder
- has undergone electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) in the past or at present
- is under the age of 18
- is currently receiving psychological treatment
- does not speak English
- is currently dependent on substances (not prescribed medication)

What will be asked of me if I take part?

If you decide that you would like to take part in the study, it will take place in two stages:

1. Once you've read this information page, you will be asked to complete a consent form to say that you have understood and consent to participation. You will then continue to the next page to complete some brief screening questionnaires to make sure that the study is suitable for you. This will take approximately 20 minutes. It is possible that you may not be eligible to take part.

2. If the study is suitable for you, you will then be asked to complete an online memory task. This memory task involves recalling specific memories in response to word cues that will be presented on your computer screen. It takes approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. You will then be asked to complete one further questionnaire about any difficult life experiences, which is entirely optional to complete. This will take around 20 minutes to complete.

After you have completed the study, you will be taken to a page which provides some extra debrief information about the study.

Altogether, your participation will take approximately 1 hour and 10 minutes.

Your well-being whilst participating in the project

By the nature of the topic of this research, you may potentially experience some distress. Your well-being whilst taking part in the project is the most important priority for us. If at any point you feel upset or you no longer want to be part of the study, you are welcome to leave the study and withdraw your information up until the point which data is anonymised. If you would like to contact myself or my supervisor Dr James Gregory to discuss your experience, please use the contact details below and we will support you in identifying what has been difficult and, if necessary, helping you to find appropriate support services. If you don't want to contact us but require assistance then please consider contacting your GP.

Will my experiences and responses be kept confidential?

Yes, absolutely. Any information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. All of the information which is collected from you during your participation and throughout the study will be kept confidential and will conform to the Data Protection Act of 1998 and in accordance with the new GDPR guidelines. This means that all information will be kept securely on a password protected database. Only those involved in the study

are able to access this information. Your responses to the AMT task/life experience questionnaires will be kept anonymous by linking your answers to your participant identification number, not any other identifiable information such as your name.

What happens to my responses after the study?

All data will be kept securely on a password protected database for a maximum of 10 years after the study in accordance with the 1998 Data Protection Act.

What happens to the results of the study?

Our findings will be written up in a generalised, anonymous research report which we hope to report in academic/clinical health related journals. The findings will also form part of Sarah Densham's research portfolio as part of her Doctorate in Clinical Psychology training requirements. We hope to raise the profile of research into hoarding and OCD problems by presenting our findings to relevant health professionals at meetings and conferences. All of the information provided by you will remain anonymised.

Do I have to take part?

No, absolutely not. It is completely your choice whether you would like to take part. If you would like to find out more information in order to help you decide, please contact Sarah Densham (hoarding_research_study@bath.ac.uk). You can also change your mind at any time up until the point which data is anonymised.

Are there any advantages/benefits from taking part?

Whilst we cannot guarantee that the information you give will be able to help you directly, we hope to develop our understanding of hoarding and the ways in which we can improve the effectiveness of treatment. If the study is suitable for you and you continue to take part after the point of screening, you will be provided with a £5 Amazon voucher.

Please note: based upon our previous experience we've unfortunately learned that online studies are at risk of fraudulent activity, such as trying to participate multiple times. We hope you understand that where fraudulent activity such as this is suspected that we will withhold participant payment.

What if there is a problem?

Should you have any concerns or complaints about your participation in the study, we encourage you to contact the researchers, Sarah Densham or Dr James Gregory, who hope to be able to help you. Our contact details are provided at the bottom of this information page.

What to do next if I'm interested?

Please continue to the next online page. If you wish to discuss this study with a member of the research team before continuing, please exit the page and use our contact details below.

Being contacted to participate in future research

At the University of Bath, we are keen to continue research in order to improve our understanding and treatment of mental health difficulties. You will therefore be asked whether you consent to being contacted in the future regarding potential participation in other future hoarding research projects. You do not have to consent to being contacted in the future at all, and this will also not affect your participation in the current study. However, if you would like to be contacted, you can provide your email address which will be kept securely and confidentially on an electronic database which is password protected, and only accessed by key supervisors of the research. It would only be members of the research team who would be able to contact you and this information would not be shared with others.

Ethical Approval

This study has been approved by the University of Bath Psychology Ethics Committee (Reference Number: 18-336). If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research, you can contact the Chair of the Ethics Committee, Department of Psychology, University of Bath, Claverton Down, Bath, BA2 7AY, phone: (01225) 383061.

Thank you for taking time to read this information.

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