



## Decluttering Class

Presented by Salus University Occupational Therapy Program

### Decluttering: Where to begin?

#### **Make the time**

- Take just 15 min/day to devote to the decluttering process. No more, no less
- Play 3-4 songs to make the time go by faster and enjoy the process

#### **Prioritize**

- Determine where the decluttering process should begin
  - Start with somewhere small like a countertop, a junk drawer, or ONE shelf in a closet
  - WORK WITH SOMEONE. Initiating the process is the hardest part and tackling it alone can be overwhelming

#### **General Concepts**

- “30 Seconds or less”
  - Tasks that take 30 seconds or less, should be completed right away like weeding out junk mail, washing your dish, or throwing away rotten food
- Think twice before buying an item
- Switch to electronic records to avoid bills in the mail
- If keeping magazines/newspapers for one article, rip it out and save in a binder
- Reward your removal of clutter!

#### **Set Easily ACCOMPLISHABLE Goals**

- SLOW and GRADUAL changes
- Big projects can take up a lot of patience, time, and energy.

#### **Sort items into 5 categories:**

##### **1) Trash**

- a) Broken items, “out of fashion” can’t find a reason to keep it, damaged
- b) Ask for help when lifting heavy trash bags and be mindful of trash collection days or arrange for junk pickup service
- c) City of Philadelphia website for finding your trash and recycling collection day using your address:  
<https://www.phila.gov/services/trash-recycling-city-upkeep/residential-trash-and-recycling/find-your-trash-and-recycling-collection-day/#/>

##### **2) Donate**

- a) Donate items that are lightly used like clothes, books, furniture

## Donation Centers and Item Pick-Up

- **GreenDrop:**
  - Accepts gently used clothing & household goods weighing 50lbs or less
  - Will not accept large furniture or exercise equipment
  - Can drop off items at a location where staff will remove them from your car
  - Can schedule for someone to pick up your items online or by phone
  - Will receive a tax receipt for your items donated
  - Location: 606 Montgomery Avenue, Narberth, PA 19072
  - To schedule a pick-up call: 1 (888) 944 3767
  - Website: <https://www.gogreendrop.com/>
  
- **Uhuru Furniture and Collectibles:**
  - Furniture donation company that accepts large furniture
  - To donate, will need to email [ufcphilly@gmail.com](mailto:ufcphilly@gmail.com) with the following information:
    - At least 1 picture of each item you would like to donate
    - Your full name
    - Phone number
    - Location where you would like your items to be picked up from
    - The best date(s) to have your donations picked up
      - Location: 832 North Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19130
      - Phone number: 215-546-9616
      - Website: <http://uhurufurniturephilly.blogspot.com/>
  
- **ReStore:**
  - Accepts furniture, home goods and building supply donations
  - Donations are tax deductible and go to Habitat for Humanity Philadelphia
  - Complete an online form to schedule a free donation pick-up
  - Phone number: 215-739-9300
  - Email: [restore@habitatphiladelphia.org](mailto:restore@habitatphiladelphia.org)
  - Website: <https://www.habitatphiladelphia.org/restore/donate>
  
- **Whosoever Gospel Mission:**
  - Accepts clothing, home goods, and furniture.
  - Can schedule a pick-up by phone.
  - Phone number: 215-438-3094
  - Website: <http://www.whosoevergospel.org/wp/donate-items/>

- **The Salvation Army Family Store and Donation Center:**
  - Accepts clothing, home goods, furniture and exercise equipment donations
  - May be up to a 6 week wait for items to be picked up but can choose from various predetermined pick-up dates
  - Will not call on day of pick up but will show up to pick up items between 8-4pm
  - Phone number: 1-800-728-7825
  - Website: <https://satruck.org/>
  
- **The Junk Luggers:**
  - Will take almost anything aside from hazardous material
  - Will travel to your house to pick up items with an associated fee
  - They sort through your unwanted items and repurpose and donate as much as they can. They take unsalvageable items to the appropriate recycling facilities
  - Phone number: 1-800-584-5865
  - Website: <https://www.junkluggers.com/>
  
- **Goodwill Industries:**
  - Donate new or gently used clothes and certain household items
  - Closest location for dropoff: 7061 Lincoln Drive Philadelphia, PA 19119
  - Website: <http://www.goodwill.org/donate-and-shop/donate-stuff/>
    - Visit for detailed information on acceptable and unacceptable items
  
- **Books Through Bars:**
  - Donation of books
  - Types of books NOT accepted: hardcover books, out-of-date non-fiction books, old magazines, and any books that are in poor condition or very old.
  - Phone: (215) 727-8170
  - Email: [info@booksthroughbars.org](mailto:info@booksthroughbars.org)
  - Address: 4722 Baltimore Avenue Philadelphia, PA 19143
  - Website: <http://booksthroughbars.org/donate/books/>

### **Clothing Specific Donation Organizations**

- **Women's Center of Montgomery County**
  - Second Chances Shoppe: thrift store for women's and men's clothing
  - Proceeds from the thrift shop sales support the center's domestic violence services
  - All donated items are tax deductible and all donors will receive a receipt for tax purposes
  - Address: 318 Leedom Street, Jenkintown, PA 19046

- Website: <http://wcmc.businesscatalyst.com/thrift-shop.html>
- Contact information:
  - Phone: 215-885-0651
  - Email: [shoppe@womenscentermc.org](mailto:shoppe@womenscentermc.org)
- Hours: Monday- Friday: 10 AM- 5 PM, Saturday: 10 AM- 4 PM
  
- **Career Wardrobe**
  - Offers donations services for women's and men's clothing and offers options for consignment
  - All donations should be on hangers or folded into paper shopping bags (no trash bags)
  - Monthly clothing drives offered with curbside assistance
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month from 6-8 PM
  - Location: Falls Presbyterian Church: 3800 Vaux Street Philadelphia, PA 19129
  - Accepting the following items for donation:
    - Women's professional clothing: suits, skirts, blazers, blouses, maternity wear, shoes, handbags/briefcases, coats, formal wear, and jewelry
    - Mens: suits, shirts, trousers, blazers, ties, belts
    - Uniforms: scrubs, polo shirts, khakis, white tops/blouses, clogs, and sneakers
  - Consignment: requires appointment with authorized buyer
    - Items can be entered into a 90-day consignment period for resale
    - Client receives 50% of the sale price when the items sells
    - Items not sold can still be donated for a tax receipt and 10% off coupon
  - Locations:
    - Philadelphia County: 413 North 4th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123
    - Delaware County: 62 West Marshall Road, Lansdowne, PA 19050
    - Bucks County: 1260 Veterans Highway Bristol, PA 19007
    - Phone (for donation): 215-568-6693
  - Website: <https://careerwardrobe.org/>
  - Contact Information for **consignment**
    - Phone: 215-568-2660
    - Email: [consignment@careerwardrobe.org](mailto:consignment@careerwardrobe.org)
  - Modified COVID-19 Hours: Tuesday-Saturday: 12 PM- 6 PM

### 3) Sell

- Valuable items, vintage items, electronics, jewelry
- Must sell within a time frame (1-2 months is acceptable) if not sold within that time frame, donate or trash.

- **Safety**
  - Having a buyer come to your home may not be the safest option, especially if you live alone. Ask a friend or family member to be present during your exchange. You can also meet the buyer at a Philadelphia Police Department District Headquarters, which allows citizens to conduct the transaction inside the Police Department.

## Selling Options

- **Facebook Marketplace**
  - Setup your Facebook profile and sell your items on Facebook marketplace.
  - Once a Facebook account is set up, take a picture of the items you want to sell and post it to Facebook marketplace.
- **Letgo**
  - Letgo is a phone app to sell your belongings. Simply download the app, take a picture of the items you want to sell, and then post them to Letgo!
  - On iPhone, go to the App Store, type in Letgo, download the app, and get started.



### 4. Storage

- Items that serve a functional purpose but are not used on a daily basis you haven't used an item within the past 1 or 2 years, it SHOULD NOT be stored.
  - Donate, sell, or trash the item

### 5. Keep

- Items that serve a functional purpose
- Memorabilia: lend it to a friend/family member for safekeeping. If you can still remember that memory, the item can be donated
- Children's art/clothes: keep only 1 or 2 items. take a picture of the item to keep with you on your phone/memory book
- Special items: put it on display or in an organized area or way where it is easily accessible.

### General questions to ask yourself when considering what to do with items

- Is it broken?
- Will I actually use this item in the future...realistically?
- When was the last time I actually used this item?
- Did I remember I had this item and/or will I remember I have it?
- Do I have room for this item?
- Am I saving this for someone else? Did that person ask for this item or have I confirmed that they want it?

## Tips to avoid new clutter

- Discuss with family members items causing clutter
- Bulk items
  - Is it something you really need that many of?
- Every once in a while go through various clutter areas so it doesn't pile up
- Don't bring junk mail into the house. Take it straight from the letterbox to the recycling bin
- Think again before taking any freebies home
  - Be intentional about things before they even become "yours" or make it into your home
- Use the one in, one out rule
  - Whenever you bring something new into your home, make an effort to find one or more thing(s) to get rid of in its place
- Use the one touch rule
  - Aim to touch an item only once after you're done using it. Instead of putting it down somewhere to be dealt with later, put it away in its home right away
- Request and give experiences like movie tickets or a cleaning service for a month or edible gifts such as food and wine
- Put recycling or trash bins throughout your home
- Remember "A place for everything, and everything in its place"

## Decluttering: Organization by Room

### Living Room

#### Consider Relocating Furniture

- What pieces do you use the most, and which ones no longer fit your needs?
- Make sure there are **wide, open areas** in your living room that will allow you or your loved one to pass by in a mobility device, like a walker or wheelchair.

#### Keep Pet/Children' Toys in a Designated Area

- Designate a bin, tote, or box to store their toys when not in use

#### Install Storage Solutions

- Have shelves installed to move souvenirs, gifts, and photos off of usable surfaces.
- Keep items you truly love and want to keep

#### Designate a Storage Space for Reading Material

- Designate a single area for reading material, such as a basket or conveniently located magazine rack.
- Every few months, commit to sorting through the rack to recycle or donate items you have read and don't need anymore.

### Home Office

#### Free Up Space with Digital Record Keeping

- Shred any records you are sure you no longer need.
- For all other files that you want to keep, but don't need to maintain as originals, create digital copies, and discard the paper.

#### Keep Work Surfaces Free of Knickknacks

- Have bookshelves installed for the belongings you want to keep and remove unnecessary items from the room by putting them in storage or discarding them.

#### Organize Office Supplies

- Discard any office supplies that are no longer usable
- Invest in a drawer organizer to make regular items easier to access.
- Label drawers and bins so that items can easily be found and put away

#### Make Sure Furniture is Accessible

- For seniors with arthritis, or individuals with mobility issues, enlarged desk drawer handles will be more comfortable.
- For those who use a wheelchair, make sure your desk is the proper height for wheelchair use, and know that you may need to replace your existing desk with a wheelchair accessible model.

#### Create a System for Sorting Mail

- Create a system for incoming mail that needs to be sorted, and outgoing mail such as bills and personal correspondence.
- Consider placing designated "in and out" bins on your desk to stay organized and address invoices and other items in a timely manner.

#### Keep a Calendar in a Visible Location

- To keep your social calendar, appointments, and other important dates organized and at the forefront of your mind, keep a calendar in a highly visible location or try using a digital calendar on your phone or tablet.
- Use it to write down reminders for yourself.

## **Kitchen**

#### Clean Your Refrigerator and Freezer Regularly

- Plan to review the items in your refrigerator once every month to throw out items that have expired.
- Be sure to wipe down the interior surfaces to remove spills, crumbs, or food particles that could rot over time, creating a risk of bacterial or mold growth.
- Make sure items used daily are within reach and not on tall shelves.
- As you sort through dishes, pans, and serving items, make sure you dispose of any items that are broken or dirty beyond the cleaning power of a dishwasher or strong hands.

#### Organize Your Pantry

- Make sure the items you use the most frequently, like cereals, pastas, and canned foods, are in the front row, while items you utilize less frequently, such as baking supplies, are toward the back.
- Wipe down surfaces to remove crumbs and food debris that could invite ants and other unwanted critters into your pantry.



### Put Your Utensils through the Cardboard Box Test

- Organization expert Peter Walsh suggests that you put all your utensils in a cardboard box. As you need items, take them from the box, and once clean, put them back in your drawer. At the end of the month, any items you haven't used should be disposed of.
- Utilize a drawer organizer to keep utensils neatly sorted and easy to find

### Organize Cabinets

- Attach a rack to the inside of a cupboard to store saran wrap, aluminum foil, resealable bags, etc. Heavy items, like Dutch ovens or crock pots can be left on top of the counter. Only make this exception for a few very frequently used items to ensure counters don't become too cluttered.
- Store small items, such as spices, on a lazy Susan inside a cabinet for easy access and better organization.

### Use Your Refrigerator for Reminders

- Keeping a shopping list, daily to-do list, or checklist on the front of the refrigerator so you can see it frequently throughout the day.
- Include a list of emergency contacts, such as the local fire department, pharmacy, and contact information for doctors, neighbors, and family members. Include a list of your current medications with this list.

## Bathroom

### Clean Your Medicine Cabinet Regularly

- Family members and caregivers should be part of this process to ensure the clean-up is done accurately, with the safe disposal of expired items.
- For the items, you keep, make sure they are stored in their original containers, and properly and clearly labeled.
- **\*Make sure medications are safely disposed at drop boxes/drug take back programs\***
  - Drug Drop Box Locations (available for drop-off anytime):
    - 19th District, 61st and Thompson Streets, West Philadelphia;
    - 22nd District, 17th Street and Montgomery Avenue, North Philadelphia;
    - 25th District, 3901 Whitaker Ave., North Philadelphia;
    - 35th District, North Broad and Champlost Streets, Ogontz.
  - Many drugstore chains also have permanent drop-off boxes

### Dispose of Unnecessary Bath Products

- If your bathroom cupboard is full of half-empty bottles of lotions, sunscreens (a product that will have an expiration date), creams, gels, and other bath products, dispose of all items you are not currently using.
- Any products that have been stored for a long time may discolor or start to smell, so make sure such items are thrown away.

### Store Small Appliances Where They Can be Easily Reached

- Make sure small appliances like hair dryers are stored within reach.



- Don't put yourself at risk of falling or injuring yourself by reaching down to access them from the back of the under-sink storage cabinet.
- Consider installing shelves for easy access items.

#### Clean Drawers, Shelves, and Dust Surfaces

- Plan to clean your bathroom regularly, or get help from a loved one, especially if you suffer from a vision, mobility, memory disability, or arthritis.
- Make sure the insides of drawers and shelves are wiped down/clean and free of molds and other potential illness-causing bacteria.

#### Organize Your Shower for Safety

- Plan to only store bottles, soaps, and other items in your shower that you use daily, and that fit in the space provided. Not only will this declutter the shower area visually, it will help to avoid a slip and fall from bottles that may tumble off shelves or tub ledges or leaky slippery soaps.
- Install a grab bar just outside the tub to minimize the risk of a slip and fall while leaning to reach for a towel from a pile on the counter.
- Discard old loofahs that could be building up bacteria, and plan to use washcloths that can be regularly cleaned in a washing machine instead.

#### Organize Small Items

- Organize small, disposable bathroom items that you use regularly, such as cotton balls and swabs in small baskets or containers on an easy-to-reach shelf for daily use, rather than under a sink or in a cabinet that is difficult to reach.

#### Organization and Decluttering Tips for the Laundry Room

- Make sure your laundry room is neat, tidy, and that heavy bottles of detergents and cleaners are easily accessible.

#### Store Detergents and Bottles on Easy-to-Reach Shelves

- Rather than storing heavy bottles of detergents or cleaners on high shelves or in low cabinets that could be difficult to reach, place them on conveniently located shelves near the washer and dryer.
- Consider installing shelves directly above, or adjacent to your appliances for the greatest convenience.

#### Presort Dirty Laundry

- Consider separate hampers for items such as towels or clothes or invest in a hamper with compartments that will allow you to pre-sort items.
- An ideal hamper is lightweight, or on wheels, so that dirty clothes can be easily transferred to your laundry room area without posing a trip and fall risk

## **Bedroom**

#### Donate Old Health Supplies

- Do you have a drawer in your bedroom cluttered with old pairs of glasses or hearing aids? Keep only your daily use pair, and a spare, then donate the rest.

#### Donate Clothing

- Parting with clothes can be difficult for many people. Whether you no longer wear an item because it doesn't fit, it's out of style, or because it's just no longer a favorite, there's always the fear that if you part with it, you may want it back.
- Work with a family member to donate clothes that you truly don't need anymore.

- If you haven't worn it in over a year, you likely won't miss it, and it should go in your "donate" pile.
- Reverse hanger trick: Take all of your garments on hangers and put them in backward, so that the open end of each hanger now faces you.
  - Set a calendar reminder for 12 months from now.
  - Then go back to your regular routine: every time you wear a piece and go to put it back, make sure the hanger faces the usual way (the opening facing away from you).
  - Once 12 months are up, you'll know exactly what you haven't touched.
  - Take out and donate or sell all of those items on backward hangers.
  - Let go of everything you haven't worn it in the past 12 months
- For the items you've decided to keep, organize your closet by color, season, and like items, to make it easy to find what you're looking for throughout the year.

#### Declutter with Shelves

- Add shelves to your bedroom to store gifts, knickknacks, framed photos, books, and magazines that are taking up space on top of dressers and nightstands
- Only save items that are meaningful and you enjoy using or seeing every day

#### Limit Storage Items Under Your Bed

- Only store rarely used items (e.g. holiday/seasonal decorations)
- Make sure storage bins don't stick out from under bed, posing a trip hazard!

### **Hallways and Staircases**

Make sure hallways are free from furniture items, such as cabinets or small tables, that narrow spaces.

- Make sure carpets/rugs are flat and are not peeling up at the corners or in entrance ways to help minimize the risks of trips/falls and well lit areas.
- For hallway closets, put your coats through the same donation test as you did for the rest of your wardrobe.

### **Garage, Attic, and Basement**

#### Eliminate Garbage

- Start by throwing away or recycling items that are garbage, such as broken pieces of furniture, dirty boxes, half empty containers of cleaning or yard supplies, or miscellaneous building supplies.

#### Discard or Donate Old Sporting Equipment

- Don't hold on to bicycles, skis, and other sporting equipment that you haven't used in years
- If you have some supplies that are still in good condition, consider donating them

#### Install Shelves

- Install shelves to store small items, such as small tools and supplies.
- Organize such items in a toolbox or bins so they can be easily found
- Store seasonal yard or home supplies on shelves

#### Get Rid of or Store Unused Furniture

- Donate or throw away the old bed frame and box springs stored in your basement
- Put in storage valuable pieces of furniture or family heirlooms

## Additional Resources

### Assistance with Decluttering and Organization

**1) Senior Transition Services:** offers assistance in removal of clutter and reorganizing the home.

- Services Include:
  - Downsizing and preparing for a move
  - Content Removal and/or estate liquidation
  - ***Organizing and decluttering your home***
- Call for a FREE in-home consultation: (215) 947-5490
- Visit <https://senior-transition-services.com/our-services/>

**2) Ralston My Way:** offers services related to organizing like packing boxes and rearranging furniture so you don't have to!

- Social Worker: A consult with the Ralston My Way social worker can help with getting more resources and extra help with clutter removal
- Call to request a service: (215) 525-5470
- Visit <https://ralstoncenter.org/programs-services/ralston-my-way/services/>

**3) National Organization of Professional Organizers (NAPO):** Organization of professional organizers to help with reorganization of the home

- Some professionals will provide a FREE over the phone or in-home consult
- Note: Organization services are not FREE. Check with your local professional organizer for quotes and fees
- Visit <https://www.napo-gpc.org/find-an-organizer/>
- Local professional organizers:
  - *Organized at Last!*- Yasmin Goodman
    - Phone: (215) 805-5895
    - Email: [YasminGoodman@comcast.net](mailto:YasminGoodman@comcast.net)
  - *Organizing, ETC.*- Ellen Treu Cohen
    - Phone: 267-273-1597
    - Email: [ellen@etcorganizing.com](mailto:ellen@etcorganizing.com)