Depression and Your Messy Home: Three Easy Ways to De-Clutter

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How Clutter and Depression Go Hand-in-Hand

Does a cluttered living space mean that we are living with a cluttered mind? One study suggests that living in a disorganized space–especially hoarding–can lead to or make the symptoms of depression worse.

Fortunately, there is a lot we can do to organize our living space, and these three suggestions just may be what you need to de-clutter your space and bring calmness and light into your mind.

How to Get Motivated to Clean When You're Depressed

Making Your Bed Is the First Step

Navy Seal, Admiral William McRaven, gave a commencement speech in 2014 about his experience in the military and the physical and mental challenges during training. The first suggestion he gave graduates was to make their bed every day, first thing in the morning.

If you start every morning by making your bed, this will give you a sense of pride and encourage you to continue your day, accomplishing more and more. With depression, our bed can be extremely inviting throughout the day especially if you live in a smaller apartment or condo.

By making your bed, you are finalizing that part of the day and acknowledging that it is time to move on. This is the first step to organize your mind and de-clutter your living space.

If You Don't Use It, Put It Away

I had a coffee maker, toaster, blender, slow cooker and microwave on my kitchen countertop in my ‘clutter’ phase of life. What I noticed is that I only make coffee on weekends and rarely use my blender and slow cooker.

I decided to store these items in convenient places out of sight until I needed them and sometimes just the sight of an open countertop makes your room appear bigger.

I encourage you to find things on your countertop you may not be using every day or every week and find a storage place to open up that countertop!

If you have tables in your hallway or shelves full of knickknack’s and pictures, take a look and see if you could move a few things into storage or sell/give them away.

Ask yourself, “Do I want it? Do I need it? Do I use it?” If the answer is no to any of these, get rid of it!

I realize we attach ourselves to things which are normal–especially if items hold memories and sentimental value.

Perhaps if you have a lot of photos on display, choose some of your favorites to leave and add the others to a photo album to display instead.

The bright side is a cleaner look and a surface much easier to clean and dust.

Organize Your Living Space Piece by Piece

De-cluttering your living space is all about reducing visual stimuli and bringing more simplicity into our days.

In episodes of depression, you may find that your mind is more active and you think quite a bit more in comparison to when you feel good. You may overanalyze your mood and be aware of negative self-talk.

By getting rid of visual stimuli, this is just one extra thing we do not have to worry about and concern ourselves with.

If you are feeling up to it, de-cluttering your space while feeling low may give you that sense of encouragement and accomplishment you need, just like making your bed.

Also, if you are feeling great, de-cluttering and making your space visually simplistic may keep you from feeling overwhelmed, but if a depressive episode comes, you and your space will be ready.

What I purchased some storage bins for my shelf and television unit to put ‘clutter’ to achieve that clean, minimalistic feeling. I put my television remotes, game controllers, magazines, and cables in them.

I’m inviting you to examine your living space and see if you could make use of these bins for any items that seem to be lying around on a daily basis.

The Takeaway

It’s a straightforward concept, but it can make a significant difference in our depressive moods and how we see the space we live in. You may not need to take action in de-cluttering now, but take notice within your space at what you use and look at every day.

Take note of things you don’t need or items that you have wanted to sell or giveaway but never made the time. This is the first step to a de-cluttered mind, but don’t forget to make your bed!