

DOWNSIzING Leader's Guide

Make your life easier by decluttering. Clutter has negative effects on your mental and physical health, too. It can leave you feeling anxious, stressed, or even depressed. Studies have shown that cortisol (the stress hormone) levels are higher in people who have a cluttered home. Stress can lead to many health problems such as high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, Diabetes or stroke. Bring a breath of fresh air to your home and family. Try a couple different methods of downsizing to enjoy the space you are living.



Objectives:

1. Become aware of a couple different methods to downsize.
2. Learn the steps to downsize.
3. Develop a strategy for downsizing your living space.
4. Downsize your living space.

Suggested Activities:

1. Discuss member's guide.
2. Have individuals' complete DOWNSIZING Strategy handout. Suggest they list where they want to start downsizing. Usually it is the most visible rooms but may be specific closets or drawers. Follow the steps and do one section of a room at a time. Emphasize we are all a "Work in Progress!" One step at a time!
3. *Our Valuable Records* is a great resource to complete where you lists all your personal account numbers and passwords. In case you are ill and unable to pay your bills or die, your family can access your information. Keep one copy at home where one family members knows the location. Make a copy to put in your safety deposit box.
4. Have a rollcall- the room you want to downsize or a decluttering tip.

Program Comments:

1. Author Margareta Magnusson has a Swedish and Scandinavian background. Dostadning (dos-TAD-ning) is the art of death cleaning a Swedish phenomenon which elderly and families get their affairs in order. They slowly and steadily declutter as the years go by. She has Scandinavian humor and wisdom remarking she is between 80 and 100. If you are going through items from a loved one who died, say goodbye and shed some tears. People need to grieve as going through items. It takes time.
2. Author Dana White is humorous as she tackles clutter. Follow the five steps in the leaflet and you can declutter any space. The Container Concept in Step 5 was new to

- me. You get a new book then get rid of one book. Go through the books and only keep the ones you have not read or want to read again. The answer is not to buy another bookcase, or another container or another shelf. Always have a donate box handy.
3. Take a “before” and “after” picture of a room before you declutter it. Most people feel peace after decluttering even a drawer.
 4. Selling your items instead of donating might be a thought. Be sure and actually sell the items in a garage sale or on-line. If the items pile up, you might as well donate them to a thrift shop.
 5. One woman shared she told her grown children that hiding dollar bills in her books and collections. They will have to go through her items if they want the dough.
 6. Follow the One-in-One-Out Policy. If you buy two new pairs of underpants get rid of two or more of those elastic stretched out ones.
 7. Make a t-shirt quilt with some of the t-shirts collected.
 8. It was suggested when going through clothes be in front of a mirror. Hold up the article of clothing to your body. If it brings you “joy”, keep it. If not, put in donate box.
 9. One year a mother and her children took everything out of their kitchen into another room. She asked her kids to put back every item they saw their Mom use. She looked at the items left and put a few more items back in the kitchen. The rest donated.
 10. One woman mentioned that she stored the scissors in a specific place for a long time. Then she decided to move them to a different location and can never remember the location. The woman moved the scissors back to the original location.
 11. A woman remarked that when her mother died it was a mystery to find her accounts & passwords. Filling out *Our Valuable Records* would have really helped. List account passwords in the leaflet too.
 12. Hire help if need assistance to declutter.

Handouts:

- DOWNSIZing Member’s Guide, Leader’s Guide & Downsizing Strategy
- *Our Valuable Records*, K-State Research & Extension, MF685 (optional).

Resources:

Decluttering at the Speed of Life-Winning Your Near-Ending Battle with Stuff. Book by Danna K. White, 2018. Note: Danna has a web site: aslobcomesclean.com If requested, she sends e-mails plus has a blog and podcasts.

Our Valuable Records, K-State Research & Extension, MF685, Rev. August 2019.

The Gentle Art of Swedish Death Cleaning- How to Free Yourself and Your Family from a Lifetime of Clutter. Book by Margareta Magnusson, 2018.

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