



## News Release

For more information contact:

Dr. Gary L. Wood or Dr. Patricia N. Alexander  
(813) 870-0392 (Hillsborough County, Florida)  
(727) 576-5164 (Pinellas County, Florida)  
(800) 870-0392 (Out-of-area)

### **Are You Ready? Part II**

**Tampa, Fla. (September 12, 2008).** It is the middle of September, 2008 and we are already up to the letter I for Hurricane Ike. Floridians and others recognize that preparing for and anticipating the arrival of a large-scale hurricane can be distressing whether one is making preparations for their own home or concerned about family members and friends. As we watch the storm updates and tracking often over a period of weeks, we realize that many begin to experience stress, anxiety and sometimes fear. We have seen with many storms a lack of preparation or even a stance of denial. Sometimes there are practical issues that guide an individual's choices. For example, we saw with the arrival of Katrina that many would not go to shelters because they had no place for their pets. How can one prepare for the emotional side of dealing with hurricane season? Here are some simple and effective tips that might be of assistance:

- **First of all, don't wait to the last minute. Sit down with your family and significant others and develop a plan. Local municipalities and media outlets provide free information regarding what to do, evacuation areas and routes, and shelters. Stock up on recommended essentials. Make arrangements to have important documents secured.**
- **Get information from experts who have dealt with both the planning and aftermath of storms. The American Red**

**Cross has a tip sheet available that is written in English and in Spanish (<http://www.redcross.org>).**

- **Follow the recommendations provided in our last two newsletters to care for yourself and others mentally, emotionally, physically, and behaviorally.**
- **Work to maintain a positive, hopeful and optimistic attitude. Resilience is something we can develop and control.**

**Remember that the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a benefit available to all employees and dependents of companies contracted with Wood & Associates for providing confidential free professional assistance 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. Remember that you or a dependent may contact the EAP regarding any concern that you might have – you don't have to wait until a problem becomes big to seek help. Above all, keep in mind that concerns develop over time but the way you address them can be changed. So, if you are faced with preparing for or experiencing a storm and applying the above strategies does not relieve your distress and are not sure where to turn or what you should do, help is just a phone call away.**

**So, if you are concerned about how you might be or may already have been impacted by any traumatic event and are not sure where to turn or what you should do, help is just a phone call away.**

#### **About Wood & Associates**

**Wood & Associates is an Employee Assistance Program and behavioral health consulting firm that helps employers maintain productivity, safety and behavioral health in the workplace. Wood & Associates is a pioneer in the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) industry and has served employers and employees in the greater Tampa Bay area and nationwide since 1982. The firm's diverse group of clients includes a number of major employers who also contract for its mental health and substance abuse services.**

**Gary L. Wood, Psy.D., founder of the Wood & Associates consulting practice, is a pioneer in the field of Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services. Since 1979, his practice has centered on providing solutions to employee and organizational problems. Wood is a licensed clinical psychologist, a member of the National Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology, and a graduate of Rutgers University, West Georgia College and Mercer University.**

**Patricia N. Alexander earned a Ph.D. in mental health counseling at the University of Florida. Trained in critical incident stress management through the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, she is a Florida Licensed Mental Health Counselor and nationally certified counselor. Through her work experience she has addressed all types of critical incident situations, including explosions, multiple homicides, suicides, line-of-duty deaths, serious accidents and robberies. Alexander conducts training on stress management for law enforcement and businesses, and has developed peer support programs for law enforcement and industry. Alexander is an educator and consultant on a wide variety of behavioral health concerns.**