



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 I

Tampa, Fla. (July 21, 2008). Hurricane season has begun. We all know that there are supplies to be bought and plans to be made. Many of us have tended to procrastinate or engage in denial – believing that “it” won’t hit near us! What if it does, however? This newsletter will help you to become aware of some common symptoms that may occur following a traumatic event. The next newsletter will provide you with some helpful management strategies.

Common reactions to any traumatic event include four major areas: physical, emotional, mental and behavioral changes. You will find some of the most common reactions under each category listed below. It is important to realize that this is not a comprehensive list. It is also important to realize that while the following are commonly associated with the aftermath of a traumatic event, there may be other contributing factors. So, for example, if you experience a physical problem, do not “jump to the conclusion” that there is nothing wrong from a medical standpoint. Always check with a doctor. Here are some specific common reactions:

Physical

- Change in sleep patterns – needing more or less than normal
- Change in appetite – eating more or less than normal

- Change in breathing pattern – breathing more slowly or more rapidly
- Dizziness
- Headaches
- Muscle tension
- Change in heart rate

Emotional

- Shock, numbness, anger or fear
- Depression or feelings of sadness or guilt
- Feeling unsafe or vulnerable

Mental

- Confusion or problems with concentration

Behavioral

- Withdrawal and isolation
- Agitation, crying, irritability
- Decrease in energy
- Self medicating with alcohol, medications or other substances

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 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.