



News Release

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HOLIDAYS AND A MIX OF EMOTIONS

Tampa, Fla. (November 1, 2013). It's that time of year when one holiday after another is on the schedule. Parties, special food, travel, seeing folks and family members that we haven't seen for a while, shopping, decorating etc. are all part of our collective experience. Then there is the holiday music and a slew of holiday movies all pointing out the wonderful time of year full of celebrations. In the movies and plays, we get to see the best of all the good things holidays are supposed to bring. But holidays also bring a mix of emotions. For some with family members who live elsewhere, there is the feeling of loneliness and/or isolation. For some there is the emotion of guilt over still harboring feelings of anger, or resentment or a lack of forgiveness toward someone. For some there is the continued process of grief over a lost loved one – whether lost through death, separation, divorce or distance. For some there is the excitement of the celebration. For some there is the feeling of inferiority – not being able to measure up to their own or other's expectations – and so it goes.

As human beings, we live in relationship to others and our society and culture often define how those relationships are to be experienced. Sometimes we put pressure on ourselves to overspend or over-celebrate in order to make everyone else happy. Sometimes we eat a little too much or drink a little too much – sometimes in all the excitement we take unnecessary risks like deciding to drive our vehicle after having consumed

some alcohol. Remember that “getting in the spirit” of the holidays means taking responsibility for ourselves and others and being safe.

So what can we do to not only “get through” the holidays but to celebrate them safely? First, we need to be aware of what we are feeling. Using a support system as a safety valve and being open by talking with someone when we are feeling out of sorts can be helpful. Using a designated driver if any alcohol at all is involved keeps us and others safe. Volunteering and reaching out to help someone else will keep loneliness at bay. And most of all, just remembering that there is no such thing as a perfect holiday and that we often have conflicting emotions about the holidays and others will keep us grounded in reality.

Remember that while holidays can be fun and contribute to social support, they can also be stressful – particularly when we fall prey to the expectations of others. If you need to need some help in determining how you really want to celebrate or if you need some support, call the EAP (Employee Assistance Program). You can explore in a confidential setting the concerns that you have and receive assistance to determine how to remain safe. When you need to sort out your feelings about what is happening in your life help is a phone call away and available 24/7/365. Above all, keep in mind that concerns develop over time but the way you address them can be changed. The EAP representative will help you find the best solution for your particular situation. Also the EAP is a tool for personal and professional growth.

Remember that the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a benefit available to all employees and dependents of companies contracted with Wood & Associates for providing EAP services and provides 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. The EAP can help you find a new path so that the changes you need to make can be managed.

EAP is a tool for personal and professional growth. Above all, keep in mind that concerns develop over time but the way you address them can be changed. The EAP representative will help you find the best solution for your particular situation and help is just a phone call away. Call: (813) 870-0392 (Hillsborough County, Florida), (727) 576-5164 (Pinellas County, Florida), or (800) 343-4670 (out of area toll free).

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.

