



## News Release

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## How Do You Communicate?

Tampa, Fla. (July 12, 2007). Approximately, half of all first marriages in the United States end in divorce and a significant number of other relationships experience difficulty. While there are a variety of reasons that may contribute to the demise of a relationship, one of the most frequently-reported problems is poor communication. Poor communication may be the result of many factors. One spouse may think that he has communicated clearly and fully addressed an issue while the wife walks away not knowing what was stated or decided. One spouse may want to discuss most issues at length while the husband just wants to get the basic facts and then get to the “bottom line.” One person in a relationship wants to discuss an issue to reach a “meeting of the minds” while the other views such communication as conflict. There is even more of a problem when the couple is at opposite ends of an issue. “Reading someone’s mind” between two individuals can occur when one hears the words being said but puts a motive behind the words. This is often referred to as “filtering” or “selective listening.” Poor communication between individuals in a relationship can leave one or both of the individuals feeling bad about themselves, each other, and their relationship. At some point, all couples argue. Arguments, however, can be diverted away from the issue at hand and become “couched” in one’s overall sense of not being unappreciated or respected. An individual can use “zingers” – what might commonly be called “hitting below the belt.” Another may use the technique of avoidance and either walk away or say “Let’s talk about it later” – only “later” never comes. Another may have difficulty respecting one’s request for some “time out” and keep

pursuing a topic. Learning to effectively express the inevitable negative feelings that you have towards a person with whom you have a relationship can be done in a way that is appropriate and that will not result in hurt feelings or inappropriate expressions of anger.

Author Deborah Tannen has written a number of good books that address communication within the context of a relationship. Another author, John Gottman, has a book titled Why Marriages Succeed or Fail that also provides good tips regarding marital communication in particular. We all have relationships in which we need to learn appropriate communication skills.

**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 the communication is a skill that can be learned.**

#### 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.