



News Release

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IT IS THAT TIME OF YEAR

Tampa, Fla. (October 1, 2006) Over the next few months most families will be gathering with other family members, friends, neighbors, other staffers, and acquaintances to celebrate a variety of holidays. This is the time to think about how you really want to spend your time and with whom. This is the time to think about how to minimize and/or prevent additional stress. A few simple decisions can make these celebrations a more positive experience.

First, decide what you really want to do. Do you really want to stay at home? Do you not mind traveling? How much travel are you willing to do? How will any travel fit into your other obligations and plans? Do you want to just be with your immediate family or others? How do you want to celebrate? What type of financial commitment and/or time commitment are you willing to make?

Second, review what stressors you are anticipating. Are you still upset with someone from last year - or five years ago? Do you worry about fitting in with a particular group? Do you worry that you will have to interact with someone you do not care for? Are you carrying a grudge? Awareness of what is likely to happen and what might be no more than an imagined interaction will reduce the stress. Making a decision to start over, forgive, or reach out in a positive manner can be a healing experience -

both for the person being forgiven and by the person asking forgiveness.

Third, reduce the "shoulds." We all have ideas of what a perfect family or get together should be like - although the reality is often quite different. Our perceptions and expectations of how we think someone "should act" or how an event "should be" not only puts unnecessary stress on others but on ourselves as well.

Last of all, try to develop an attitude of gratitude.

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 struggling with how to deal with holidays, interpersonal difficulties or financial stressors, help is 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.