



News Release

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REGAINING YOUR BALANCE

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As the holiday season gets into full swing, most working (and non-working) adults find themselves caught up in a whirlwind of personal, family and professional obligations. Whether it is getting the home cleaned, taking the kids to school events, buying gifts or performing a host of other activities, it is clear that many wind up feeling overwhelmed and exhausted. Then it seems as if what should be pleasant and enjoyable events turn into experiences that one endures rather than one enjoys. Are there any tips for managing and balancing so many responsibilities? The answer is "yes."

One of the most important things to do is decide what is really important to you and those involved in the decision making. So often, we feel pressured by multiple messages we receive about how we are to celebrate special times. Our own needs somehow tend to fall by the wayside. For example, maybe we really want to watch a game or take a nap in the comfort of our own home but feel pressured to run around and visit. Maybe we find ourselves trying to compete with someone else and wind up over-spending. It is important to think about what is really meaningful and that will give joy to the season for you and those you love.

Secondly, remember that there are multiple roles that you play. Compare your goals and objectives for home, work and/or school at the same time so that you don't overbook yourself in any one area of

your life. Use a calendar that includes room for activities, appointments and deadlines. There are family-style calendars available that have multiple columns to track various family members' schedules.

Consider dividing up the tasks. A child, for example, can help clear dishes or remove dishes from the dishwasher or keep the family cat or dog busy and out of the way while the adults do the cleaning. Include as many as possible in preparations. Have some close friends over to trim the tree and have a set time frame for doing so. Keep the refreshments simple and use disposable plates and utensils. That way you will have fun for a few hours and cleanup is a cinch – and someone is there to help you figure out how to put the lights up!

Turn routine events into shared events. For example, join with five friends or neighbors with each person baking five dozen of their favorite cookies. Then each person shares their cookies with the others. Each person now walks away with a dozen each of five different cookies. Or have the kids come in the kitchen and help you to make the cookies.

Keep your expectations realistic. Not too many of us have homes that would show up in a magazine or on a home and garden television show. Real people have imperfections and sometimes spill things or forget to pick up after themselves. Dogs come in wet and leave footprints. And even some of the best with green thumbs will not keep the poinsettia alive. And in the “people category” it is not always easy to get along with everyone – including family.

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 holidays are meant to be a time of celebration, fellowship and giving of thanks.

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.