



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)

TURN A NEW LEAF

Tampa, Fla. (April 1, 2007) Spring has sprung! Trees that have had barren branches now are covered in green. Perennial plants that looked like dried up weeds are now showing new growth and, in some instances, flowers. Everywhere we look, we see new life. When we look outside of ourselves what do we see? Do we see change and newness? What about when we look inside of ourselves? A small boy once approached his mother with one hand behind his back. He said to her as he brought out a bouquet of dandelions – “Here, Mommy, I picked some beautiful flowers for you.” He didn’t see them as “weeds” – nor did his mother who promptly made a fuss and put the freshly picked dandelions in a vase.

When we look at or think about ourselves, what do we see? What is our personal self image? How did we arrive at viewing ourselves a certain way? Is it positive or is it negative? A lot of how we view ourselves comes from what we learned from our parents, family, friends and others. If others have shown reassurance and love we will tend to view ourselves in a positive light. On the other hand, if we have experienced criticism and judgmental comments, we might tend to view ourselves in a negative manner. So how can we “turn a new leaf” and learn to develop more positive self-esteem?

Here are some ideas:

- **Learn to avoid having unrealistic expectations of yourself – and most importantly, stop trying to please everyone else.**
- **Rephrase negative statements in regard to yourself and turn them into positives. For example, if you make a mistake and find yourself saying “I’m so stupid,” change it to “I just learned to do that in a more productive or successful manner.”**
- **Focus on the good and meaningful experiences of your life. Too often we think about and talk about the negative experiences.**
- **Learn to stop and think about what is really important to you. This isn’t as easy as it sounds! Believe it or not, but there are some folks who don’t really even know what their favorite food or movie is.**
- **Take responsibility for your own feelings and actions. Sometimes we are “stuck in the past” and keep repeating to ourselves things that happened twenty years ago. Focus on the present.**

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 if you have struggled with problems of self-esteem and are at a point where you want to develop a more positive view of yourself, call the EAP. Above all, keep in mind that concerns develop over time but the way you address them can be changed. So if you want to take an honest present day look at yourself – or any other concern - 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.