



## News Release

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### **USE, ABUSE AND SUBSTANCE DEPENDENCE**

**Tampa, Fla. (July 1, 2006)** Many people have consumed legal substances like alcohol, nicotine, caffeine and prescription medications. How do we determine if use has moved into abuse or dependence?

**Substance abuse occurs when an individual manifests significant impairment or distress in one of the following over a twelve month period:**

- **Recurrent substance use that results in a failure to fulfill major role obligations at work, school or at home. Examples would include repeated absenteeism or poor work performance related to substance use and neglect of children or household responsibilities.**
- **Recurrent use of a substance in situations that are physically hazardous: driving a vehicle or engaging in work with machinery while impaired by a substance.**
- **Recurrent legal problems related to substance use: disorderly conduct or a DUI.**
- **Continuing to use the substance in spite of having recurrent social or interpersonal problems caused by or worsened by the effects of the substance: arguing with a spouse or friend about the consequences of being intoxicated.**

**Substance dependence, on the other hand, is a maladaptive pattern of substance use that leads to significant impairment or**

**distress as manifested by three or more of the following occurring at any time in the same twelve month period:**

- **Tolerance that includes a need for markedly increased amounts of the substance to achieve intoxication or the desired effect OR a markedly diminished effect with continued use of the same amount of the substance.**
- **Symptoms of withdrawal from the substance which varies according to the substance being used OR using the same or closely related substance to relieve or avoid withdrawal symptoms.**
- **The substance is often taken in larger amounts or over a longer period than intended.**
- **There is a persistent desire or unsuccessful efforts to cut down on or control use of the substance.**
- **A significant amount of time is spent in activities necessary to obtain the substance**
- **Important social, occupational, or recreational activities are given up or reduced because of substance use**
- **Use of the substance continues despite knowing that one is experiencing significant problems**

**If you see yourself in any of the above – or, if you have a child or family member who is manifesting the signs and symptoms listed – help is a phone call away. One of the most common problems in dealing with substance abuse or dependence is denial. The individual with the concern believes that it is not a problem, that others are exaggerating what they are seeing or are just nagging or picking on the individual, or that they can control their use of the substance. Interpersonal problems frequently result because of mood changes or behaviors while under the influence of a substance. Some individuals wind up losing everything that is important to them once they become dependent on a substance.**

**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 you don't have to wait for an accident to happen or a relationship to end – 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.**