



## News Release

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### **When Unwanted Thoughts Control You?**

**Tampa, Fla. (December 7, 2007). Most individuals at some time will feel uncomfortable or anxious about something for a short time now and again. Individuals who have anxiety disorders, however, tend to feel this way much of the time. Sometimes they even realize that they are worrying out of proportion to the event or situation prompting the concern. Approximately 18% of the U.S. population has had an anxiety disorder at some point in their lives. Most people do not know that there are varying types of anxiety disorders. This article will address something called obsessive-compulsive disorder.**

**Have you ever seen the movie, "As Good As It Gets" or the T.V. series, "Monk?" If so, you have probably realized that the main male character in each of these exhibited some uncommon behaviors. Both characters, for example, are obsessed with a fear of germs, putting things in a certain order, or checking things over and over. The movie character had to take plastic ware into the restaurant where Helen Hunt worked, sit in the same place, be served only by her, could not step on cracks in**

**the pavement etc. These behaviors wind up getting in the way of a person living their life.**

**So how do you know if you or someone you love might have obsessive-compulsive disorder? Ask yourself these questions:**

**Do you have repeated thoughts or images about many things: fear of germs, dirt, violence, or being overly neat?**

**Do you execute the same rituals over and over: washing hands, locking and unlocking doors, counting, accumulating things you don't need and won't use, or repeating the same steps again and again and feeling uncomfortable if you don't do something exactly right?**

**Do you have unwanted thoughts and behaviors you cannot control?**

**Do the rituals you perform give you a brief relief from your anxiety but are in reality a burden for you?**

**Do your rituals get in the way of daily life activities?**

**Obsessive-compulsive disorder, or OCD, often starts in childhood or adolescence and the symptoms may come and go throughout one's life with varying degrees of intensity and intrusion into one's daily activities. While there currently is no "cure" for OCD, this is a condition that can be treated to assist an individual in becoming less anxious and less fearful. A good place to start would be to call the EAP. You can get more information by going to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) website at <http://www.nimh.nih.gov>. If you call 1-**

**866-615-6464, you will get free information about obsessive-compulsive disorder mailed to you.**

**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 what you think might be OCD, or need help in dealing with another about whom you are concerned, help is just 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.**