



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)

YOU CAN MANAGE STRESS IN YOUR LIFE

Tampa, Fla. (May 1, 2007) Stress is a normal physical reaction that occurs when you feel threatened or overwhelmed by actual or imagined situations or events. The perception of a threat is just as stressful as a real threat. Your perceived or imagined threatening situation or your feeling of being overwhelmed is further complicated because you are dealing with an unusually large number of everyday responsibilities. With increasing demands of home and work life, many people are under enormous stress. Stress in one setting can have a rippling effect that affects stress levels in other settings. As a result, your ability to think clearly and function effectively is compromised. It can disable you physically and emotionally. The goal of stress management is to bring your nervous system back into balance, giving you a sense of calmness and control in your life.

Controlling your life means balancing various aspects of it: work, relationships, leisure, physical, intellectual and emotional parts. People who effectively manage stress consider life a challenge rather than a series of irritations and frustration. They believe that they have control over their lives even in the face of setbacks. There are no "one size fits all" solutions to managing stress. Every person has a unique response to stress so it is important to learn what approach to managing and reducing stress works best for you.

Here are some strategies that you might consider using to better manage stress:

Get enough sleep: Adequate sleep helps your mind as well as your body.

Develop a support system and share your feelings. Perhaps a friend, family member, teacher, clergy person or counselor can help you see your problem in a different light.

Exercise regularly. Exercise does not need to be excessive. Develop a plan that is medically appropriate for you given any physical considerations or limitations.

Develop a lifelong nutritional program that is appropriate for you. Reduce caffeine and sugar. In excessive amounts, the temporary "highs" they provide often end in fatigue or a "crash" later. You'll feel more relaxed, less jittery or nervous, and you'll sleep better.

Don't self-medicate with alcohol or drugs: While consuming alcohol or drugs may appear to alleviate stress, it is only temporary. When sober, the problems and stress will still be there. Don't mask the issue at hand; deal with it head on and with a clear mind.

Learn to develop a hobby and take reasonable breaks throughout the day.

Learn how to change your thinking to have more realistic expectations.

Learn to develop a sense of humor. Don't take yourself or others too seriously.

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 stress can be managed.

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.