



News Release

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STOP WORRYING!

Tampa, Fla. (May 1, 2006) Many people have experienced feeling worried when facing a major life change, a school or professional exam, receiving test results from a medical doctor, or even the outcome of a car repair. Some people find it worrisome to speak in public or to interact in a social gathering. Some individuals find themselves overly preoccupied with the possibility of an event that is unlikely to occur. And, some folks worry about the fact that they are worrying!

According to the National Mental Health Institute in 2006, anxiety disorders are the most common of all the mental health concerns affecting more than 19 million people each year. And, there are different kinds of anxiety disorders such as panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, social phobia and generalized anxiety disorder. How do these various types differ from one another?

Panic disorder is characterized by panic attacks. One experiences a sudden feeling of terror that occurs repeatedly and without warning. Individuals often think they are having a heart attack and go to a medical professional and/or emergency room only to find that their heart is fine. Chest pain, heart racing or pounding, difficulty getting a breath, dizziness, sometimes profuse sweating or tingling in the hands, dizziness and fear of dying are some of the main symptoms. Never, however, put off seeing a medical professional if you have these symptoms

because one doesn't want to guess as to whether it is a panic attack or heart attack.

The movie, "As Good as It Gets" with Jack Nicholson and Helen Hunt demonstrates how debilitating obsessive-compulsive disorder or OCD can become. It involves repeated, intrusive and unwanted thoughts or rituals that seem impossible to control. Sometimes the patterns can become so intricate and frequent that a significant amount of time and energy is spent in carrying out the rituals. It is also quite frustrating to others who are often told how things should be: think Felix Unger and Oscar Madison on the Odd Couple.

Post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD, may occur after a traumatic event such as a robbery, hurricane, rape, terrorist attack etc. Symptoms include: nightmares, flashbacks, emotional numbness, depression and increased anger and irritability.

Social anxiety or social phobia occurs when an individual has an extreme and irrational fear of something like talking in front of a group. Usually whatever is being avoided is no real threat to the person but their fear leads to avoiding whatever the feared person, object or event might be.

Finally there are individuals who worry about everything. They might consistently "make mountains out of mole hills" and be described as being overly pessimistic.

The good news about anxiety and worry is that there are treatments available to alleviate the discomfort of symptoms that are a part of each of the above types of anxiety.

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 anxiety and worry saps us of our energy, may keep us awake at night and change how we are able to deal with everyday changes – you don't have to keep worrying since 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.