

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)

Coping with Apprehension in Uncertain Times

Tampa, Florida (November, 2010). With the recent experience of credible threats of attack via explosives on planes carrying cargo, we continue to find ourselves in jittery times. We can overcome our feelings of apprehension and anxiety by recognizing what's behind them and by renewing our efforts to live normally. The emotions many are experiencing now are different than what they felt after September 11. That event caused acute levels of anxiety, concern and shock and mental health professionals could intervene with specific techniques and strategies because there was a specific situation to address. The fears people experienced were based on the reality of a particular event. Now people are experiencing fears that are more difficult to address directly.

Our anxieties now are insidious, chronic and free-floating with no specific boundaries and no specific beginning or end. It's not really surprising, because we're living in a unique time in history. Our lives are filled with uncertainty caused by economic, political, technological, demographic and informational shifts. All of this taken together has resulted in a sea change, which can cause people to feel very anxious about the future."

There is good news in all this since people can still find their way even when they're living in a constant state of uncertainty. It does require extra effort, and what can help most is maintaining physical and spiritual health, social support systems and a focus on positive activities.

Many employers' security departments have examined their policies and procedures resulting in changes designed to protect employees, facilities and business operations. It's important to pay attention to any communications from your employer regarding workplace security, and to be aware of your company's procedures for dealing with security threats and emergency situations. Being prepared at work will give you some extra peace of mind. At home, families can prepare by creating a Family Disaster Plan and practicing it in case of an emergency. The American Red Cross Web site, www.redcross.org offers a wealth of information on disaster plans and what children should know about preparing for and responding to emergency situations.

Most people experience anxiety as a fear of the unknown and an uncertainty about the future. It often affects our behavior, thoughts, feelings and physical well being. It's important that we take steps to help overcome our anxiety so it doesn't begin to impair our daily living. Here are a few tips for coping with and overcoming anxiety:

- **Exercise – Medically appropriate exercise can relieve nervous energy and help you sleep better. (always consult your doctor before starting an exercise routine)**
- **Relax – Relaxation techniques can help you reduce stress and focus on the “here and now.” Try listening to some soft music in a comfortable chair, or concentrating on controlling your breathing in a quiet place.**
- **Talk – Spend time with friends and family voicing opinions and expressing your feelings. Ask others how they are coping with their fears.**
- **Keep moving – Take part in activities that will help keep your mind off your fears. Instead of watching and reading excessive amounts of news about terrorism, try reading a good book, seeing a movie, or spending time with friends.**

Sometimes no matter what we do, we cannot seem to get rid of our anxious feelings. When that happens, anxiety begins to

affect our work and home life, and can sometimes lead to panic attacks. Severe anxiety problems can be treated, though. Treatments may include a combination of the following: individual counseling, family counseling, and medical treatment.

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 your 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. If you need help in developing a specific plan to address what is impacting your life or if you have concerns about someone else, all you need to do is call your EAP and you will be directed to our experienced team of counselors. It is that simple. We will help you cope, find assistance, and guide you down the path to effectively dealing with whatever might be impacting your life.