

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)

How Have You “Branded” Yourself?

Tampa (February, 2012). Turn on the television, read the newspaper or magazines, look at billboards and we see companies and services that work hard to present their “brand.” But companies are not the only ones who try to get their brand out so as to be immediately recognized and have particular qualities identified. We, too, live in a digital age and are accustomed to routinely communicating via email, Twitter, Facebook, Yahoo groups, You Tube etc. Sometimes instead of writing out a philosophical type thought, we share where we have been, what we are doing and what we think about a wide variety of topics – often in sound bites. Sometimes our comments are so brief and without placement in any specific context so they might be widely and inaccurately interpreted. We also post pictures of ourselves and those we care about from a wide variety of sources. Fortunately, in some of the above formats one can delete a posting – once one makes a more objective view of what one has written. In some instances, however, the rule is “once posted, forever posted.” And, as we know, once posted anything can be copied and sent to live forever in cyber space. That leads us to the question: “How have you ‘branded’ yourself?”

If you were looking for a job and a Human Resource representative checked out the social networking sites, as many do, to see what might be out there, what would they learn about you? Is there a picture where you are making strange faces or inappropriate gestures that might have seemed funny at the time? Is there a picture where you are in a bar or other setting with multiple alcoholic beverages and empty glasses in front of you? Do your comments demonstrate abusive, angry, or vulgar use of language? If you are already at a job, what comments

might you have made about your boss, supervisor or another team member after you have had a bad day at work? While friends or peers might interpret your postings in a more accepting manner, others who do not have a context to understand what you are posting might not be so kind. Do you talk about personal problems or relationships?

The ultimate question is “what would a complete stranger learn about you from what lives in cyber space – and is that image true and what you want to project?” There is a phrase “think before you speak” that could be equally apply to “think before you post.”

There is also another side to cyber posting and that is the safety factor. Is it wise to put online your schedule and where you are going to be for example? And there is the possibility of creating a self image that is overly positive or non-existent. This is an important part of safety awareness when we interact with others.

So think carefully about what and how you post.

What can you do if you if you recognize yourself or a loved one in the above information? Call your EAP. Sometimes learning to be more discrete in this new cyber-oriented society can be a daunting prospect. Sometimes we need to learn the dimension of appropriate boundaries and how to better communicate. Sometimes it is a matter of developing emotional intelligence. The EAP can help you find a new path so that you present yourself in an accurate and appropriate manner. Remember that the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a benefit available to our contracted organizations employees and dependents So call your EAP. 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. Help is available 24-hours a day, 7 days a week.

Call: (813) 870-0392 (Hillsborough County), (727) 576-5164 (Pinellas County), or (800) 343-4670 (out of area toll free).

