

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)

In the Midst of Winter

Tampa, Fla. (May , 2012). The famous philosopher, Albert Camus, wrote in The Stranger: “In the midst of winter, I found there was, within me, an invincible summer. And that makes me happy. For it says that no matter how hard the world pushes against me, within me, there’s something stronger – something better, pushing right back.” So often life “hits” us with so many changes that we feel overwhelmed, sometimes angry and frustrated, and sometimes just helpless. Dealing effectively with change takes some basic unlearning and relearning beginning with understanding what change really is and following up with effective strategies for coping with change.

Change is a normative, not abnormal, part of life. Even events that appear to be negative often result in positive outcomes. Take a planned “burn” by the fire department. At first it appears to be negative and destructive but in the long term new life results. Take the loss of a job which can be a frightening experience at first yet often leads to new training, a new career or even self-employment in an area that once was a hobby! Change does involve loss of some sort which means that we go through a grief process. It gives us a feeling that events are occurring over which we have no control. So initially we may go through a stage of denial, shock and disbelief. Then we may enter into a stage of anger where we are angry at the government, the organization, our boss and/or supervisors or Human Resources, the profession or ourselves. We can enter into a bargaining phase where we go into the “what if” phase of grieving. “What if I had worked harder?” “What if I had entered a different profession?” Then we can enter a phase where we might even be depressed. As we go back and forth in these phases with each new reminder, such as being turned down for

a job interview and move back to phase one and then two, three and four, eventually we can arrive at a point of acceptance. We often think of grief in terms of the death of someone, however, we grieve many life events that involve loss.

The most effective way of dealing with loss is to adjust our attitude and recognize that change is a normal part of life. A well known prayer used in the recovery community asks that one have the serenity to accept the things that cannot be changed, the courage to change the things they can, and possess the wisdom to know the difference. It is the last part that is so difficult for most people. Dealing with change effectively necessitates that we stop hitting our head against the wall in trying to regain what was lost exactly as it was and begin to look outside the box. It is so important to create a new vision of and for ourselves. It is equally important to see any loss as a potential to personal and professional development.

Remember that the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a benefit available to all General Dynamic employees and dependents and provides 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 concerned about how you tend to deal with change or are feeling helpless and overwhelmed by the change in your life and are not sure where to turn or what you should do, help is just a phone call away.

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