

News Release

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Stop Playing the “Blame Game”

Tampa, Fla. (March 2014). Have you ever been blamed by someone for something you didn't say or do? How did it feel? Or, have you ever caught yourself blaming someone else for something and based that “blame” on insufficient evidence? When we blame another, what we are trying to do is say that what happened is not our fault. Often our urge to blame another is based on our own fear that another might see us as deficit in some way. When we blame someone, we are actually addressing three components of a problem: 1) Did this particular person cause the problem; 2) How should this person's actions be evaluated against a standard of conduct; and 3) If the person is at fault, how should they be punished? By blaming another person, we are basically endorsing all three questions. Any wonder then that we are met with a defensive posture and voice, arguing, intense emotion, and sometimes “counter blame” toward us.

When we focus on blaming another, we are blocked in our attempt to effectively deal with conflict. We can also get so caught up in the emotional aspects that we fail to reach any understanding of the problem and/or the solution.

Putting aside blame means that I am able to better listen, communicate and evaluate a problematic situation. It means that I am better able to develop a collaborative relationship and take a mutual gains approach toward dealing with conflict. This results in a “win-win” situation for both individuals.

A lot of time and energy is expended and ultimately wasted in defending oneself or in accusing another. A helpful book to read that addresses this and other difficult areas in the communication process

is: Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most by Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton and Sheila Heen.

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 concerns develop over time but the way you address them can be changed. So, if you are concerned about how you deal with conflict or blame either in terms of what you do or how you respond, help is just 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.