

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)

BUILDING POSITIVE SELF ESTEEM

Tampa, FL. (February 2014). Do you like yourself? I mean, do you genuinely like yourself? Are you comfortable and content with your life? Or, do you find yourself being critical, negative, pessimistic, argumentative, demeaning or non-accepting of yourself? When you succeed at something, are you able to graciously acknowledge that success? When someone is complimentary or congratulatory, can you simply say thank you? Or do you find yourself “arguing” with the other’s comment which they intended to be a sincere reflection of their perception of you? How we view ourselves often results in how we interpret or “filter” what others say about us. How do we come to a point where we either have or do not have positive self esteem?

First, of all it is important to recognize that we are influenced by those who care for us when we are very small. We tend to internalize what others reflect to us. For example, if we are told to “grow up and stop acting like a child” when we are two years old, what message does that send? What do we learn if we are called “stupid” or “clumsy?” Can we separate out the reflection from the reality when we are so small? Or what impact does it have on us, when the first “love of our life” rejects us and moves on? How do we interpret that? Do we see that the other may have realized that there is something within them that does not “fit” with the person we are – or do we self criticize and say we are not obviously “good enough?”

So the first thing we need to do in developing positive self esteem is distinguish the reality of our lives from the

perceptions or interpretations we have developed. We have to be ready and able to get rid of the false perceptions and filters that we have carried around with us for years – and which may continue to affect how we interface with others. If I have told myself over and over how defective and unlovable I am, for example, it is likely that I will not find a healthy, loving relationship because I will not allow myself to be open.

Second, examine your expectations of yourself. Stop placing unrealistic expectations on yourself that will lead to self-criticism when you do not measure up.

Third, realize that history cannot be changed. “That was then, this is now” is a healthy way of making new goals and decisions and moving on with life.

And finally, recognize the importance of social support. Surround yourself with individuals who tend to be positive and reassuring.

What can you do if you if you recognize yourself or a loved one in the above information? Call your EAP. Sometimes dealing with letting go of old patterns can feel overwhelming because we’ve been responding in the same old way over and over. So if you are struggling with the question of what you need to change or want to change and need some help in accomplishing your goal, help is a phone call away. The EAP can help you find a new path so that change is managed, relationships are healed, support systems are developed, and expectations are kept realistic.

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. Above all, keep in mind that self

esteem develops over time and can change. So, if you are struggling with how you view yourself, 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.