

# HELPS

## How to contact HELPS

Call **813-870-0184** and say that you are calling HELPS. (Call collect if you're out of the area.) Outside of normal business hours, a staffed answering service will take your call and a HELPS representative will respond promptly.

Your contact with HELPS is **confidential** as provided within the parameters of professional ethics, the USF College of Medicine contract, and applicable federal and state statutes.

## From the Editor

This quarterly newsletter is a part of the HELPS program. It provides topics and tips to help you successfully deal with the challenges you face as a student. We welcome your suggestions for topics. Send them to HELPS Editor, [patricianaalexander@earthlink.net](mailto:patricianaalexander@earthlink.net)

Health Enhancement for Lifelong Professional Students Newsletter

## *Getting Through the Rough Spots*

The University of South Florida College of Medicine congratulates you on your choice of educational pursuits, whether that's medicine, physical therapy or a graduate degree program. You likely are tuned in to the resources available at USF to prepare you academically. We also want you to know about a program we have set up to help you deal with some of the tough real-life concerns that can interfere with your academic success.

The program is HELPS — Health Enhancement for Lifelong Professional Students. It's an easy-to-access service designed specifically for students, family members and significant others. We encourage you to call for HELPS when you are faced with a situation with which you're not

quite sure how to cope.

"Most people, at some point in their lives, experience what is called a major life stress," says Gary L. Wood, Psy.D.

"It's not unusual for students to have educational concerns, learning problems, financial worries, legal issues, family substance abuse issues or relationship difficulties. These may be problems that affect you directly or indirectly regardless of age, gender or socioeconomic status."

"Generally, you can deal with your own problems and manage them successfully," Wood continues. "But when problems grow beyond your ability to deal with them, you can be affected emotionally, physically, socially and academically. That's when you need someone who can help you identify the problem



*We want you to thrive, not just survive, at USF. The Health Enhancement for Lifelong Professional Students program can assist when you're not sure where to turn.*

and point you to the resources available to you."

We have established HELPS as an assessment, support and referral program tailored for the needs of students. The program is provided by Gary L. Wood & Associates, P.A., a Tampa-based organization. Wood & Associates is staffed with highly qualified professionals who are available to provide guidance and assistance.

## What's Troubling You?



**HELPS 24-hour phone line: 813-870-0184**

HELPS offers assistance for problems that can be resolved by counseling or therapy, including:

- Academic concerns
- Learning disabilities
- Vocational/aptitude testing
- Career decisions
- Interpersonal difficulties
- Relationship problems
- Troubled children/adolescents
- Distress, anxiety, depression and other emotional concerns

Students seeking help with a substance abuse problem will be provided with referral information to the Professionals Resource Network (PRN).

HELPS can also provide guidance for problems that are typically resolved by the courts, including:

- Divorce, child support
- Property/lease suits
- Court orders
- Imprisonment

While HELPS cannot offer financial assistance or loans, it can guide you to resources for money and credit problems.

HELPS can also assist with resources for:

- Care for aged/infirm
- Local social services
- Battered spouse
- Immigration
- Sex counseling
- Individual or family crisis situations such as rape, assault, robbery, suicide or other life-threatening trauma. ■

**A confidential consultation with your HELPS representative can point you to the best and most cost-effective ways of dealing with difficult problems. It can also assist you with career decisions and other professional development resources.**

## Who's Eligible & What it Costs

The services of HELPS are available to you, any dependent eligible for insurance benefits and your significant other whether or not they are currently

covered under your health care policy.

The first three visits to HELPS are provided at no charge. Additional contacts may be covered by your behavioral health

insurance plan. You may incur other charges for the resources to which you are referred. If cost is a concern, be sure to discuss this with your HELPS representative. ■

## Take the First Step

Nearly everyone finds it difficult to begin talking about a problem. Most problems are not easy to define and have been around long enough to have become complicated. Making the first contact by calling HELPS

can be a major step in resolving the largest of problems. Remember, the people you talk to will be warm, sympathetic, and understanding.

Your HELPS representative will help you identify your problem

and find a qualified resource near campus, your home or work. HELPS is not a treatment program — it's simply the first step. And it could be the most important one you will ever take. ■

HELPS is administered by:

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