



TURFGRASS MATTERS

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Managing Personal Stress

For those of us that have listened to people who work inside all day or drive around in their vehicles making sales calls say, "You have the best job in the world. All you do is mow grass and soak up the sun in the summer and travel and goof off in the winter." We (golf course superintendents) would probably like to respond with "walk a mile in my shoes." That, however, would not accomplish anything so we smile and keep doing our jobs.

The amount of stress in all of our lives varies. Some people only think of getting their job done, taking care of family and making sure their bills are paid. Others, however, worry about many other things that cause them a lot of stress.

The word STRESS is often used for so many situations that it is hard to understand what a person means when he or she says "I have a lot of stress" or "I'm stressed out." Stress can mean feeling tired or confused. Stress can also mean there is a serious chronic anxiety. The fact that stress can come from many areas of our lives, such as work, home, community, friends and even extended families can make us feel as though we're dealing with a moving target, or worse, that we are the target and the stones are coming from every direction.

Stress is not necessarily harmful. It is a normal reaction, a biological fact of life. The amount of stress we experience within a time period and the way we handle it physically and emotionally determines whether stress becomes harmful.

One way for us to better handle stress is to be able to recognize the stress. Under

stress, our bodies usually experience a fairly standard response, consisting of a number of physiological states. Some of them are: increased blood pressure and pulse rate, a heart-pounding feeling in your chest, dilation of the pupils, dry mouth, increased perspiration, muscle tension, fast-shallow breathing, fatigue and boredom. The first eight can be minor and barely noticeable, yet they each take a small toll. If the stressful situation continues, then the last two-fatigue and a sense of boredom-may occur. Not everyone will experience these states. Some of us have a high natural resistance to stress or our stress response may be less noticeable than others.

We need to be able to recognize these reactions in our body so that we can make "an attitude adjustment." One of the best features of working with your attitude is that it is yours alone. No one and nothing else can determine your attitude. You may not always know how you have formed your attitudes, but they probably have been formed by many factors, such as your experience, your beliefs, and your values. Because your attitude is all your own, it is yours to change as you see fit.

Sometimes when we are feeling deeply worried or depressed about an impending task or situation, we may need support, or we may need some time to think about the reasons for the negative feelings, how they started, whether they are reasonable (sort of a reality check), and how to work around them. However, with many day-to-day tasks, when we are doubtful, lacking confidence, worried, or angry, it can be

very helpful to simply choose to put the negative feeling aside and decide to be optimistic.

We can not control the weather, we can only work with what we get. We can not control what other people do or say about us in our absence, we can only be ourselves and try not to let it cause so much "stress" that we change who we are. We can, however, try to manage our time so that we are better able to deal with what is handed to us. Some of the ways to accomplish this are: Tackle the toughest projects when you have the most energy, group similar tasks that can be done together, use "idle" time to get things done, delegate, take the time to refresh yourself, make lists and keep on your desk only materials needed to accomplish the day's tasks.

You can reduce your general susceptibility to stress by improving habits and

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Bullets from the Boardroom

MAAGCS Secretary - Nick Vance, CGCS



Tentatively our monthly meetings for next year (1999) will be at the following locations: Fountain Head Club, Turf Valley Resort (2), Chevy

Chase Country Club, Westwood Country Club, Mayo Beach and South River Golf Course for the picnic, Woodmont Country Club, Lowes Island Golf Course and Southview Golf Course. If you do not see your golf course on the list perhaps it is time you contacted the Board of Directors to schedule an event. Finding places to hold our monthly meetings has become very difficult and your help is appreciated.



By the time this newsletter gets to you the new Directory will be at the printer or maybe even in the mail.

As noted in all the dues statements that went out, if your dues are not current at the time of this printing, you will be dropped from the listing.



The Social and Benevolence Committee is in the process of putting together a CASINO NIGHT for our

September "Ladies Night" event. All the details have not been finalized yet, but it looks like a fun evening.



The dates and topics for the December seminars at Turf Valley have been approved. On December 8th we will have an "Employee Safety Training" seminar and on December 9th the topic will be "Maximizing Job Satisfaction." The Board of Directors decided to try two one day seminars to give those persons that can not get away for two days in a row a chance to take at least one day of education.



The MAAGCS Web Page is still moving forward at a pretty good pace. The Committee has put together a site that would include a calendar of events, membership information, announcements, turf links and much more. We will keep you informed of the progress and let you know when we go "on line".

Stress

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practices. Setting goals, managing your time, and organizing your tasks enable you to work more efficiently and with less frustration.

Stress management refers to the process of reviewing your life and your habits and determining what you can change to reduce long-term stress and to make your life more enjoyable. Life will always present stress, but if you have laid a ground work of healthy attitude and reduced susceptibility to stress, you will find the stress that does arise easier to handle.

Managing stress and maintaining your productivity is not a one-time endeavor or a short-term project. It is an ongoing, lifelong process.

Nick Vance, CGCS