looking and recommitment.

The first stage usually lasts the first three to six months of a new job, that excitement of a new challenge, new goals. "This excitement will carry the employee through adversity," Swenson says.

The second phase, frustration, has six sub-phases: shock at finding the job isn't going to be so easy or perfect; denial that the problem lies within; fear of total failure; outward anger; justification of what is happening with the job; and finally acceptance of the circumstances and a lowering of goals.

What results from this frustration stage, if it is not headed off, is the looking phase: for a new job, a search for that excitement.

Swenson says that the excitement period decreases in duration for each new job. He calls this the negative cycle. A new job won't make things better for any length of time.

But he adds that the negative cycle can be prevented by recognizing the signs of the anger sub-phase. "Recognize the anger stage and go straight to the fourth phase from there," Swenson advises.

The recommitment phase involves three stages, beginning with a re-evaluation of why you took the job in the first place. After that, set some immediate goals that will inject some excitement and boost confidence quickly. Finally, get an outside opinion on whether you are right for the job or the job is right for you, and if you can do the job well. Often, the outside opinion is a key factor. The boss or a fellow employee can provide that opinion.

"Going through the positive cycle extends the excitement period each time," Swenson says. If an employee is showing this anger, sit him or her down and talk it out. It may save time and money down the road.

Swenson spoke at the third North Central Turf Grass Association conference in Bismark, N.D..

GOLF

Consistent topdressing improves performance

Keeping the same topdressing media over a period of years will improve the performance of topdressing and reduce or avoid other problems, notes Jim Snow, director of the Northeast region of the USGA Green Section.

The most serious potential problem is the chance of layering. When particle size or media is changed, and changed often, layering is nearly a given. "Fine particles on top of coarse ones cause a perched water table," Snow says. "Keep the same particle size and blend."

Snow outlined benefits and concerns of sand topdressing in relation to high sand mixes and soil. Compared with high sand mixes, straight sand is easier to apply when wet, more readily available and costs less, Snow says.

He also brought up some concerns with sand as compared with soil in addition to layering. Sand has lower microbial action, which helps to break down thatch. Greens can become hydrophobic because of sand's high percolation rate, and greens can lose color rapidly after fertilizer applications. Spike and ball marks last longer and bedknife wear increases.

Most often, Snow explains, topdressing fails because the wrong size particle or too much sand is used. Also, when greens aren't aerated, the layering problem compounds. Snow says to aerate at least twice annually. Adjust other management programs along with aeration, he says. He recommends light and frequent topdressing applications and more frequent but light fertilizer applications with more phosphorous and potassium.

When choosing a sand topdressing, Snow says to consider physical properties such as particle size and thus porosity and infiltration rate, bulk density and water retention.

Snow spoke at the GCSAA Conference in Houston. **LM**