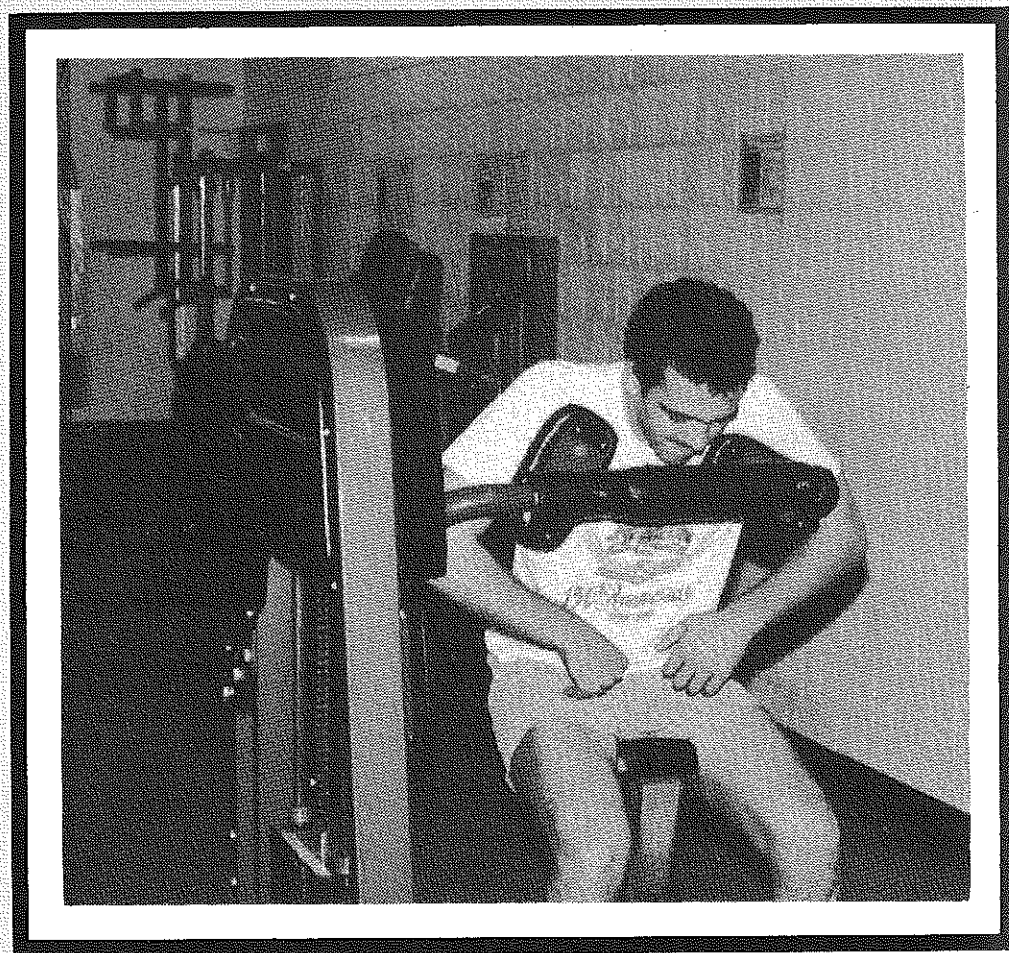


The
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April, 1988
Volume 60
Number 10



THEME: Stress Management

THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION MAGAZINE



April, 1988

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Using the Time-Out to Advantage

What is it that separates today's great basketball coaches from their peers? Today's club of great coaches includes Dean Smith of the University of North Carolina, John Thompson of Georgetown University, Denny Crum of the University of Louisville, Bob Knight of Indiana University, and a few others. These coaches definitely have talented players each year, but so do others who aren't close to the club. Some say these coaches have a 6th sense. Others argue that talented players will elevate a coach to the revered club. Non-fans of these coaches might call it luck or a mystic quality. An objective observer notes a common thread.

During intense games, these coaches are in charge. If their players don't execute the game plan, they get benched. If the officials make many unfavorable calls, these coaches take charge of them. Technical fouls called on these coaches motivate their teams. When the other team gets the upper hand, strategically called time-outs often mean the difference between winning and losing. Great coaches sense if they're not in charge. They stop the action, gain control, and proceed with business.

Even though agricultural educators aren't under the national microscope as often as the above coaches, they face stressful situations. Whether personal or professional, pressures associated with stress have the same effect. You either manage stress or it controls you. Unfortunately, stress and a few other topics have been relegated to the same stature. Agricultural educators just don't talk about such closet or closed-door topics.

This issue brings the topic of stress to the forefront. Fortunately for the profession, several educators are willing to share strategies that have been successful for them. Ronald Grimes, this month's theme editor, accepted the task of zeroing in on this topic by securing authors to discuss this closet topic. This issue will enlighten all who call time-out and absorb some of the strategies. Three common threads run through the articles.

Three Perspectives

First, in the January, 1987 issue, L.H. Newcomb labeled education a "helping profession." Such professions frequently encounter stressful situations that must be managed. To simply cope with stress is not adequate. To cope means you struggle with limited success. Authors writing in this issue indicate that managing versus coping brings vastly different results. Managing shows you have control and can adapt to stressful situations.

Second, as educators, we are responsible for helping others manage stress. We are taught to deal with the problems of others. Some would argue that today's problems are



BY BLANNIE E. BOWEN, EDITOR

(Dr. Bowen is an Associate Professor in the Department of Agricultural Education at The Ohio State University.)

more complex than those faced by yesterday's agricultural educators. This may or may not be true. It is a matter of perspective, thus not worthy of serious debate. The important consideration is how agricultural educators manage stress related to contemporary problems: teenage pregnancy, farmer suicide, substance abuse, single parent families, AIDS, et al.

Finally, agricultural educators face a variety of what is labeled personal stress. This type of stress has both internal and external origins. Motivators within agricultural educators drive us to be excellent in what we do. We set personal goals and strive to achieve them. In achieving or not achieving our goals, internal stress will be encountered. The preferred route is to manage stressful situations. Further, being that none of us lives on an island, external factors also influence how we set goals and go about achieving them. Some factors are within our control, others are not. External stress can also be managed.

In Conclusion

Thanks to authors writing in this issue, many stress management approaches are offered. All of them agree that you must be in charge because stress, like death and taxes, is inevitable. It will not go away. We must master the time-out and gain control the way Dean, Denny, John and Bob do it. Society expects no less. Agricultural educators must be members of the "club."

About the Cover

Stress creates energy. That energy can be reduced by exercising. An exercise program must have two main features. First, agricultural educators must follow a consistent routine of regularly exercising. Second, each session must be long enough to have the desired effects. (Photo courtesy of Martin B. McMillion of VPI & SU.)

Can We Manage Stress?

We are in a society that is changing dramatically. It is a society that is plagued by violence, family upheaval, nuclear threats, and great uncertainty about the future. Children certainly have more stresses on them than ever before.

Children from divorced families, single-parent families, dual income families, step families, and no families are children that must deal with this associated stress. Family stress is not the only stress facing children of today. There are other situations that can overburden children.

Pressure is applied to children to achieve in everything. Johnny and Susie do not only have to be the best academically, they must also be the best athletically. Johnny and Susie have to be the BEST in everything.

Many young people are laden with adult responsibilities and are being forced to grow up very early.

How are today's children dealing with these pressures? In some cases they become physically sick and develop illnesses such as headaches, abdominal pains, and muscle spasms. Other children develop behavioral problems or become depressed. Still other children turn to various controlled substances and even suicide.

Most of the time we get these troubled children in the ninth grade and are expected to teach them about agriculture. We find ourselves asking, "Why do I have to take time to deal with their problems?"

Teachers must remember that they teach students and then subject matter. There is not much we can do about their family life, pressures at home, or nuclear threats. There is, however, much we can do to assist and advise children, our students, in coping and dealing with pressures.

We in vocational agriculture and the FFA have a unique opportunity. We, probably better than teachers of any other subject in the high school curricula, have the opportunities to do something positive about teaching students how to cope with, and manage stress.

Children need to learn how to divide and conquer their problems. They must learn to delegate responsibilities, manage their time, know themselves, set priorities, be enthusiastic, be prepared, be cooperative, relax, exercise, eat properly, and adapt to that which cannot be changed.

Don't these sound like topics that a good agriculture program teaches? They are, but maybe not in a unit approach.



BY RONALD GRIMES, THEME EDITOR

(Mr. Grimes is State FFA Executive Secretary and a Program Specialist for Vocational Agriculture, Bureau of Vocational, Technical and Adult Education, West Virginia Department of Education, Charleston, West Virginia 25305.)

"Class, today we are going to talk about knowing ourselves." We teach it in a much more subtle approach.

Through profitable and meaningful supervised occupational experience programs, students learn much more than the scientific side of it. Through involvement in FFA activities, students learn and experience much more than the activity. Through the hands-on approach to teaching, students are taught much more than the actual exercise. Through the problem-solving method of instruction, students learn skills essential for dealing with problems and stress.

Are we aware of the lessons being taught? Are they part of our objectives? Should they be? Yes! We must teach students how to handle stress. We must learn how to manage stress ourselves.

Numerous books have been written about stress management. There are numerous workshops across the country that discuss stress management. If you still feel inadequate about stress management after you have read the following articles, you probably should consider purchasing some of these books and/or attending workshops on stress management.

Teachers teach what they know! Teachers teach by example! How much do we know about stress and managing that stress? Are we being the "right" role model for our students and others when we deal with personal stresses?

Stress is a part of life. A major part of growing up, however, is learning to deal with it, says Dr. Barbara Korsch, head of general pediatrics at Los Angeles Children's Hospital and a professor at the University of Southern California School of Medicine.

As educators, have we learned to deal with stress? Have we developed the skills, outlets, or support systems to cope with it? Are we prepared to teach others how to manage stress? Can we manage stress?

Hit the Ground Running

The alarm clock rings at 4 a.m. A woman reaches to the nightstand, shuts off the alarm, and drags her body from the bed. She looks into the refrigerator to check tonight's dinner and then goes to the bathroom to get ready for work. Before leaving at 6:00 a.m., she prepares her child's breakfast and lunch, packs a diaper bag, and then loads it all into the car. She bundles the baby, carries him to the car, and after fastening him into the seat, begins the one and one half hour drive to the school where she teaches. On the way to school, she delivers the baby to the sitter. When she turns to leave, the baby clings to her neck and cries. All day she will feel the tension of a working mother that somehow she should be doing more for her son.

She arrives at school at 7:30 a.m. and is greeted by her students. The workday has officially begun. She starts with first period Agriculture Science I and ends with Ornamental Horticulture. She has from 12 to 28 students per class and academically they range from valedictorian candidates to those who are functionally illiterate. Some have behavioral disorders. Some have criminal records. Others operate their own businesses and have a net worth of over \$10,000 while others wonder where they will receive their next meal. They are a mixture. Teaching them is frustrating, challenging, and funny. For the most part, they are nobody's children, but they are hers. She and her students successfully operate three school greenhouses and try to keep a vocational agriculture laboratory of equipment in working order. Her students compete in contests, attend the FFA National Convention, and have several fund raising activities and community service projects. All have farming or agribusiness endeavors, and some attain state FFA degrees.

After classes, she picks up her son and brings him back to the school. The workday is not yet complete. All too often, there is a contest team to train, a student to supervise, or an adult class to teach. Somedays she arrives home at 5:30 p.m., and other times at 1 a.m. If she is home early, there may be three or four farm hands to feed, a field of tobacco to harvest, or a sick animal to help her husband treat. If not, she can relax by washing clothes, dishes, or cleaning the house. Many times, she falls asleep on the couch in the middle of a sentence. I know this woman. For two years I followed this same routine, not to mention attending church, paying bills, going to professional meetings, and other scheduled events.

This schedule would be enough to cause anyone stress, but when one adds illness, car trouble, crop failure, equipment repairs, etc., the pressure is doubled. As if this isn't enough, my husband is also a vocational agriculture instructor. Although we share similar responsibilities, we have long days.

Thankfully, I was offered a position closer to home. The commute is over, but the pressure remains. My new school



BY CONNIE DEWHURST

(Mrs. Dewhurst is a Vocational Agriculture Instructor at Ripley High School, Ripley, West Virginia 25271.)

was being accredited, and it seemed that every time I entered the classroom, I was being evaluated. New procedures caused headaches, and my son's routine with the sitter was interrupted. I soon learned that since every situation can be stressful, it's not important how many pressure problems we have, but instead, how we view and deal with them.

A Healthy Attitude

Probably the best way to handle problems is to look at them from a different perspective. Time doesn't heal all wounds. But, if we can ask ourselves in a month's time will I still be troubled by this instance, we will be better able to deal with the individual problem on broader terms. Finding day care for a sick child on the first day of vocational agriculture judging is a hassle. But, if I can remember that colds and contests pass, I can relieve the stress of the moment and realize that both will soon be a memory. A positive attitude not only helps me deal with the problem, but it also aids in the solution. If I become defeated with each setback that arises, I am less effective than if I am sure of finding a workable solution. If I don't find a solution, then at least I should be sure that I've done my best. After I've tried, then I'm content. By following Saint Francis' prayer to change the things I can and to accept those that I cannot, I will be more effective than if I agonize over guilt that cannot be helped.

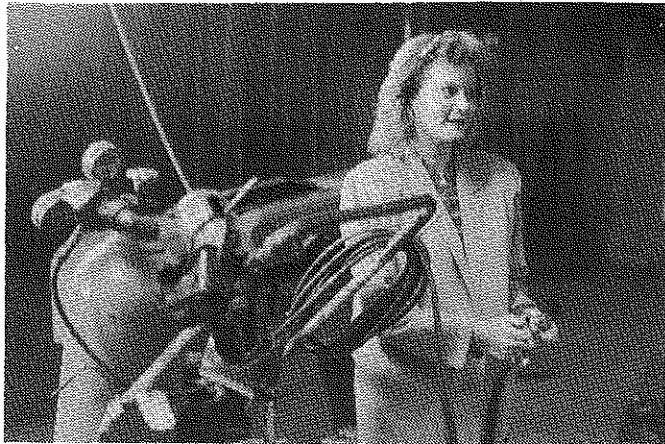
Organization

My biggest problem with stress is poor organization. With everything that my husband and I do at school, home, church, and on the farm, we desperately need to be organized. Often we find that we are not. So I'll practice what I preach. When possible: 1. Handle each paper only once. When I receive a memo, letter, or bill, I either file it, answer it, pay it, or throw it away. Stop procrastinating on simple tasks. It is such a relief to know that the paperwork is completed. 2. A place for everything and everything in its place. However, I find I am forever searching for a lost sweater, shoe, or my school keys. When this happens, I am late for appointments, I drive too fast to make up for the lost time, I see the blue lights flash behind me, and once again, stress rears its ugly head.

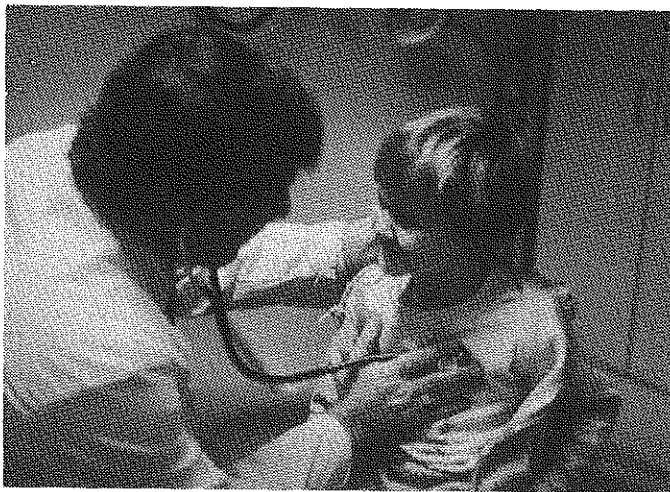
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Hit the Ground Running

(Continued from page 5)



Being prepared in the lab and classroom is vital for stress-free success.



Having a doctor that your child trusts helps lessen the stress involved from illness in the family. (Photos courtesy of the author.)

Time Management

My mom used to say that when a person becomes a mother, that person gets two more arms and eyes in the back of the head. I say they don't but they should. Very often, I find myself washing clothes, washing dishes, cooking dinner, bandaging a hurt, and reading the paper, all at the same time. As the pot boils over, as it usually does, then stress once again enters my life. One way to alleviate these pressures is to use wasted time. The doctor's office, the checkout line, and driving are all examples of places we can save time by using time.

Another way to better manage time and thus alleviate stress is to delegate tasks. I used to want to do everything myself. No one would help me accomplish all I was required to do. I would be self-sufficient. The only trouble with that mentality is that the person is usually tired and resentful. Now I'm a great delegater of tasks. Of course, I must be

very careful to whom I delegate. Once to keep from traveling 128 miles of county and state highway, I assigned a student to water the greenhouses for me on a Sunday. The student, who thus far had seemed trustworthy, turned out to be a thief, causing me more trouble and stress than it would have to make the commute myself.

Even when you are disappointed, remember that there almost always is someone responsible enough to trust. Keep searching. I have found reliable helpers and the rewards are many. Not only will those responsible people save you time and energy, but they will also be gaining experience and self worth by completing an important job.

Work

When we are young, we sometimes think that work is a curse, something that must be endured to get the material things for which we long. We must realize that work is a blessing. The ability, opportunity, and initiative to work are a God-given gift. If we can be truly happy in our work, then no stress can overcome us. The farm is very stressful because of loans, bills, and bad weather, but the physical work involved in baling hay or the accomplishment that comes from a finished recordbook can't be equalled for relieving stress.

Time Out

When my son is stressing our parent/child relationship to the final thread, he is sometimes disciplined with what we call "time out." He must sit on a chair all alone until he can refrain from the undesirable behavior. We as teachers need an all powerful mother to discipline us the same way. Not that we should always be on vacation (although I'm sure that some are), we should know when enough's enough and give ourselves a much deserved break. A vacation doesn't have to be in the summer. Try to get away when it's needed — not always when it's most convenient. You and your family will be glad you did.

In Conclusion

When my son is feeling good, he wakes in the morning with the attitude that nothing can slow him down. We say that he hits the ground running. Nothing that I've said is new. Keep a healthy attitude, be organized, manage your time, delegate tasks, and take time out are examples of advice that we've heard countless times. Many of the examples that I've offered were how NOT to manage stress. On the positive side, I've found a nursery school that my son loves. It is improving him as a human being more effectively than I ever could. I have a year under my belt at my new school so I am more familiar with the routine which at least makes me appear to be more stress free. I believe that this could be the first step. It is important to remember that teaching vocational agriculture is very stressful, but also very rewarding. If we use our past experiences as a history lesson, and benefit from (instead of repeat) our mistakes, pressures and tensions won't rule our lives. We will be able to adhere to the sage advice of my four-year-old and in teaching "we will hit the ground running."

Counseling Those Under Stress

A farm management instructor talked with a distraught farmer on the telephone until well after midnight. The farmer was in fear of losing the farm to creditors after five generations of his family having successfully managed the farm. An appointment was made to meet at the farm the next morning. The farmer was there for the appointment. The instructor said, "I wouldn't have been surprised if the farmer had taken his life during the night."

Perhaps the counseling skills of the instructor did save the life of the farmer. We, the teachers, supervisors, and teacher educators, want to be skilled in saying and doing the right thing to relieve the stress of those we serve — high school students, adults, teachers or college students.

The instructor in the example did not say, "Let's get the facts first," "It can't be all that bad," or "You asked for it." He said such profound things as "Uh huh," "I see" and "What are your feelings toward that?"

So, what is the best helping behavior for educators in agriculture to use? Dr. Jerry W. Robinson, Jr., a rural sociologist at the University of Illinois, began his chapter on helping behaviors (1985, chap. 13) with how to listen and continued with other suggestions for the counseling session. It seems to me that most of us in the agricultural education profession don't take our counseling role as seriously as we should. High school teachers especially seem to push hard to finish or organize others to finish their "to do list" every day. In all the haste, we might not recognize stress in others. Our clients may not want to burden such a busy person with their problems. Even if the opportunity for stress counseling presents itself, I'm afraid we are not inclined to spend the necessary time. A life in need of some repair might be in front of the teacher, yet he or she may cut the session short to repair a near worthless chair for the school.

Encourage Expression of Feelings

A good listener is an active listener. Robinson (1985) said, "An active listener is animated, using behavior which turns a person on, such as: leaning toward the talker, nodding the head in agreement, using an open hand to motion . . . tell me more, not a clenched hand, fist or steepled hands in front of the face" (p.110). The pensive, analyzing, or judgemental look is not appropriate when attempting to get persons to express their feelings. Other things that active listeners do are to repeat the last phrase or word in a statement, summarize what was said, and check to see if what was said was understood.

You, the reader, can check how well you listen by seeing if you can answer yes to the following questions.

1. Do you encourage people to talk by asking neutral, open-ended questions? Neutral means non-threatening and that it is not a loaded question. Open-ended means it does not require a yes or no answer and that it gives the talker



By MARTIN McMILLION

(Dr. McMillion is an Associate Professor of Agricultural Education at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061.)

flexibility in answering. This flexibility helps the talker express feelings and reveal sources of stress. Just try to be as sympathetic as you know how, and your questioning will usually be correct.

2. Do you look at the person doing the talking, keeping good eye contact?
3. Do you listen equally well to all kinds of people? Does their personality, background, or habits appreciably affect your patience, sympathy, or understanding? Aggression and withdrawal are symptoms of stress. "If you are able to recognize aggression and withdrawal as symptoms of stress, you can react to these conditions with more understanding" (Robinson, 1985, p. 112).
4. Do you listen for feelings?
5. Do you use long pauses, giving the person time to think?
6. Do you nod your head, gesture, and encourage the person non-verbally?
7. Do you repeat key phrases, feelings and ideas? This lets the talker know you are listening and it stimulates more conversation.
8. Do you put your work and other distractions aside?
9. Do you withhold your opinions until after you learn what the other person feels and thinks?

There does come a time in the counseling session when the stressed persons have "talked themselves out" and the counselor has to move beyond the good-listener role.

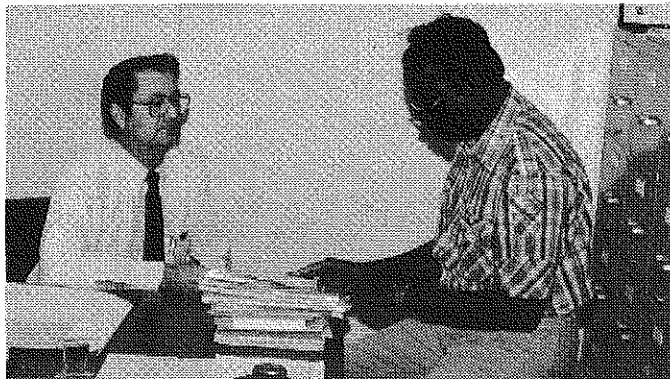
Identify Sources of Stress

The source or sources of stress must be identified. The stressed person may or may not have correctly identified and revealed the source of stress during the "feelings expression" part of the session. The counselor must not jump to conclusions about the source or sources of stress, but must ask the same kind of non-threatening, open-ended questions as discussed earlier to discover the source of stress. "Sometimes . . . the source of stress the person cites is only the tip of the iceberg. When a small incident triggers an unexpectedly strong reaction, check the possibility of another stressor" (Robinson, 1985, p. 113). Encouragement to discuss the real sources of frustration is necessary.

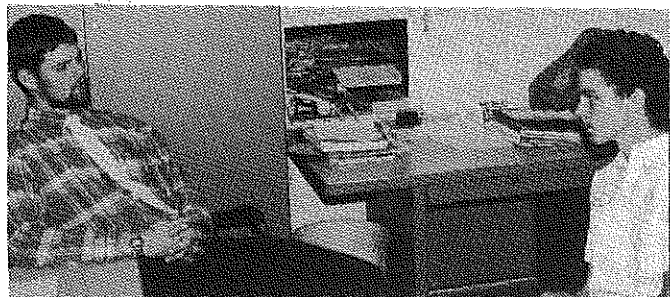
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Counseling Those Under Stress

(Continued from page 7)



Dr. J. Dale Oliver of VPI and SU listens to the troubles of a Sri Lankan graduate student without a country.



Student teacher, Phillip Carr (left), tries his skills as a stress management counselor at Smithfield High School in Virginia.

Certain life events are known to produce stress. Researchers have identified these and assigned stress scores to them. When the sum of a person's stress score reaches a certain number, the individual will not only exhibit stress but also will very likely become physically ill if the stress endures.

The life event scales do not list the likely events that face high school students, but it is not difficult to see that loss of a boyfriend, failing grades, and trouble with car payments could produce an overload of stress equivalent to three of the top stressful events on the adult list. Randy Wiegel (1981) listed 46 stressful life events. Holmes and Rahe (1967) listed 43.

A knowledge of the stressful events in the life of those you serve will let you know how much stress they are under. Usually, in the order of things, you see the stress and must discover the cause, but it is possible to see a cause (from life events list) first and know there is stress. Also you will know about how much stress the life event is likely to generate in the average person.

Relieve Pressure

Once the stressors are identified, the counselor must lead the person in ways to relieve the pressure and hopefully find full or partial relief from the stress. Stress from overwork can be relieved by giving more time, requiring less work, providing help to do the work, or giving suggestions to make the work easier. Relief of pressure can come from just getting away from the problem for awhile, referred to as withdrawal. The adult may go on a trip and the student may

skip school. Neither of these solves the problem, but they relieve the pressure temporarily which allows the person to look at the situation a little more objectively and helps facilitate a solution to the stressful situation.

Help Adaptation

Some problems which cause stress have solutions and some do not. One must "learn to live with" some health problems. This was and is the case of a dairy farmer who had his legs mangled in a silo unloader and had to spend months healing and being fitted with an artificial leg. The farmer cannot do several things he once could, but he has adapted to the situation. The government program for dairy herd buy out, which came three years later, helped the farmer to further adapt by switching to beef cattle.

"Adaptation can take place in different ways: Re-defining the situation, finding temporary outlets and developing and implementing a plan of action" (Robinson, 1985, p. 116). The plan of action belongs to the stressed person. The counselor provides information, brings up alternatives and asks questions to help the person decide on a plan. Insisting on a plan the person does not like will only create more stress.

Summary

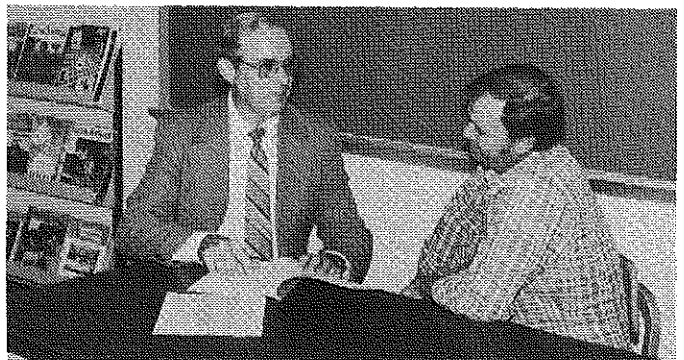
Professionals in agricultural education are asked to assume many roles. The role of counselor to those under stress, like other roles, requires some specific competencies. We in the profession frequently talk with stressed persons. We just as well use the competencies known to be successful.

Remember to listen for feelings, use verbal and non-verbal means to encourage, and assist the person at each of the four phases of a counseling session.

1. Encourage expression of feelings
2. Identify source of stress
3. Relieve pressure
4. Help adaptation

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Virginia Area Supervisor, D.D. Oliver, counsels one of his teachers. Such sessions often eliminate stress. (All photos courtesy of the author.)

Stress Management

Problems of stress in the workplace cannot be covered in an article of this length. Workshops up to a week in length have been devoted to the subject, covering stress induced by the death of a spouse to the stress of working in a hostile environment. Two very small areas of stress management that are applicable to vocational teachers will be addressed:

- (1) *Stress caused by a number of little, nagging irritations.*
- (2) *Stress caused by too much to do at the same time.*

We often see articles or books that go into detail on how to cope with stress. You'll note that this article is entitled "Stress Management." To me, coping means breaking even. I don't like to take on jobs where the best I can expect is to break even.

My wife is always striving for self-improvement. I really don't think she needs it, but she continues to buy books on how to be better organized, how to be a better mother, improve family health, etc. I borrowed a book she had on stress. It was written by a doctor who evidently thought the best method of handling stress was to forget it. His idea seemed to be to grow a garden, take long walks, or do more community service. All these are good ideas but they just can't be used in your job whenever the roof falls in and you have more to do than can be done or can't get your job done because someone else isn't carrying her or his share of the load.

Stress is cumulative. Imagine, if you will, that you have cut off a little piece of the old-fashioned sticky fly paper and dropped it into a Teflon-coated pan. When you shake it around, it won't stick. Now add another little piece and shake that around. Sooner or later, the two pieces make contact and cling. Add more pieces, shake more, and you will end up with a big glob of sticky flypaper. None of the pieces is substantial, but the total seems bigger than the sum of its parts.

Let's imagine that some morning you left the house just a little late for work, maybe because breakfast was late, and you were hurrying along when you caught up with a slow driver in a place where you couldn't pass. Less than a mile from school you finally get around, but in the parking lot the two persons on either side of your parking spot got a bit close to the lines and you have trouble getting out without banging doors. In your struggle you manage to brush against a car and get a large smudge on your clothes. You no sooner step inside the doors than you meet a fellow teacher, who says "good morning", but also looks at his watch.

If you're an average person, you have just shaken the Teflon pan. None of these incidents amount to much, but they already have accumulated into a mass that seems greater than its parts. If you are not now in a bad humor,

By HAROLD W. SULLIVAN

(Mr. Sullivan is Director of Administration and Planning, Bureau of Vocational, Technical and Adult Education, West Virginia Department of Education, Charleston, West Virginia 25305.)

it won't take much more to put you there. Already, your ability to perform at peak efficiency is impaired. If you're the typical overworked teacher, you need to operate at peak efficiency and you can't afford to let these little irritations, just because they all happened in a short time, become one large irritation instead of a bunch of little ones. There is usually more opportunity for stress buildup in large irritations than in small.

Stress Management

Different types of stress require different methods of management. For the situation where a lot of little things have added up to a bad start, use the "divide and conquer" technique. The late breakfast, the slow driver, the inconsiderate persons who parked on top of the lines, the smudge on your clothes, and the teacher who noted you came in late are not individually very significant. Your mind, however, has shaken the Teflon pan and is trying to convince you that all of these little problems actually are one great big problem. Big problems cause stress; stress impairs your efficiency as well as giving you a disposition better suited to privacy.

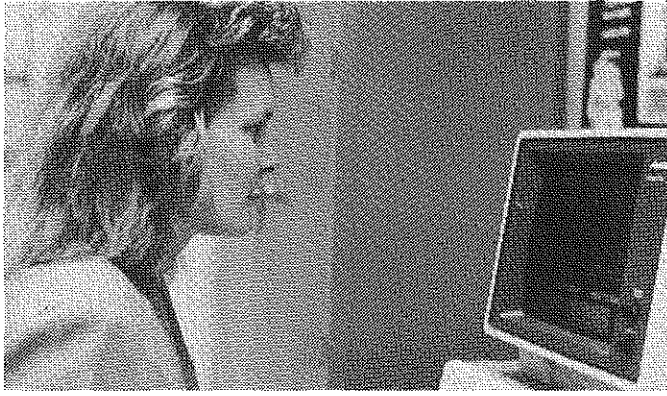
It's time to divide and conquer, and you need not take a lot of time to do it. You can develop a little trick to use when everything is going wrong and you feel like biting the head off the next person who crosses you. Force yourself to ask: "What's bugging me?" Then, after you quit lying to yourself and pretending it wasn't the teacher who said you came in late that got your goat, start to divide and conquer. List the aggravations, one by one, and decide if there is anything you want to do about them. Decide if any are worth any effort at all. Most of the time they are not, but maybe there is one that needs attention. If so, decide right then how you're going to handle it. If you are going to complain to the people who parked on your space, set a time to do it. If you are not going to take any action, force the issue completely from your mind. It takes a little practice.

It's hard to give up irritations. We like to hold on to them. Self-pity, one of the most comforting of all emotions, is also very destructive. You must employ some personal management procedure that will allow you to put these minor irritations into perspective and not allow your emotions to shake the pan with flypaper.

(Continued on page 10)

Stress Management

(Continued from page 9)



The use of new technology such as the computer saves time and energy for teachers. (Photo courtesy of Connie Dewhurst of Ripley, WV.)

Tackling the Big Job

Now let's go on to more serious problems such as overwork. We'll start by talking about shearing sheep.

Back home on the farm we raised sheep. In those days, the 1930s, we didn't have the technical expertise of today's agricultural society and we'd never heard of the Australian method of shearing sheep. We didn't like to shear sheep. We caught a sheep, tied its back feet together, tied its front feet together, tied a tobacco stick between the front and back legs, then threw the poor critter up on a table made of a barn door on sawhorses and assaulted it with a pair of shearing clippers powered by a man turning a crank on a gearbox. We always started out the day by making a decision: Should we shear the buck first or last?

Shearing a female sheep was bad enough but the ewe only tried to escape. The buck tried to kill us. I don't know if we had the meanest buck sheep in the United States or not, but I'll bet he'd have taken a ribbon in any bad-sheep class you could put together. To shear him first meant we'd use up a lot of energy before we even got started on the rest of the flock; to shear him last meant we'd be dog-tired and still have to go 15 rounds with that bruiser. We would seriously debate the issue and always come to the same decision — we'd shear him last. This ill-founded decision made shearing even the ewes distasteful because we spent the day dreading the job at the end.

Here is a one-question personality test for you. In all honesty, which option would you take in this situation? You are just beginning your planning period. There are six tasks before you. Five of them are rather routine — they won't require all that much time and you know how to do all of them. However, the sixth is a big one and one you really don't want to do because you're not even quite sure how to do it.

Big vs. Little Jobs

Will you polish off the smaller jobs and get them out of the way before you start the big job? Or will you let the little jobs go and start on the big job immediately?

Many people easily convince themselves to finish the smaller jobs so they will have a "clear mind" before starting the big job. Let's see how it works.

You start on the first small job and complete it. After a few interruptions by callers or the telephone, and you also get the second one done. The third poses an unexpected difficulty and your planning period ends before you can complete it. Unfortunately, during the time you were working on the first three jobs, three more small, easily accomplished jobs have accumulated and lie there, vying for attention at your next free moment.

The day ends with three routine jobs done and three more waiting. The nasty job, Old Biggie, is still lurking over in the corner.

Original objectives can be modified. Since you're tired and don't plan to work late again this week, you decide to let Old Biggie wait a little longer.

Guess what happens to Old Biggie? He goes home with you. He's not in your briefcase, of course, but he's in your mind. Instead of going home feeling good about the day and all that you've accomplished, you go home feeling a twinge of guilt. Old Biggie is still to be done. The routine jobs were incidental yet you spent all your time on them.

Old Biggie stays with you at home, even if you go jogging or work in the garden. You may shunt him aside for moments but he's still there. Give him a new name. Call him Stress. You put off shearing the buck sheep until last.

You can handle this type of stress without knocking yourself out. You will have to fool yourself a little, but you can do that; you have for years. No one said you had to finish Old Biggie that day. Your stress comes from the fact that you didn't even try; your number one priority never got touched.

To alleviate this problem, simply do a little work on Old Biggie the first thing. Resist the urge to work on the little jobs; instead, promise yourself that you'll just work 10 minutes on Old Biggie and then you'll turn to some of the smaller tasks.

This little change in management may surprise you with its results. You might get interested and wipe out Old Biggie and, while you rested, you may also have taken care of a little job or two.

If you work on Old Biggie and leave some of the smaller jobs undone, how do you feel on the way home? Guilty? Of course not. After all, the big job is well on the way and the little jobs can easily be done first thing in the morning. You don't feel guilty at all; you feel you have accomplished something. A feeling of accomplishment goes a long way in reducing stress.

Many people make a list of things to do and, as each job is completed, carefully mark it off. This little tool helps in stress management. The marking-off is the key; it is visible proof of accomplishment, an excellent reinforcement, especially that which enhances our self-image. Stress doesn't hang around people who feel good about themselves.



Delegating tasks to capable students helps relieve time-management related stress. (Photo courtesy of Connie Dewhurst of Ripley, WV.)

When You're Buried

Now let's consider a related stressful situation, the problem of being buried in work.

Suppose it's the beginning of a normal work day and you didn't bring any irritations like slow drivers and dirty clothes to work with you. The dark cloud hanging over you is one you cannot avoid — the problem of too many things to do at the same time. We've heard fellow workers say, "I'd just like to sweep everything on my desk off into the wastebasket and start over!" Unless you're independently wealthy, you'd better think of some other solution.

For purposes of discussion, let's say you have five major tasks to complete and all are important and all are due. These, too, are like sticky flypaper and you may have already thoroughly shaken the Teflon pan. The dark cloud cannot be parted by dividing and conquering, or tackling Old Biggie first. You don't even know where to start. Worse, you know that wherever you start, you're not going to get done.

It's easy to spend a half hour miserably trying to decide what to do. Your problem is further compounded by stress triggered by knowing you can't possibly get done. You begin to feel overwhelmed and alone, beset by insurmountable obstacles, and unappreciated. Looking around, you note that other teachers don't have nearly as much work, are probably paid more, spend their time trying to get brownie points with the principal and . . .

Can you see what is happening? Your day is already ruined and you have not even started. Worse yet, the time you've spent feeling sorry for yourself was time you really needed if you're to be productive.

The problem can be phrased best by misquoting an old bromide: You can't see the trees for the forest!

Set Priorities

It's easy to say that, when faced with several jobs, to put them in the order of importance and start on the most important first. That's wasted advice; you didn't get where you are without knowing how to establish priorities. If you could have ranked the five jobs in priority, you'd already have been hard at work. You're perplexed because the jobs are

all of equal importance and you don't know where to start. You are dismayed because you can see the forest but you can't see a single tree.

You may believe that making decisions causes stress. Failure to make decisions is a far greater hazard. An old proverb says the longest journey starts with a single step, which may be slightly inaccurate. The longest journey may start with a decision to make the trip.

Before starting work, take another instant to reconsider the priority matter. If, within 15 seconds, one job doesn't rear up as top priority, then they remain equal. It's time to admit it. It's also time for action.

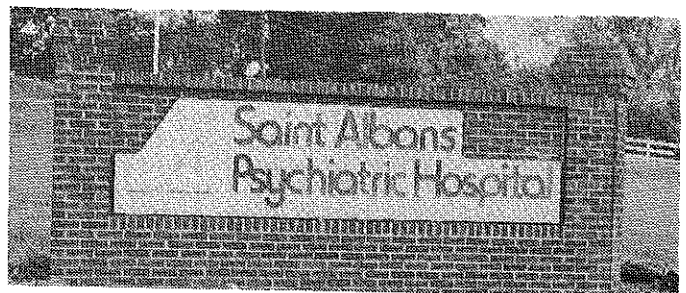
Take a tree. Any tree. You can't jump on your horse and ride off in all directions and you can't do all of the jobs simultaneously. On the 16th second grab your axe and knock out a chip. Don't waste any more time on the impossible task of establishing priority. Take the job next to your elbow, but start on something! You don't have to even cut the tree down; you can chop awhile and then take a few whacks at another tree if it makes you feel better. Sometimes it's better to try to chase all five jobs along, if only to be able to truthfully say "I'm working on it."

You can't avoid the stress of overwork but you can put it in its place by accomplishing something. When the chips stop falling, we acknowledge to ourselves that we have done something, therefore, we are productive, therefore we're a pretty nice person, therefore we feel good . . . and the stress disappears. The work doesn't but we already knew that some of it wouldn't be done on time. It really wasn't the work that was causing the trouble; it was the self-inflicted mental anguish that was churning your insides. Stress has many symptoms.

So quitting time comes and you've knocked yourself out all day. You got one job fairly well done and started on another, and know how you're to do the third. You go home. How do you feel?

Do you feel guilty? Of course not. You gave it your best. You were faced with an impossible situation and you went 15 rounds at full steam. You know you could have done no more. Where is Old Stress? Somewhere else. You sweat him away. You buried him because you were successful. You were not successful in getting all the jobs done; you were successful because you gave it your best shot and you feel rather good about it. Stress and sweat don't mix very well. Stress does better with people who can't see the trees for the forest and let their axes rust while they agonize about where to chop.

(Continued on page 12)



Stress management can keep people out of institutions like the one pictured. (Photo courtesy of Martin McMillion, VPI and SU.)

Stress Management

(Continued from page 11)

In Conclusion

Now let's recap the three little areas of stress management we've covered:

(1) Don't let little irritations accumulate. Don't let the little pieces of flypaper stick together and become greater than the sum of their parts. Keep them divided and conquer them one by one.

(2) Shear the buck sheep first. Start your day with the hardest job. You don't have to finish; just don't keep put-

ting it off and building up stress because the nasty job is still waiting. Start on Old Biggie even if you have to quit and work on something else after just a few minutes.

(3) When you're overworked and don't even know where to begin, start somewhere. Don't get in the position of not being able to see the trees for the forest. Agonizing over priorities wastes time and builds stress. Take a swing at some thing, even if it later develops it was not the most important.

You can cope with stress by diverting your attention with activities not related to your job, such as raising a victory garden, jogging, or some other cop-out. You can manage stress by getting and developing a few mental tools that will allow you to get control of yourself.

THEME

Pass The Chocolate: Seven Secrets on Stress Management

When I told my secretary that I had been asked to write an article on stress management, she laughed out loud right to my face. She then proceeded to imitate some of my nervous tantrums and fussing which always envelop me each year during the last several weeks before the state FFA convention. I ask her three times in the same five minutes whether she made this or that mailing yet. I get short with people on the telephone. I'm testy in staff meetings. I'm less patient with requests for interpretations of rules and policies. I have trouble sleeping. I think all this is collectively called stress, or at least the symptoms thereof. And I have been smitten by it. But perhaps that qualifies me to write on the topic, somewhat like a minister we once interviewed at our church. I was on the pulpit committee to select a new minister. At the conclusion of one of the interviews, an elder on the committee posed that inevitable question: "Tell us, why should we hire you over these other candidates?" The middle-aged minister gazed through the window as he obviously attempted to compose some profound statement which would cinch his employment. But his prolonged silence alarmed his wife. Fearing that he was stumped by the question, she came charging to the rescue. "Well, I can answer that," she said. "Having lived with him for 21 years, I can tell you that he's an expert on sin!"

Perhaps I am like many others, an expert on stress, by surviving the first year of teaching, and other wars. I've heard credentialed speakers at inservice meetings talk about the causes of stress. Some said it was too much responsibility. Others said it was too little rest. Still others said it was too much pressure. Others said that it was too little resources. These presentations definitely went from the sublime to the ridiculous when one lecturer I heard said that stress was, in part, a result of too much caffeine in the diet, and he therefore recommended abstaining from chocolate.



BY ROBIN C. HOVIS

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That did it. I like chocolate. It's all-American. I'm going to buy it and eat it. It would be stressful for me to give it up.

Stress is not necessarily the result of too little rest. Warren Reed, under whom I student taught, averaged 5-6 hours of sleep per night. He did it voluntarily for 31 years. He loved it. It's not the result of too much responsibility. Franklin Roosevelt was responsible for leading a devastated nation to economic recovery and then bringing victory in World War II. It is difficult to comprehend the magnitude of his responsibilities. He did it voluntarily for 15 years. He loved it.

Stress is not the result of too much pressure. Lee Iacocca brushed aside a chance to slip into early retirement and enjoy his wealth, so that he could become the chairman of the mammoth corporation which was plunging toward bankruptcy. The jobs of hundreds of thousands of people would be lost if he failed. Millions of dollars of borrowed money would be in default if he failed. He's borne that pressure voluntarily for 10 years. He loves it.

And it's not the result of too little resources. J.C. Penney, Colonel Sanders, and Joyce Hall (founder of Hallmark)

were each completely broke — totally without resources — just before they began to build their multi-million dollar businesses.

Stress arises from a lack of confidence.

- *You're attempting to do a job you're not confident you can do.*
- *You're involved in a situation where you're not confident of your ability to influence the outcome.*
- *You've asked someone to help with a task and you're not confident that person will perform well.*
- *You're not confident of your ability to manage finances, relationships, or personnel.*
- *You're not confident of yourself, period. So you worry. You're stressed.*

Thus, it seems that the key to reducing stress is not in reducing responsibilities or taking long vacations or changing your diet, but in **increasing your confidence in what you're doing.** Here are some steps to follow which have been helpful to many. They are the "seven secrets."

1. Ask for help. Maybe you need someone else's brain power or technical knowledge or philosophy on something. Maybe you need an errand runner or a strong back. Sharing the workload with competent colleagues raises your confidence in the outcome. My principal, superintendent, and university and state supervisors really boosted my confidence and gave very helpful suggestions while I was teaching.

2. Secure the knowledge and skills you need. You can't be confident in teaching what you don't know. Trying to teach what you don't know can cause stress in the form of confused students, embarrassment in front of the class, discipline problems, and dissatisfied parents. (The author speaks from experience!) Attend inservice workshops. Use "how to do it" books on technical topics. Take a course. Spend half of a Saturday with a vet or a mechanic or a landscaper and ask them to show you how to perform the skill which you're about to teach.

3. Plan your work better. (Again, my secretary laughs.) Here's where we pack-rats have the edge. Files bulging with samples saved from previous years' activities are invaluable aids to good planning. Practice demonstrations before the class assemblies.

4. Give more complete explanations of your expectations to students, subordinates and helpers. The best leaders put expectations, rules and policies in writing. The writing doesn't have to be voluminous — just clear and complete. Give examples to add clarity. Post snapshots of projects which graded "A" in previous years.

5. Revise your expectations to make them realistic. Obviously, you can't be confident of your ability to accomplish a goal if the goal is beyond reach.

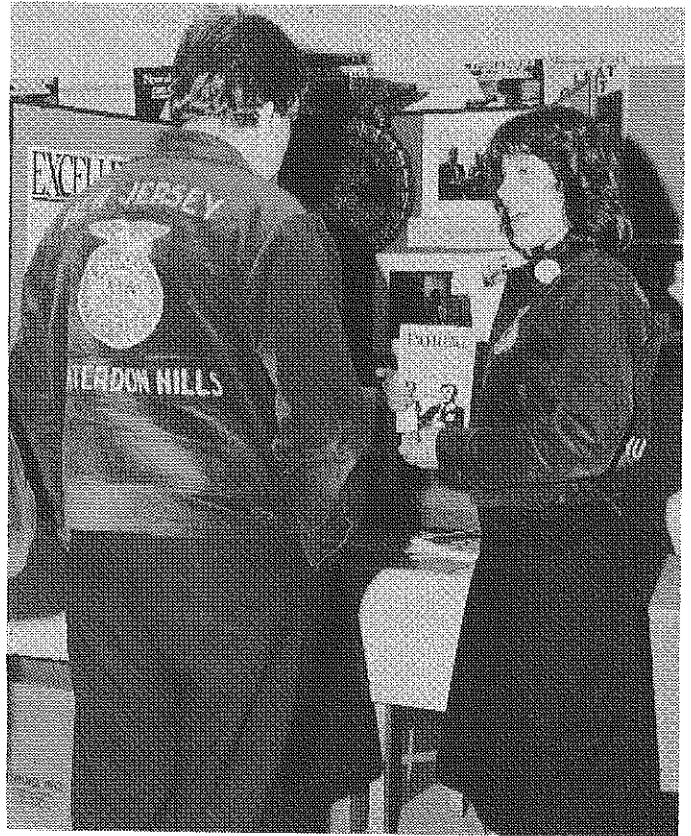
6. Search for positives. Occasionally making a private list of what you feel you've accomplished will serve as refreshing evidence that you are more capable and effective than you perceived. That builds confidence.

In recent years much has been said and written on the subject of stress and stress management. I've read some of it and listened to some of it and, frankly didn't find much help

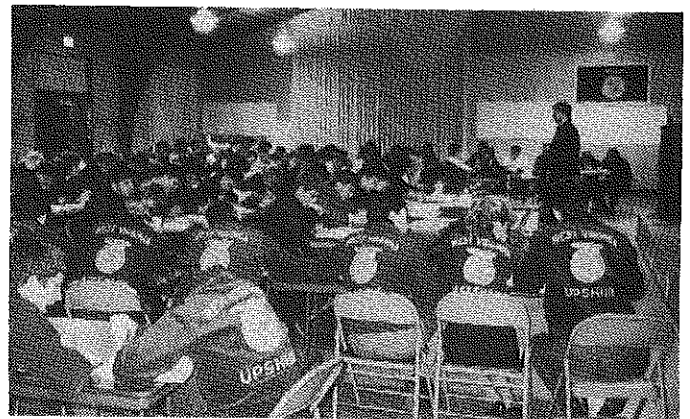
in any of it. But I have found that there is an infallible correlation between my lack of confidence and my degree of stress. I, therefore, recommend the foregoing six suggestions, plus one more .

7. Don't allow your secretary to laugh at you. It wrecks your confidence.

Pass the chocolate.



Many months of planning are worthwhile as FFA chapter members have the opportunity to meet one another, learn about FFA, and have fun at the State FFA Convention. (Photo courtesy of Andrew Daddio, Cook College, Rutgers University.)



West Virginia Leadership Conference for Chapter Officers. Several workshops can be conducted to assist students in dealing with a variety of topics such as stress management. (Photo courtesy of the West Virginia FFA Association.)

Stress Management — You Too Can Be Happy

According to Webster's dictionary, stress is defined as: To subject to the action of external forces; to overstrain; intense strain; as under the stress of circumstances. Further, Webster says management is the art of managing; conduct, control, direction.

In modern day society, one must contend with an array of pressures that make those of yesteryear seem relatively simple. Technologies in all arenas of societal advancement have increased humans' awareness that complexities of just "keeping up" are far more rigorous than was experienced in earlier generations. It is human nature to possess a desire for happiness, achievement, and success. We like for people to think well of us. To realize these positive qualities of life, there must be some well disciplined control associated with both human internal and external forces as related to situations in which he/she operates as a being.

This writer is a firm believer in the Bible as a guide for life associated with joy, hope, peace, and tranquility. Philipians 4:13 says, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me." Stress management programs must include the guide book for direction of effort that will reconcile man's body with external daily activities and situations.

Burron and Crews¹ indicate that: "Successful stress management, then, is the ability to use our God-given capabilities to respond confidently and optimistically to triumph or tragedy through the power of the Holy Spirit."

Stress is no respecter of persons, therefore, its subjects must give thought to where it might most likely be encountered and how best to cope with it. The rich, the middle class and the poor, the successful, men, women, youth, educated, uneducated, professional and non-professional are all affected in varying degrees. Negative qualities, as perceived in relationship to the wholeness of a person, might be identified as emotional, physical, spiritual, and psychological.

Sources of Stress

Life's events associated with stress levels which must be considered in a management program² are shown in Figure 1.

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Death | Change in financial state |
| Divorce | Change to different work |
| Marital separation | Mortgage |
| Marriage | Child leaving home |
| Retirement | Trouble with in-laws |
| Change in health | Outstanding personal achievement |
| Pregnancy | Change in living conditions |
| Sex difficulties | Trouble with boss |
| Change in residence | Change in schools |
| Change in sleeping habits | Change in church activities |
| Single person living alone | Change in social activities |

Figure 1: Life's events that produce stress.



BY O. CLAUDE MCGHEE

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| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Long work hours | Loans for students |
| Adult farmer classes | Liability |
| Young farmer classes | Expectations from local school personnel |
| District meetings | Expectations from state school personnel |
| FFA activities | Attending meetings and conferences |
| Reports | Family expectations |
| Student records | Community expectations |
| Course of study | Unstable homelife |
| Insurance | Student safety |
| Personal finances | School finances |
| Etc. | |

Figure 2: Sources of Anxiety and Frustration for Agricultural Educators.

The lists in Figures 1 and 2 are not all inclusive and the reader, no doubt, will envision others that are applicable to his/her individual situation.

Stress In Our Lives

Often times a person creates his/her own stress pattern. Some individuals seem to thrive on stress while others become devastated by its presence. Both groups deserve recognition, but the latter group appears to possess the greater need. The first group is acquainted with management techniques that permit them to function even when faced with varying degrees of stress.

The writer likes to think that the person who manages can cope with stress as a result of having an understanding of that rare quality perceived as "wholeness of the individual." Within this quality one would include emotional, physical, spiritual, and psychological wholeness. An individual must have a balance and a mutual working relationship between these four strength qualities to enjoy a minimum of stress associated situations. Some would say that the greatest feeling of a person is that of wholeness of spirit and wholeness of the physical being. These two appear to exhibit a positive and therapeutic effect upon the others. A person needs to know and understand self to be more real and experience internal peace. Mental health professionals thrive on those of us who do not possess the ability

to employ management techniques or at least not practice stress preventive measures.

In these traumas of real life situations, figuratively speaking, we build a wall of pretense to hide who and what we really are. We live in an age of pretense. We spend hours trying to impress others. We want to impress the boss, a friend, a fellow teacher, the supervisor, or the parents of the students. Today success seems to be measured by being above average. We often think being ordinary or average is failure. We are pressured on every side to be "the best" at whatever we do - at the top of the list.³ Of course being above average creates a better feeling about ourselves and success causes our peers to think well of us also.⁵ Lest the reader perceives that the writer is promoting mediocrity he will defend the above truth through motivational forces that embody "good" conformity to standards and rules of success. Success as used here means striving toward excellence in the areas of finance, personal health, and job (and education if a student).³

Consequences of Stress

This writer wants to say that he experienced a minimum of stress during 43 years of professional performance, but that would be an untruth. He has experienced three heart attacks and quadruple bypass surgery. However, he is a firm believer that we contribute much to our stress and health problems by our food selection and intake. Today my physician and cardiologist say that I am healthy and experiencing a minimum amount of stress because I have learned many things since 1959 when I encountered my first coronary attack. I am convinced that my eating habits contributed more to the heart condition than did the stress factor. However, when we combine the effects of both, the physical side of the rectangle creates an imbalance, thus, causing a traumatic condition that may affect one or more of the remaining three sides. A person is a product of the food consumed. Then, too, to exhibit that wholeness of body, one must practice disciplined exercise. Management of stress-effect is in direct proportion to the inner peace one enjoys from a life of dignity, discipline, and integrity as a result of positive thinking, a high value system, and faith in a Supreme Being.

Normally, when we experience problems, stress, pressures, etc., we feel relief if we can talk to a close friend. This permits the friend to share at least part of the stress burden. We are actually relieving our own pressures through a management technique of placing them on his/her "shoulders." The Supreme Being is ever present to listen to our woes and provide comfort when many other remedies are only temporary. For example, Cliff C. Jones⁴ says that, "In one year, doctors write more than 60 million prescriptions for Valium, one for every four Americans." This definitely is a temporary technique for disciplining and controlling the inner dynamics that result in either positive or negative external expressions of self.

One might pose the question, "Is there anything healthful about stress?" We indicated earlier that some people thrive on stress and find it conducive to the four elements of wholeness when adequately managed.

Coping Strategies

It seems appropriate to consider management meth-

odology and techniques that seem to have worked for most any age, personality, occupation, or profession. These tend to ensure personal peace, tranquility, and happiness in both social and professional environments.

1. **Know yourself.** Few of us really know who we are, for what we stand, where we are going, and how we choose to arrive at our selected destination. It is expedient that we operate with a positive mind and know who is in charge.

2. **One's value system must be of a nature that would make him or her and others happy.** Priorization plays a major role.

3. **Operate in an environment (social, professional, and spiritual) that makes expressions of love and concern a trademark of your personality.** Many of us have lost the art of telling and/or expressing love for our fellow human beings.

4. **To avoid stress one cannot practice putting off until tomorrow what should be done today.** It seems advantageous to be a planner. Then, it becomes equally important to follow through according to a predetermined timetable of events to a successful climax. With proper planning one's work/responsibilities become a pleasure rather than a stressful chore.

5. **Be enthusiastic and enjoy your work.** Maybe if one doesn't enjoy his/her work, it is time to move on and make room for another who will. Another option is to make changes in attitude, personality, and other controllable personal qualities that will permit an overall positive nature.

6. **Are you oversensitive and look for those things that offend you, thus creating stress?** The happy and productive person is the one who understands others, demonstrates a loving caring concern - my God first, my fellow man second, and self third. This person never tries to "walk" on others to achieve self-appointed goals.

7. **Practicing honesty and truthfulness as a lifestyle will mean much toward converting stressful situations to non-stress.**

8. **Be prepared.** Whatever the occasion, if one prepares well (early) this person can eliminate much stress that may lead to depression.

9. **Be understanding and sympathetic of the other person's problems and his/her desire to solve them.** Often times all we need to do is to be there - listen, understand, and offer suggestions if we feel inclined.

10. **Demonstrate a cooperative spirit and loyalty to the group and/or project(s) with which you are working.**

11. **It is a cold cruel world out there, but it is a real world.** There is so very much to be done. Tough choices must be dealt with. One must understand his/her limitations, learn when to say "yes" or "no", and then exercise self competence to equate the final product with excellence.

12. **Build family harmony.** Sehnert² gives five suggestions that would nurture family love and harmony.

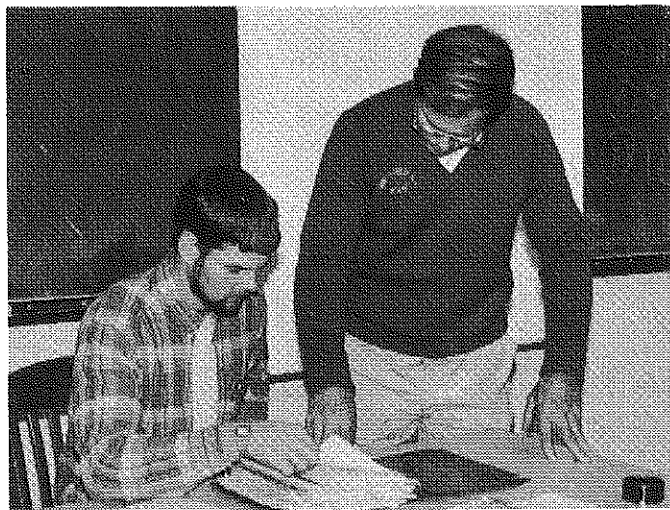
a. *Be cautious with criticism - do not judge your brother until you have walked two weeks in his moccasins.*

b. *Allow for solitude.*

(Continued on page 16)

Stress Management — You Too Can Be Happy

(Continued from page 15)



Mike Pierce (standing), a cooperating teacher at Smithfield High School in Virginia, counsels Phillip Carr, a student teacher, about his lesson planning. Student teaching is a most stressful time for all parties involved. (Photo courtesy of Martin B. McMillion of VPI & SU.)

- c. *Be a good listener.*
- d. *Show your anger, but do it in an understanding way with a desire to separate how you feel about the event and the behavior of the person who created the bad feelings.*
- e. *Be willing to apologize.*

Lint⁶ indicates that J. Allen Peterson in *Conquering Family Stress* notes that "conflict is certainly not pleasant, but it can be a stepping stone to growth in your relationship if it is the transition from one stage of development to another. Conflict becomes constructive when it is resolved with some positive change. And change requires action."

The agricultural education professional spends much time from her or his family. There MUST be an understanding and a prioritization of events, activities, and values. Because he or she is away from home does not necessarily mean neglect of the family. There should, however, always be a proportionate amount of time for family togetherness. I enthusiastically enjoyed both professional and family activities and obligations which were held in balance through my church associated activities.

13. Relaxation and recreation are essential to a sound body, mind and spirit. Find your technique and don't neglect it. My technique is a catnap, even for only 10 minutes.

14. Exercise regularly. Since 1976, I have walked at least two miles daily, sometimes as many as eight miles. This practice requires discipline, but the results far outweigh the calories used. One who exercises finds that it is far more beneficial than tranquilizers furnished by the druggist.

15. Employ healthy eating habits. Have you ever thought

about why we have so many obese (fat) people in our society? Many of them are under what seems to be "uncontrollable" pressures. They eat to relieve their stress, thus, inhibiting a healthy and active body that can cope with the every day stresses of a complex society.

16. Observe recommended nutrition practices and the seven golden rules for good health as prescribed by Sehnert.²

- a. Never smoke cigarettes.
- b. Avoid alcohol or use moderately.
- c. Get regular physical activity.
- d. Obtain 7-8 hours of sleep each day.
- e. Maintain proper weight
- f. Eat breakfast.
- g. Don't snack between meals.

17. Prayer can be quite valuable as an ingredient of the stress management recipe. It seems helpful many times to be able to transfer at least part of the stress load to another. Here is where the Supreme Being comes into play as He makes available His love, forgiveness and concern for humanity.

18. Planning is an essential if one is to accomplish goals with the least amount of stress. Planning can be overdone, but let's think of planning not as a burdensome chore, but as a means whereby the planner is relieving potential stress that might occur as a result of an inadequate design pattern.

19. The right attitude can mean the difference between positive and negative reactions. One must envision the circumstances (events) as positive rather than negative if the nervous system is to react in a relaxed, peaceful fashion.

In Conclusion

The writer has attempted to treat success according to a four dimensional pattern. These play a vital role and are manipulative in nature as individuals practice management techniques that produce either positive or negative responses. As agricultural educators in a complex, progressive, and ongoing society, we owe it to ourselves, our families, our students, and society to be proponents of non-stress qualities sufficient to live and challenge others to balance life daily in a manner that will ensure love, joy, peace, hope, and tranquility as a result of wholeness of the person - physical, emotional, spiritual, and psychological balance.

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Taking Advantage of Stress

Stress is a part of everyday life. We are constantly subjected to stress, both positively and negatively. Hans Selye's view is that it is unthinkable to avoid stress in our daily lives (Selye, 1979). He states, "Stress is the spice of life," (Greenberg and Valletutti, 1980). Positive stress is what motivates people to achieve. When our minds are most active, accomplishing a variety of tasks throughout the day, and planning to achieve more for tomorrow, we will dream up ideas for growth in our professional or personal lives. If we experience non-productive stress, signs of boredom, apathy, negativity, and decreasing motivation can be factors of underload. On the other end of the spectrum, overload factors can be identified as irritability, poor judgment, lack of clarity, and indecisiveness. Optimal stress, which I will focus on, causes mental alertness, motivation, exhilaration, high energy, and calmness under pressure (Selye, 1979).

Stress Creates Opportunities

As an FFA Executive Secretary, I find many opportunities for positive stress. They occur in everyday work experiences and in those special events that seem to occur constantly in the FFA. FFA conferences, state and national conventions, interscholastic judging contests, state officer classroom visitations, and the yearly training of state officers are all positive stressors. Each year state officers are elected and the challenge brought about by positive stress takes place for an executive secretary or state advisor. The officers, usually apprehensive about their new responsibilities, are given workshops to prepare them for their year ahead. I experience personal gratification each year as I see these officers grow to become effective public speakers, plan and conduct FFA Conferences, and then conduct a highly successful state convention at the end of their term.

The process of state officers planning a chapter officer conference can be stressful to an executive secretary. Since planning must begin early in their year, often during the officers own training period, they are not only unsure about themselves but are still learning about fellow team members. Officers not only have to develop new ideas for "their" conference, but they also must learn some of the behind the scenes workings of the conference. Unless there are second year officers on the team, it is up to the executive secretary to bridge the gap from what the officers experienced as members at the conference and what they will be expected to do as state officers. The level of leadership ability of the students will decide how quickly they perform this transition, thus creating a potentially stressful situation for the executive secretary. After working with five state officer teams, there is no doubt that various teams create many different kinds of challenges.

New teams create new ideas. Executive secretaries coordinate schedules, programs, finances, meetings, and people



BY NANCY J. SCHNETZER

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to help the state officers carry out their ideas. Of course none of these tasks can be perfected at the expense of well-trained, well-spoken, and highly motivated officers. FFA officers are one of our prime public relations tools. When students are viewed wearing the FFA jacket, immediate standards are set. In agricultural education, we set high standards for ourselves and FFA officers. Members, advisors and supporters expect those wearing the blue and gold to be close to perfect. As each year unfolds, a transition from untrained FFA officers to ideal officers takes place. They come closer and closer to goals of perfection that they and supporters of the FFA set for them. Energetic state officers are the key to any successful state association, just as motivated chapter officers are the key to a successful chapter.

Motivation and Positive Stress

High energy, a factor of optimal stress, usually means new ideas for new events, contests, programs, or policies. As these new events take place, they open the door for other new ideas. A lot of mileage can result from a single public relations effort such as having the state's largest dairy print 360,000 FFA milk cartons to be distributed statewide during National FFA Week. FFA Week alone is reason enough to be busy at the local, state, or national level, but it is an example of how positive stress creates higher motivation. Another public relations effort in New Jersey that motivates staff, state officers, and members is the employment of a Public Relations Coordinator for the State FFA Association. The coordinator is a Cook College, Rutgers University senior cooperative education student majoring in communications. News releases and news articles about events, activities, and people, present and past, are written on a regular basis. FFA members' success stories are exciting to put together and usually are of interest to different audiences, thus opening new doors and opportunity. As a result of preparing the annual American Farmer degree candidates' news release, the state's primary newspaper visited a local chapter and wrote a feature article about the Vocational Agriculture/FFA Program. FFA members were interviewed and each discussed their career plans, thus making our urbanized state aware of the diversity of agricultural education in the Garden State.

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Taking Advantage of Stress

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State FFA Contests require coordination of faculties, materials, contest staff, and contest participants. Such activities produce stress. (Photo courtesy of Andrew Daddio, Cook College, Rutgers University.)



The State FFA Convention requires a constant awareness of many details, none more important than that of state officers themselves. This is a stressful time for all parties. (Photo courtesy of Andrew Daddio, Cook College, Rutgers University.)

The Rewards

I believe that positive stress also creates valuable rewards. I am rewarded each time state officers perform. What better payback is there than younger members responding to state officers' encouragement. I recently observed a state officer's presentation at a school where members were not only unsure that they wanted to attend an upcoming chapter officer leadership conference, but they were also unsure that

they wanted to be a part of the stereotyped "Future Farmer" organization in their urbanized school. At the end of the visitation, several open-minded students had changed their minds about attending the conference and decided to give the FFA organization a chance. They proved their intentions by thoroughly enjoying the conference and becoming active in state association activities. Credit for this new motivation must also be given to the local advisor for understanding the worth of the FFA and offering continual encouragement to students. As the FFA Executive Secretary, it is not only important to have conferences and programs run well, but also to have state officers relating well to members. When this happens, the rewards are high and no matter how many details are involved, we feel exhilarated. I find coordinating FFA contests a major task with an infinite number of details. The contests can at times cause an overload of stress when contest officials have pre-contest concerns to be addressed, a request for contest location change comes in, and chapter advisors fail to pre-register their teams. Stress levels can be high, especially when contests are sandwiched between several other FFA events. My tact in these situations is threefold: 1) remain calm, 2) take one step at a time, and 3) be cheerful! If stress overload is a problem, these reminders help me to return to optimal performance. Being aware of personal strengths and weaknesses enables a person to maintain a "realistic attitude" and, therefore, maintain a handle on stress (Greenberg and Valletutti, 1980, p. 88.)

Conclusion

I seldom consider my job as FFA Executive Secretary to be stressful in a negative way. If there are negative stressors to be identified, they would include tasks throughout the year which involve justification to fund state FFA services and positions, justification for the worth of Vocational Agriculture/FFA Program, and red tape involved in agencies so large that we begin to wonder if anyone actually knows the correct policy to enact in a given situation. I perceive my position as Executive Secretary to be a challenge and opportunity for further growth for myself and the FFA. The positive stressors far outweigh distress, therefore, the only way to deal with stress is to take advantage of it.

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NEW PRODUCT

IN *NEW DIRECTIONS FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL*, James Kadamus and Willard Doggett describe the technological, economic, demographic, and societal changes occurring in the United States, particularly those trends affecting vocational education. Reviewing what recent national reports have to say about vocational education, the authors propose a new role — the development of a balanced occupational program that enables students to acquire broad, transferable skills for employment and personal use.

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL, 44 pp., 1986 (IN 311 — \$6.00), is one of seven publications produced by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education located at the National Center for Research in Vocational Education. Send your order to the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, Publications Office, Box N, 1960 Kenny Road, Columbus, Ohio 43210-1090; or call 800/848-4815 or 614/486-3655 inside Ohio and outside the continental United States.

Managing Stress in Your Life

Numerous books, articles, and other materials are available about stress management. Many of the leading experts in the field may not agree with how I define and handle stress. It is assumed that some stress is healthy.

Stress is pressure applied to a person. Management is how the pressure is handled. Pressure can be applied to a person from internal and external sources. Understanding whether the source is from within or without is a key factor in reducing stress in one's life. Once this determination has been made, identify the specific causes for each source before taking action to reduce stress.

Internal stress is pressure that results in conflict that comes from within our being. This conflict is caused by such personal characteristics as our values/beliefs, self-image, and self-confidence. Conflict arises when there is a difference between what one believes and what one does. It is as if there are two persons within each of us — one good, the other bad. There is often disagreement between these two inner persons. When the bad inner person wins, the consequences cause guilt and often withdrawal. Guilt and withdrawal increase the stress on us.

External stress is pressure that results in inner conflict that comes from outside our being. In many cases, one has no control over the source of external pressure. External pressure comes from the family, the work place, and peers. This pressure can come as sickness in the family, divorce, death, or problems with children. In the work place, stress is placed on an individual when there is conflict with peers and supervisors or a heavy work load. Even though the pressure comes from outside of our being and we seemingly have no control over it, the result is increased pressure in our lives. Consequently, both sources of stress become a part of our inner being.

Internal and external stress can manifest itself in many ways. Stress can result in sickness, irritability, depression, drug and alcohol abuse, fear, and anger. How one reacts to stress can be harmful. The individual who reacts negatively often becomes cynical and has fewer and fewer friendly relationships. This person is no longer invited to parties or asked to assist in business or social endeavors. This individual is shut-out from the people around him or her. All of us may react negatively to stress.

Stress can, however, be handled in such a way that our lives become an inspiration to others. To become an inspiration to others is to find outlets for stress. Many people use hobbies as an outlet. The key is to become involved in other interesting and exciting things. The mind escapes the pressure of stress through activities such as reading, walking, running, hunting, fishing, and playing golf. Find a positive outlet for stress because the way you react to internal and external stress can change your life for the better.

BY LOUIS LOUDERMILK

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A Few Guidelines

Some guidelines that can reduce stress in one's life are: (1) Become involved in activities not associated with work; (2) Learn not to worry about what will or will not be; (3) Learn to accept criticism; (4) Learn to make decisions; (5) Learn to fix the errors and mistakes of others — no one is perfect; (6) Resolve personal conflict — use confrontation; (7) Practice being honest and forthright — shoot straight; (8) Know who can be trusted; (9) Treat others the way you want to be treated; (10) Obtain support by recognizing the achievement of superiors and subordinates; (11) Listen to what others have to say; and (12) Be open to change.

One way of handling stress at work is to play a game of "War." War is made up of a lot of different battles. Some battles will be won and some lost. In a battle it is assumed there will be casualties. Some of the participants will be killed and others wounded. In these battles, you have the choice of being killed, wounded, or coming through the battle safely. If you are killed, the war is over. If you are wounded, you have the opportunity to go back into battle. If you safely come through the battle, you are ready to fight another battle. The important thing in the game of war is to be able to fight in another battle. However, many individuals are wounded or killed and never return to fight another battle. They often become angry at the system and are no good to themselves or the organization.

Two Examples

One example of how I handled stress involved an illness. I was getting sick and missing work. Through inner searching, I realized that stress at work was causing me to want to stay home. The only rational way to miss work was to allow sickness to come in and give me a good excuse for staying home. Once I realized the fault was from within, I resolved that I would not allow stress to cause sickness.

Another example of how I handled stress involved my work. Many years ago, after being promoted to a higher position, stress became unbearable. I realized that the cause was not a single decision but a 10-inch stack of papers. A decision needed to be made on each letter or request in the stack. Realizing the cause, I went through the stack of papers and made a decision on each request. I was conscious that some of my decisions could be wrong, but I was willing to accept the responsibility for making a wrong decision. When all the decisions were made, a burden was lifted. I resolved

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Managing Stress in Your Life

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to never let a group of decisions or a single decision cause stress again. Since that time, I have never delayed making a decision or delayed action. Delaying action on firing a staff member can be as stressful as making the decision to fire a staff member. A good rule of thumb is, "Do what needs to be done when it needs to be done."

Inner Strength

I have an inner strength that many people do not possess. This strength comes from my religious background and belief in a Supreme Being. I believe through faith that this inner being helps and guides me in my daily activities. You may say this cannot be. Yet I know that the world uses the principle of faith and attributes the results to self reliance. Positive thinking concepts are a part of self reliance and Christian living. Both will probably work — one is real and the other is counterfeit.

You Can't Go Home Again by Thomas Wolfe is a book that has greatly influenced my life. Once an individual makes a decision, the consequences of that decision can never be changed. These decisions are a lot like water going under a bridge. Water cannot be brought back, but the memories, good or bad, remain. The key to inner strength is to know when to let go. Often, people remember the bad,

but not the good. One should remember that most people do forgive. The problem is that we are not willing to forgive ourselves for some decisions. People should learn to forgive others and forgive themselves rather than continuing to condemn. This inner condemnation places stress on each of us. Each of us should learn to let the water go. This way, an inner peace can replace conflict.

Remember, you make the decision, consciously or subconsciously, as to how you want to react to internal and external pressures that cause stress. No one can decide for you. How you react may affect everyone around you or it may only affect you. For example, you are driving on one of the highways in West Virginia. You find yourself behind a slow moving coal truck on a hill with no opportunity to pass and in a hurry. You fume, fret, and become angry. Who made this decision for you — the driver of the coal truck? You made the decision. Could you not have made the decision to follow the truck and use the time to enjoy the beauty of the day? If you had the family or other passengers, how did your decision affect them? How we react to situations at work and in the home can result in our putting stress on those around us.

In this article, I have tried to define stress and give some ways to manage stress. I believe wise decision making is the key to handling stress in our lives. I conclude with this thought, "A glass of milk is spilled." The right decision is to clean it up. Try applying this principle to your life and to helping those around you.

ARTICLE

Delegate Details to Reduce Stress

Accountability - individual education plans - accreditation - science certification - competency based objectives - state department of education reports - annual FFA reports - discipline referrals - class rolls - immunization records - proficiency awards - BOAC - purchase orders - inventories - federal aid impact surveys - State Farmers - American Farmers - budget management - deficiency reports - judging team certification - fair entries - farm management contest - visual aid control - parent conferences - PTA - professional organizations - etc.

The list goes on. The above examples represent some of the stress increasing demands placed upon vocational agriculture teachers. After these "paper-work demands" are met, the teachers are still expected to teach, keep up-to-date professionally, and conduct supervised occupational experience programs for their students. Some years ago, it was reported that the typical teacher worked 56 hours per week. Since this study was completed, numerous other requirements and professional obligations have been added. What direction should the profession go?

BY CLIFFORD L. NELSON

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Most of the detail and paperwork will not go away. The federal and state governments are expecting and getting more accountability. New legislation typically includes more reporting requirements. Many school districts are becoming larger and adding layers of administration, each with unique reporting requirements. The papers must be filled out or the funds that support new and ongoing programs will not flow.

Alternatives

There are several alternatives open to teachers. The first is to neglect the traditional program components of supervised occupational experience program (SOEP) visits, spend less time in developing teaching plans, revise the curriculum less often, and reduce FFA activities to meet the requirements of the "paper-blizzard." Another alternative would be to

work the longer hours needed to complete the new requirements.

Neither alternative should be acceptable to the good teacher. Reducing the quality of program by neglecting SOEP, FFA, and quality teaching of relevant subject matter is a sure way to destroy a dynamic and quality vocational agriculture department. Students deserve the best that we can deliver. If we do not offer the aspects of the vocational agriculture program that make it unique and strong, we are committing a "professional suicide."

Increasing the required workload for vocational agriculture instructors to 60 or 70 hours per week is counter-productive. This type of extended activity builds stress in the teacher. Lack of time for family and personal activities has a tendency to increase stress in marriage partners and does not contribute to good mental or physical health for either spouse.

Many feel that this causes premature departure from the profession of the hardest working teachers and also causes some to seek another profession. One son of an outstanding teacher known to this author chose a subsequently very successful career of elementary school teaching. When asked why he did not become a vocational agriculture teacher, he responded, "I think too much of my family."

A vocational agriculture or other teacher who chooses to work overtime should be recognized and commended for the commitment. However, when minimum performance by a teacher requires extensive overtime, the profession suffers. The well balanced teacher allows for both personal and professional activities. What options might be open to the committed teacher?

Teacher's Aides

Teacher aides are very valuable to the vocational agriculture teacher. Doctors, lawyers, and other professionals have long delegated detail work to others. Few doctors take x-rays or administer shots. Teachers of agriculture should move in the same direction. In the past teacher aides have been found to be very helpful. Lack of funding often is a problem in securing an aide. Some targeted funding might be available to hire an aide to assist the teacher who has exceptional students.

Student Assistants

Most schools that have office practice programs have practicums where students are placed for a period a day at some place in the school. The vocational agriculture teacher should seek an office practice student for each period of the day. One student could be charged with all filing of teaching materials, magazines, and reports. It is recommended that the files be set up using the AGDEX system so this is done systematically. Other students could be assigned to develop and type purchase orders.

Students could also be assigned to handle classroom and shop inventories and supply storage. High school students have also been able to complete state reports and type

classroom materials, official correspondence, and FFA business. The key to this type of delegation is specialization of assignment and recruitment of able students. It has been the author's experience that upper-class high school students have the capacity to learn carefully specified tasks well and to successfully accomplish them.

Another valuable student assistant is a student aide for each laboratory period. Ideally, this student should be an upper-class person with at least one year of agriculture. It is also helpful to have current FFA officers as aides. This student could be assigned to assist in the preparation of demonstrations and materials as well as care and maintenance of equipment, assisting in skills instruction, and direction of laboratory clean-ups. If the student aides are FFA officers, much of the between-meeting FFA business can be conducted, thus, saving time as well as giving the teacher more after school flexibility.

FFA Alumni and Parents

No good agriculture program runs without parent and other adult support. Parents in elementary classrooms are often welcome as aides. They serve as room mothers, library assistants, and unofficial aides to the handicapped and slower learners. Parents have many skills that are usable in a total agriculture program both in and out of school. They can assist with skills instruction in the classroom and laboratory as well as with out-of-school field trips and the preparation of fairs, contests, and shows. Parents are also the source of many supervised occupational experience opportunities for students as well as being helpful in arranging transportation and chaperoning for out-of-school activities.

The FFA Alumni affiliate is an ideal vehicle for utilizing community support for agriculture. Placement in occupational experience activities is a major area where Alumni can help. An Alumni committee can seek and gain the cooperation of prospective employers of students. Other committees could seek quality livestock, seeds, and farming locations for production agriculture and placement and entrepreneurial activities in off-farm agricultural occupations. Many FFA chapters now utilize Alumni to assist in preparing judging teams, fitting livestock for shows, and transporting animals to fairs and market.

Alumni often serve as officials at contests and conventions. Others organize the major fund raiser for the FFA chapter. Alumni also encourage advanced education in agriculture through college and post secondary school scholarships.

Conclusion

Delegation must take place if we are to reduce stress and maintain good programs. We should take a "leaf from the book" of Extension and to better utilize the help of volunteers and others. Professional teachers have many resources at hand. They will need to develop management skills similar to those of a business executive, full-time school administrator, or Cooperative Extension Agent. If they don't delegate and get others involved, their families and programs will suffer.

Stress Management Means Time Management

One of the major problems facing teachers of vocational agriculture is that of stress and burnout. No doubt a lot of burnout and stress can be directly contributed to the long hours that are worked. As vocational teachers become established in communities and develop quality programs, demands on time begin to grow.

The teaching profession can be one of the most rewarding of all career choices. People who dedicate their lives to teaching others reap many benefits above and beyond their salaries. As a group, vocational agriculture teachers have always been recognized as being dedicated to their profession. Countless hours are spent on the job working with the different aspects of the program. This dedication is what has always made the vocational agriculture teacher so effective in working with young people. At the same time, teachers who are so dedicated often find themselves feeling stressed or burned out as a result of the demands.

A vigorous, productive program of vocational agriculture has to be constantly maintained through hard work and dedication. Lesson plans, FFA programs and activities, SOEP, advisory council meetings, alumni activities, adult programs, and regular teacher duties constantly consume the time of a vocational agriculture teacher. Sometimes the teacher finds him or herself becoming spread too thinly. When this occurs, the teacher begins to become stressed out and program effectiveness is lost. His or her home life also begins to suffer. This only compounds the problem. The classic problem arises: How do I prevent stress and burnout and at the same time retain an effective program?

Sometimes the answer to the question can be found in the proper organization of our involvements. The problem of stress is usually brought about by frustration. Frustration is brought about by not being able to accomplish all that we think we should. We reach a point where we seem to not have enough hours in the day and a lot of our goals appear to go unachieved. Outlined below are a few suggestions that might help alleviate frustration through some simple procedures aimed at making more efficient use of your time.

Prioritize Your Activities

Vocational agriculture teachers are constantly presented with seemingly endless opportunities to become involved in activities that appear to be appropriate and necessary. The question that must be asked is, "Which activities do I do and when? The answer lies in setting priorities on a weekly basis. At the end of each week make a list of tasks that you will face next week. Next, separate them according to priorities. First, list those that are a number one priority.

By RAY HERREN

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Number one priority tasks are those that have a direct bearing on the program and if not accomplished, would have a detrimental effect. These should be tasks or duties that absolutely have to get done during the next week.

Next list those activities that are a number two priority. These should be tasks that have to get done, but not necessarily next week. They may be tasks that have an indirect effect on the program or they may be number one priority items that are not yet pressing. After the next week, these tasks might become a number one priority.

Third priority items should be listed next. These are items that would be nice to get done but are not crucial to the program. These items could be termed as "the icing on the cake."

Priority four items are really not important to the program. These items take a little thought to sort out. Ask yourself what would be the consequences if this job didn't get done or what will be the benefits to the program by accomplishing the task? You might be surprised as to how many of these items have been getting top priority. Prioritizing will allow you to organize your calendar for the next week.

Keep an Organized Calendar

Most of us keep a calendar of some sorts. Properly used, the calendar can become more than just a listing of upcoming events. The calendar should be daily, weekly, and monthly plan for your activities. The beginning point of calendar organization should be to list on your calendar those things that are a number one priority. If the calendar becomes filled with number one priorities, then go back and reprioritize the tasks. Space should be blocked-out on the calendar for tasks that are of a routine nature that need to be done daily or weekly. For instance, time should be set aside for planning next week's work. You will be more likely to do this if you set aside a certain time each week for activity planning. Every Friday afternoon, after classes are over, might be a good time to plan next week's activities.

The point is to get in the habit of doing things routinely to make sure they get done. Think of those things that are a number one priority that have to be done regularly such

as SOEP visits. Set aside a time each day or each week as your regular time for making these visits. Then try to work all the other tasks around your regularly scheduled activities.

Learn to discipline yourself to stick with your routine and don't schedule other activities during these times. If a time block is scheduled for developing lesson plans then use that time for developing lesson plans unless, of course, an emergency arises that you must attend to during that time.

Don't make your calendar too full. Leave some time open for those unexpected matters that arise and need your attention or those activities that take more of your time than anticipated. Don't forget to also leave yourself some free time. The old adage that "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" also applied to vocational agriculture teachers. It is absolutely essential that some time is taken off to spend with the family and to relax. Efficiency is greatly improved after periods of rest and relaxation or "R&R."

Preventing your calendar from becoming too full means that you will have to learn to say no. This is a hard thing for a dedicated teacher to do. There always seems to be all sorts of activities that involve a vocational agriculture teacher. But remember that a teacher who is spread too thin loses effectiveness. Reflect on the first point made in this article - set priorities! Once you have organized the calendar, stay as close to your plan as is feasible. This will allow you to plan for more efficient use of your time.

Keeping Teaching Materials Accessible

Normally the task that takes the most time in a teacher's day is preparing teaching materials. Here, too, time can be economized by following a few guidelines. Easy access to teaching materials is absolutely necessary. This means all materials need to be filed in an organized efficient manner. There are several good methods to do this. Many teachers like the AGDEX system where all materials are filed under a numerical code. Others have developed their own method for easily accessing materials.

The point is to find a good, systematic method that you feel comfortable using. Get in the habit of putting materials in the files as soon as you acquire them and also after you are finished using them. Lesson plans can be kept and organized using large three-ring notebooks. When a lesson plan is developed and used, it should go into the notebook so the next time the unit is used all you have to do is revise the plan. Never throw away a lesson plan until you have another plan to replace it. Using this method, you will soon have a good "bank" of easily accessible materials to use in preparing for class.

Learn to Delegate

A good time manager realizes that he or she can't possibly do all there is to do. If properly done, many everyday activities can be delegated to students who can gain from the experience. Teacher assistants are often available to assist in tasks that are a drain on the teacher's time. Class and lab set-up, filing, addressing envelopes, and organizing are a few of the tasks that can be performed by student assistants. A properly supervised student can save a teacher's time.

Your goal as an FFA advisor should be to train students to conduct the chapter by themselves. While you will probably never reach the point where all chapter business is carried out by the students alone, most of the tasks can and should be done by students. A good rule of thumb is to never do an FFA associated task that could be done by a student. Not only will this help you better manage your time, but it will provide the type of training that the FFA is supposed to provide.

Use Support Groups

One advantage vocational agriculture teachers have over many other teachers is the use of support groups such as the FFA alumni and parents. People become members of these organizations because they are interested in your program and want to help. To maintain a strong support group, the members must be involved in activities in which they feel they are making a real contribution. Often, they are reluctant to jump into a task unless they are asked to do so by the teacher. Assist them in preparing a program of activities that keeps all the members involved in activities that can help alleviate some of your load.

Support groups can be a tremendous help in just about all aspects of the program. They can assist with such things as transporting livestock to and from fairs and shows; training judging teams; and serving as resource people or planning field days. Usually, all a teacher needs to do is ask and these groups will be glad to assist. As long as they are involved in meaningful, worthwhile activities, the group will grow and at the same time you will gain valuable help that will go a long way toward preventing stress.

Summary

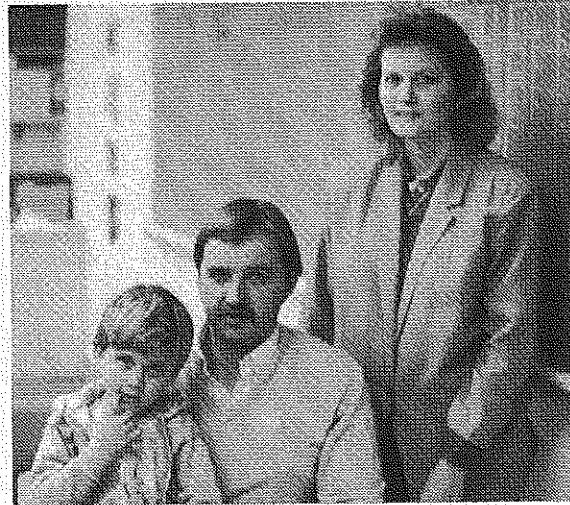
Through careful planning and organization, much job induced stress can be avoided. Planning and organization take time to do, but every hour spent planning and organizing can save you a day's time in the future. As more efficient use of time is made, the symptoms of stress and burnout will diminish.

Coming In May . . .

Career Ladders

Stories in Pictures

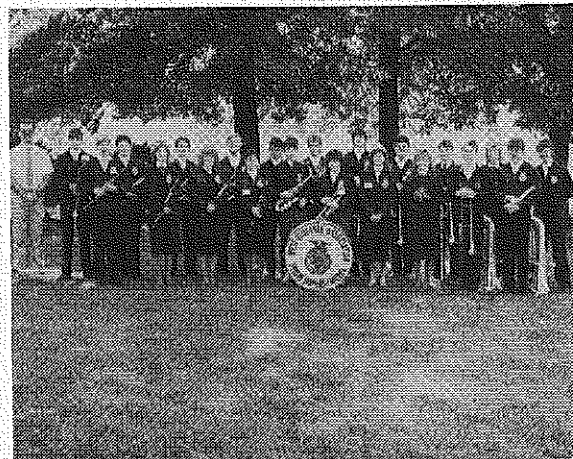
Managing Stress in Your Life



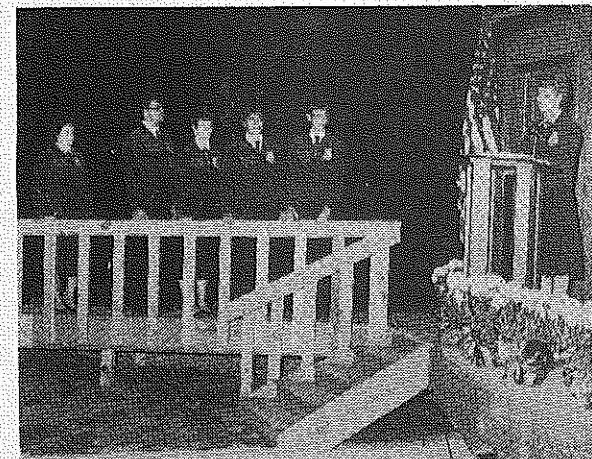
Realizing your spouse's responsibilities and problems makes for better understanding thus remedying marital stress. (Photo courtesy of Connie Dewhurst of Ripley, WV).



A State FFA Officer from West Virginia participating in a getting-to-know yourself activity at the National Leadership Conference for State Officers. (Photo courtesy of the West Virginia FFA Association.)



Shown above is the West Virginia State FFA Band. Having an enjoyable hobby is therapeutic. (Photo courtesy of the West Virginia FFA Association.)



State Officers shown presenting a vespers program at their annual State FFA Convention. Inspiration is essential in dealing with stress. (Photo courtesy of the West Virginia FFA Association.)