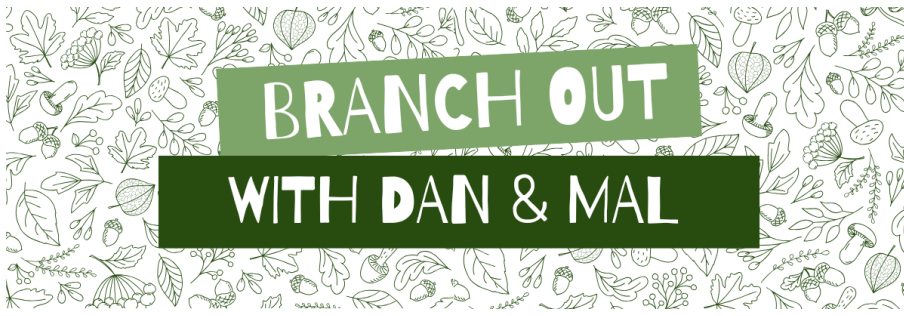




Welcome to Branch Out with Dan & Mal, a weekly newsletter on all things health, wellbeing, and wellness at Midland!

OAKay, Let's Talk...

Mallory's Report:

When I wrote that it was peak cold season at Midland a few weeks ago, I may have spoken too soon—because *this* week feels like the peak of cold season. We've got sore throats, phlegmy coughs, headaches, stomachaches, and body aches. The students are ill, I fear. Fortunately, most of these colds seem to pass within about three days, which is a good sign. As a reminder, there's no magic cure to shorten a cold, but taking care of yourself definitely helps. That means drinking plenty of water, eating nutrient-dense foods, and getting adequate rest. I can offer the advice—but it's up to you to put it into practice!

Dan's Report:

As I spent some time reflecting earlier this week, I realized it was the first moment I felt a bit more distant from the school year still feeling “new.” We're settling into the steady rhythm of the boarding school experience and this is the point when it takes real endurance to remain productive and effective.

As we move forward in building and maintaining that endurance, there are a few key ideas to keep in mind. Developing a consistent routine helps create habits that become dependable over time. We all have habits shaped by Midland's daily structure, but it's the habits we form outside those requirements that often determine how well everything comes together.

These include:

- staying hydrated and nourished to sustain steady effort throughout busy days
- maintaining a regular bedtime routine to ensure enough rest for emotional balance and clear thinking
- steering clear of emotionally contagious behaviors like negativity and gossip.

While gossip can offer a fleeting sense of connection, it often turns subtly toxic—draining energy and eroding trust, which ultimately leads to isolation. Let's choose habits that fill us up rather than those that drain us. Doing so will help us cultivate the endurance we need to stay productive, grounded, and effective throughout the school year.

In a *Nutshell* -- Deep Dive of the Week

One of the recent themes that has emerged is loss. We've all experienced loss in some form, and it affects each of us differently. When people think about loss and grieving, the first thing that often comes to mind is the death of a person. However, there are many other forms of loss that we tend to overlook—losses that still deserve our attention, care, and healing.

Here are just a few examples of disruptive losses:

- The end of a dating relationship
- A change or drifting apart in a friendship
- Losing a cherished object (like a bike, favorite jacket, or family artifact)
- A valued community member leaving
- Moving to a new home

Even the seemingly smallest losses can stir strong emotions and linger if unaddressed. We might feel angry for breaking something meaningful, or frustrated with ourselves for misplacing a favorite water bottle (with all the cool stickers!). And of course, many of us may be grieving the absence of a community member who has chosen to move on. All of it matters, and it's important to acknowledge and process the feelings that come with these experiences.

Here are a few ways to begin coping with loss:

- **Talk about it** — Share your thoughts and feelings with a friend, family member, advisor, teacher, or health professional.
- **Allow emotional release** — Let yourself feel and express emotion to prevent tension buildup; avoid repressing it.
- **Create a symbolic gesture** — Do something meaningful to honor what was lost.
- **Journal your experience** — Writing can help you process and find clarity.
- **Engage in self-care** — Move your body, spend time in nature, take a warm shower, or rest when you can.

Key takeaway: No matter the size or nature of your loss, take time to *do something about it*. Unacknowledged emotions can build up and lead to longer-lasting stress or difficulty. Remember, you don't have to navigate loss alone—the **Health Center is here to support you**.

Acorny Ending

Lots of students are sick, but we definitely aren't *sick* of any of you. Keep showing up; you're doing great. We're on your team—and we're rooting for you.



Mallory McPherson-Wehan
Health Director



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