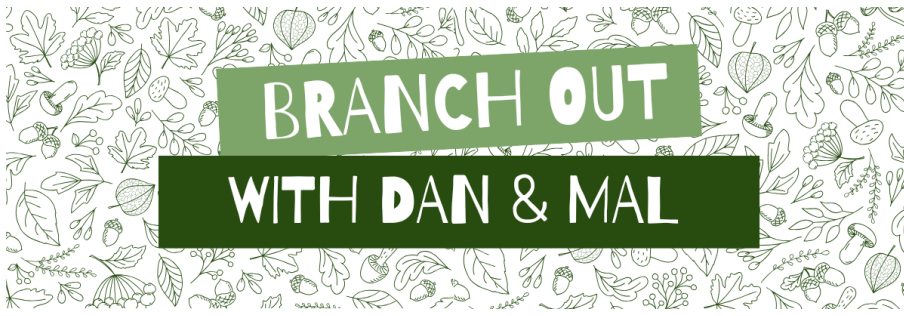




Welcome to Branch Out with Dan & Mal, a weekly newsletter on all things health, wellbeing, and wellness at Midland!

OAKay, Let's Talk...

Mallory's Report:

The final stretch! The end of the academic year feels simultaneously so close and yet so far away. On my way into work today I grabbed a Lefty's latte as a little morning morale boost! Self-care! This week in the Health Office I'm seeing a cold strain wreaking havoc with lots of sore throats, congestion, and coughs. I'm also seeing a lot of sleep challenges—students struggling to get enough sleep, stay asleep, or fall asleep. This might be the time where we all feel like we just need to put our heads down and grind—and there's some truth to that—however, I encourage you all to find time for yourself as well because four weeks is a lot of time!

Dan's Report:

This week has been a week of noticeable change at the counseling office. The pattern of back-to-back meetings all day, every day, has begun to shift from a constant, to less predictable spurts of meetings (finally giving me time to grade psychology assignments and to catch up on important case management details). This shift of pace is a sign of a few things: 1.) students are aware that there is no more getting to things next term - there isn't a next term and they have fully arrived in the "deadline zone" when all school work is due, period. 2.) They are also finally seeing the light at the end of the school year tunnel - there's hope. And finally, 3.) they are embracing the limited time together in this magical place. But, I'll tell you one thing... there's no way I'm unbuckling my seatbelt just yet!

In a Nutshell -- Deep Dive of the Week

The Midland community has fully entered into that anticipatory end of the school year realm when several emotive surges come on strong. The excitement is building, the

sadness is creeping in, and the transformative aspects of approaching change are arriving. We all feel it right now.

The word “change” stirs up emotions in all of us, either positive, negative, or both. This week has truly felt similar to riding on a rollercoaster - up, down, right, left, and then a big loop! So how do we navigate a highly emotional timespan? Consider the following:

- Minimize scope of perspective: When we are on the kind of rollercoaster we are now on for the remainder of the school year, it’s important not to attempt to address all of it at once. Rather than thinking about what might come to be weeks, months, or years from now, shrink it down to what matters today. This manageable step takes the power back from attempting to manage the unknown or uncontrollable.
 - Stay aware of catastrophizing: This anxiety-driven experience of imagining and monitoring the potential worst case scenario can expand and fully take over before anything has even happened. Before this happens, consider these effective steps:
 - Name the experience as “catastrophizing” to first separate it from yourself.
 - Ask yourself if the fear is a realistic outcome, or if you are only spinning within the threat
 - Solution-focused mindset: Ask yourself, what is within your control rather than worrying about the unknown & uncontrollable. That is usually an abrupt dead end.
 - Stay in the moment: We have no control of what is to come. When we live in the moment, we are living within the known, rather than aimlessly trying to manage the unknown. It’s so much more satisfying!
 - Individuate from emotion-contagion: At boarding school communities we have a tendency to become enmeshed with one another. When we become that closely knit together it becomes challenging to remember that we are still individuals as well. As collective emotions expand and gain momentum, we tend to quickly take in information and the emotions that everyone else is reacting with. In those moments, it’s crucial to just pause and ask yourself “wait, is this really a threat to me too?” If/when we realize it might not be, we can attempt to step outside of it and remind ourselves that it’s going to be ok.
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Acorny Ending

Change will always be an active force in our lives. The key is to keep a close eye on the emotion it evokes, and to steadily manage where it drives us. Our mind is the steering wheel, so let's steady our process and take one step at a time. And remember, we're stronger together, so stop by the Health Center if you ever need any support over the coming weeks of change!

We're on your team—and we're rooting for you.



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Health Director



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