Be REAL consists of 6 weekly sessions, 90 minutes each. Participants engage in interactive discussions, guided contemplative practices, and small group activities to learn more about:

- Understanding stress responses, stress tolerance & strategies to manage stress
- Building emotion awareness & emotion regulation skills
- Cultivating self-compassion & a deep sense of common humanity with others
- Strengthening skills to navigate challenging situations & support oneself

Be REAL can be led by advisors, instructors and other staff who support students. Before leading a group, staff participate in the same 6-week program, receive a manual and facilitator training. The parallel process of supporting staff and students helps to:

- Open more pathways for students to access mental health programs
- Foster a culture of well-being on campus, particularly in micro communities and student affinity spaces.

Be REAL is effective online as well as in-person. Newsletters, handouts, audio practices, and videos support participants in applying the skills to daily life.

In three years, 260 UW staff have participated in Be REAL and 70 have been trained to facilitate student groups. More than 775 students have participated in Be REAL. Participation has been found to significantly improve student well-being with [1, 2]:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improved student well-being</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More effective coping</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lower perceptions of stress</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater self-compassion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increased social connection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater resilience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enhanced executive function</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decreased symptoms in anxiety</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater mindfulness</td>
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Impact & Research Results


Facilitators receive and pursue ongoing training to foster an inclusive and supportive space for all students. The program has been offered in a variety of student settings, ranging from the residential halls to programs supporting underrepresented students. Be REAL consistently receives outstanding feedback from students and staff.

**What students say about Be REAL**

- "After using these methods, I treat myself better and try not to put too much pressure on myself. When I'm tired or felt pain, I will leave myself enough time to relax and recover."

- "Connecting with other students made me feel much less self-conscious about my own efforts and I feel the practices were genuinely helpful and empowering in my own life."

- "The most useful thing I took away was to always make time for yourself even though it might seem like you cannot afford to take time off because it will help you in the long run."

- "Be REAL gave me the tools to regulate my emotions in a healthy way and calm down during stressful events."

- "It's the most safe and understanding class I've ever had at [this school]. I feel very confident to learn, be involved and be myself in the class."

- "[The most helpful part of Be REAL] was learning to be less self critical and to be nicer to myself, "treat yourself like you would a friend."

**What staff say about Be REAL**

- "Mindful listening is something I strive to do everyday now. Working on myself allows me to be more present and helpful with people in my personal and work life."

- "[I learned] that mindfulness is not about doing a 20 minute meditation (which is not feasible with my lifestyle at the moment). It's possible to weave it into my daily routines like walks, brushing teeth, conversations with people."

- "What I liked most was being lead through practices and exercises. It gave me time to practice self-compassion, which is something that has been lacking during the pandemic."

- "I entered into the Be REAL training to learn ways to help my students and especially in their academic success. I was pleasantly surprised at how much it taught me about my own self-care....I taught all my student employees the strategies. They all loved them and even use them in meetings with students. It has made us a more open team about our mental health and needs and allowed folks to step in for others with kindness when they need a break."

- "I have a lot more compassion for myself."

Learn more at: www.ccfwb.uw.edu/bereal