

Be REAL

Megan Kennedy & Kizz Prusia

UW Resilience Lab

January 12, 2024 @ 10-11:30am

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON



CENTER FOR
**Child & Family
Well-Being**

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON



Today's Presenters



Kizz Prusia, MPA



Megan Kennedy, MA, LMCH



Learning Objectives

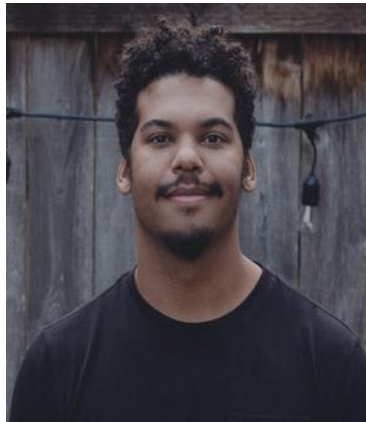
1. Participants will learn about the UW's Be REAL program, including its content, delivery, and research.
2. Participants will be introduced to several examples of mindfulness, self-compassion, and cognitive-behavioral strategies from the Be REAL program.
3. Participants will learn how the Be REAL implementation strategy is successfully reaches under-represented student communities at the UW.



The **UW Resilience Lab** is promoting well-being at the UW through education, research partnerships, and our core programs and initiatives.



Student & Alumni Centered Vision



Redefining Resilience

- > Common definitions of resilience do not take into account the toll of racism and other forms of oppression.
- > People with marginalized identities are expected to be “tough” to deal with the systemic oppression that exists within institutions and organizations.
- > Focusing on stress-coping strategies alone only makes sense if we are addressing the conditions, factors, and structures that cause the stress in the first place.



Redefining Resilience

- > The Resilience Lab is focused on initiatives that promote collective/organizational resilience (our ability to adapt and learn together); shifting the onus of responsibility from individuals to the whole system.
- > We are interested in building a culture of collective resilience – and resistance. One way we enact this is by applying contemplative practice (e.g., mindful awareness) to racial and environmental justice work. We also teach resilience-based practices to apply in one’s own life, as well organizationally.
- > The Resilience Lab leads through *Collective Impact* – a process for supporting a system to work interdependently toward common outcomes. Through this we provide pathways for constituents to co-envision and co-create a compassionate University. This requires that we learn strategies that support us to work *really well together*.
- > As such, we believe the way we work matters. We focus on leading in contemplative ways – individually and collectively – to support our ability to work on challenging adaptive issues and thrive.



TEACHING FOR EQUITY AND ACCESS

Creating an atmosphere of belonging and addressing power, privilege, and oppression in the classroom (e.g., co-creating shared norms and expectations for class discussions).



NURTURING CONNECTION

Tending to the social connectedness students experience with others and supporting students as they build stronger connections and awareness within themselves (e.g., encouraging peer interaction through study groups).



FOUNDATIONS OF STUDENT WELL-BEING

BUILDING RESILIENCE COPING SKILLS

Teaching and modeling everyday practices to develop the four cornerstones of resilience: mindfulness, growth mindset, gratitude, and self-compassion (e.g., opening class with a few minutes of reflective journal writing).



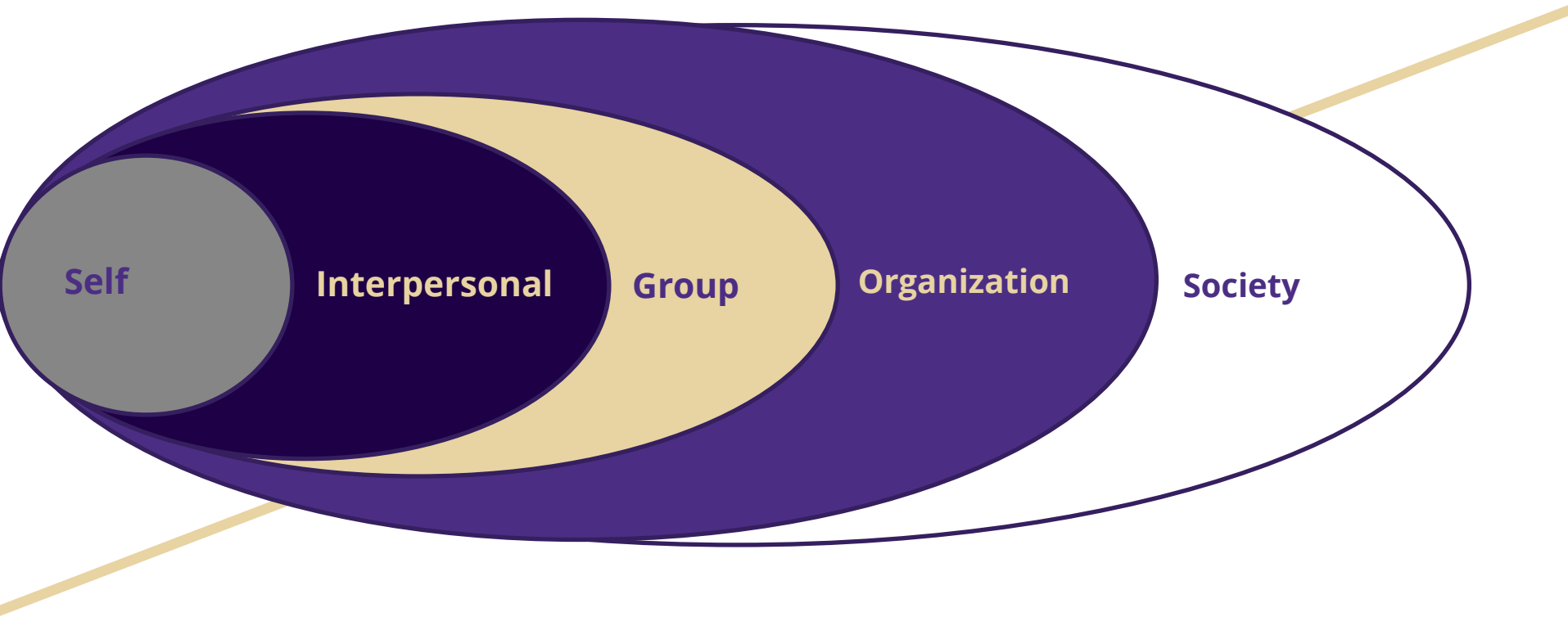
CONNECTING TO THE ENVIRONMENT

Establishing an intentional and meaningful relationship between students and the places where they learn and grow (e.g., creating opportunities for students to learn outside).



Two theories that inform our leadership practice.

Systems Perspective



Adaptive Leadership

- **Technical problems** often have a clear solution and can be solved by a few professionals.
- **Adaptive problems** are usually vague and complex. These problems require input from a variety of people within the organization and often take longer to solve.



Share your reflections of the
Resilience Lab's framework.

What thoughts - *reactions, questions,*
connections – are coming up for you?



Pause for Q&A

Center for Child & Family Well-Being (CCFW)

CCFW transforms innovative research in child and family well-being into practical solutions to ensure all children, youth and families are resilient and thriving.



Promoting
Resilience &
Well-Being



Supporting
Parents



Addressing
Adversity &
Inequity



Cultivating
Mindfulness &
Compassion



Dr. Liliana Lengua
Professor of Psychology
CCFW Director

Be REAL Skill Areas

Reducing Stress:

Managing acute and chronic stress through contemplative practices

Coping with Challenging Situations:

Learning strategies to change a situation or one's response

Resilience + Well-being

Managing Emotions:

Building skills and practices to become aware of and regulate emotions

Building Connections & Compassion:

Cultivating kindness for others and ourselves

Research Findings

Be REAL has been found to significantly improve student well-being with [1, 2]:




More effective coping



Lower perceptions of stress



Greater self-compassion



Increased social connection



Enhanced executive function



Decreased symptoms in anxiety



Greater mindfulness



Greater resilience



High student satisfaction

What students say:

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

"The different methods we learned was what I liked the most since they are all different and we can have one that best fits us."

1. Long, R., Halvorson, M., Lengua, L. J. (in press). A Mindfulness-based Promotive Coping Program Improves Well-being in College Undergraduates. *Anxiety, Stress & Coping*.

2. Long, R., Kennedy, M., Spink, K., Lengua, L. J. (2021). Evaluation of the Implementation of a Well-being Promotion Program for College Students. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*.

Be REAL Facilitator Training Overview

The three part sequence totals 26 hours

1. Immersion Program

For 7 weeks, participants meet weekly for 90 minutes.



2. Facilitation Training

A series of three 4-hour sessions to review curriculum delivery.



3. Consultation

Individual support to adapt and implement Be REAL at your institution.



Aspects of Be REAL

Be REAL aims to provide participants with tools to:

- Tuning into oneself and tending to one's emotions
- Navigating challenging situations
- Enhancing relationships with friends, family, and more
- Building a culture of compassion among staff and students

**Grounded
in research
from:**

Mindfulness Psychology Neuroscience
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Dialectical Behavioral Therapy

Key Values

Cultural Humility Trauma Aware & Sensitive
Culturally Inclusive & Affirming Reciprocal Learning & Collective Wisdom Responsive & Adaptive to Group Needs

Staff Professional Development and Well-Being

- Be REAL consistently receives outstanding feedback from students and staff who report that it is supportive to their well-being and inclusive of their cultural and personal beliefs;
- Staff report that Be REAL provides them with tools to manage the stress of working in educational settings, especially in the ongoing COVID pandemic;
- Staff report feeling more competent in supporting students with the skills they gained from the program;
- Be REAL provides staff with everything needed to immediately launch a group, including a fully scripted manual and professionally developed resources to support a variety of student learning needs.





Pause for Q&A

Be REAL: Mini-Module

+2 Breathing

First

Count how many seconds you inhale.

Then

Breathe out 2 seconds longer.

SOURCES OF STRESS



**Things happening
to us
(events or
circumstances)**



**Our
reactions**

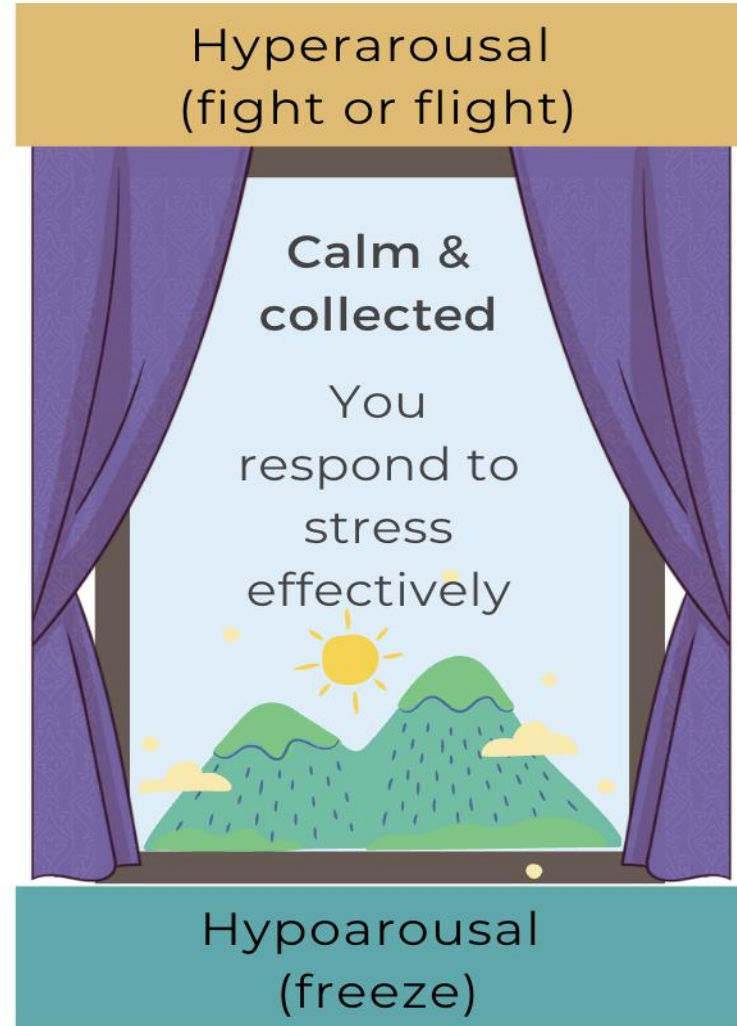
Hyper-
aroused (fight
or flight)



Automatic
stress
response



Hypo-
aroused
(freeze)



Mindfulness



“Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space lies our freedom and power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and freedom.” Victor Frankl

Mindfulness

Awareness of the present moment, with a kind and open attitude.



Mindfulness allows us to pause

Present
Moment

Stop ruminating
about the past

Stop worrying
about the future

Awareness

Tune into
ourselves

Tune into
students and
each other

Kind +
Curious

Compassionate
with ourselves

Compassionate
with others

Mindfulness

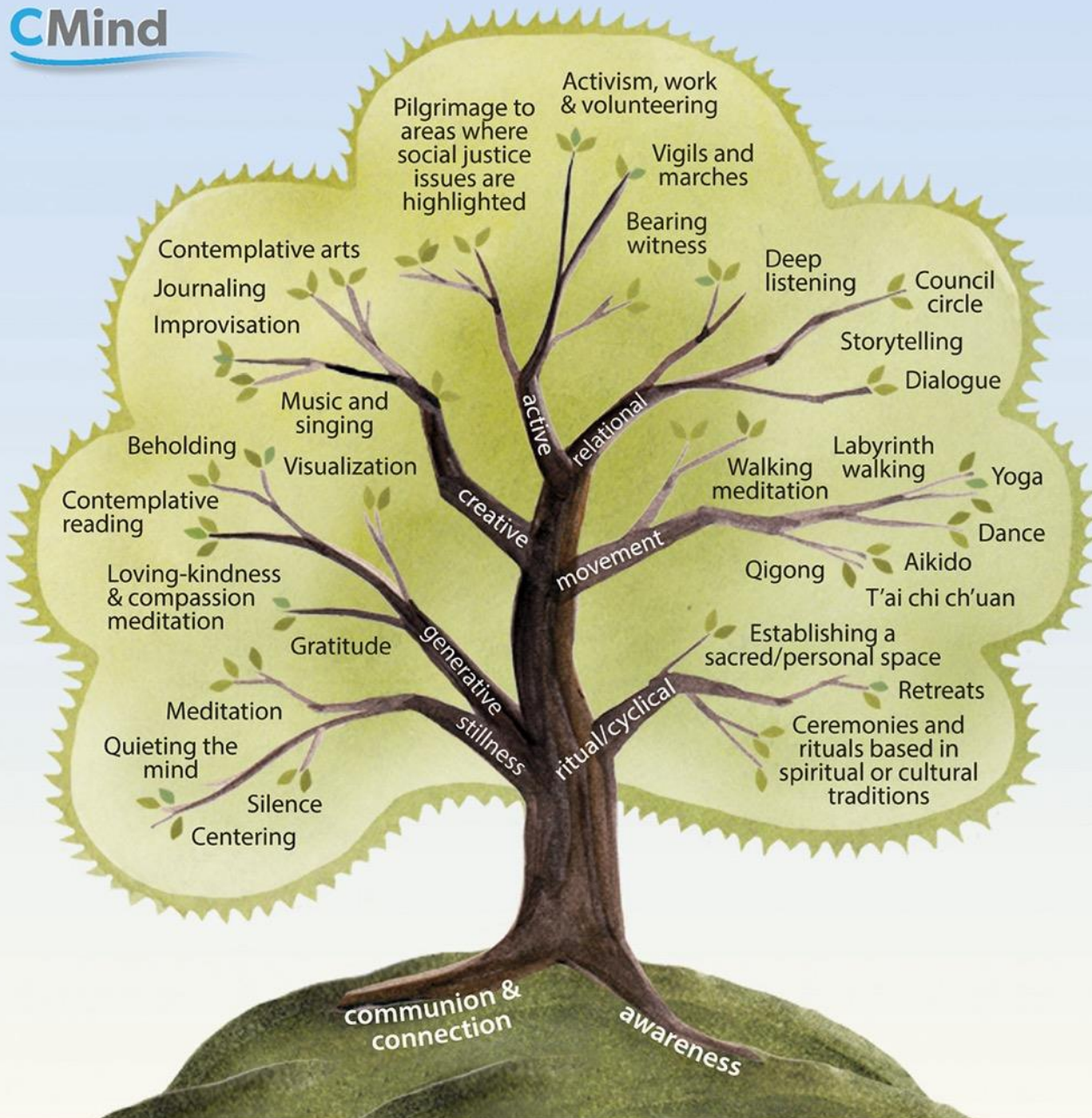


Reflective

Breath

Sensory

Body



The Tree of Contemplative Practices

How does mindfulness work?



**Neurons that
fire together,
wire together**

Building new habits for resilience

Mindfulness in Organizations

- Shifting from automatic pilot to a more aware state of being. Attending to your quality of presence (e.g., listening).
- Scheduling time each day for short, intentional breaks.
- Taking or inviting a “moment to arrive” at the beginning of meetings and closing meetings with intention.
- Practicing concentration (e.g., focusing on one task, being present with others).
- Zooming-out – or perspective-taking. Holding a more balanced perspective.
- Maintaining daily/weekly reflective practice.



Laura van Dernoot Lipsky

Author: *Trauma Stewardship*

Having an “**exquisite quality of presence**” will interrupt the systemic oppression that we know is causing so much harm and can transform the trauma that is arising.



Rhonda V. Magee

Professor, University of San Francisco

Author: *The Inner Work of Racial Justice*

“We don’t always realize that we must work continuously to make real the promise of liberating human interrelationship. **Even less often do we have the skills to do this work together.** Indeed, we have lacked the consciousness necessary to see our potential together and to lift ourselves up to a new plane for being in relationship with one another in ways that do not depend on power-over, but rejoice in power-with.” ⁽¹⁰⁾

Discussion Questions

- How does mindfulness support your resilience to stress?
How does mindfulness support your sense of connection to yourself and others?
- How could mindfulness promote collective or organizational resilience?





Pause for Q&A



EXAMPLES & PRACTICE

With Kizz Prusia



The 3 Ps

for responding wisely

Pause

Take a
breath.

Feel your
feet on the
ground.

be Present

Tune in.

What are you
feeling?
What thoughts
are present?

Proceed

Continue
in a way
that feels
wise and
effective.



Discussion Questions

- Share any observations about your experience in each of the practices. Is there a practice you would try again? In what setting (e.g., at home, at work, with colleagues)?
- What other personal practices support your resilience to stress?
- What personal practices could you imagine integrating at work?
- What is one takeaway from today's discussion (e.g., redefining resilience, stress response system, mindfulness, radical acceptance, etc.).

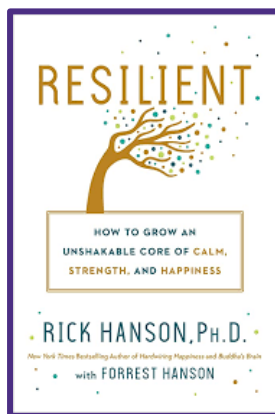
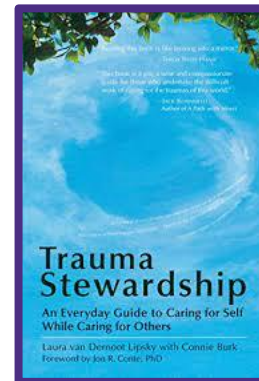
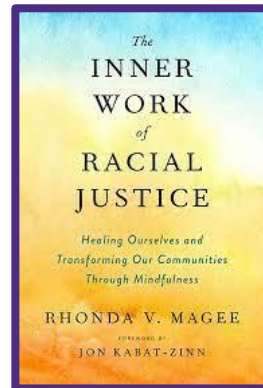
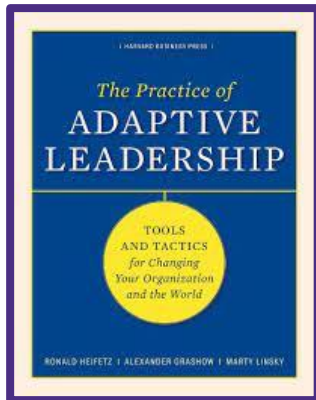


Be REAL: Implications for Work

- > Supports cultivating a work culture that is more spacious and adept at addressing stress – individually and collectively
- > Supports a culture of compassion and anti-racism
- > Be REAL skills, such as setting group norms and mindfulness, foster psychological safety (e.g., giving and receiving feedback)
- > Improves our interpersonal skills and ability to relate to others we work with



Mentioned Resources





Pause for Q&A

THANK YOU
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