

BE REAL™ BODYKIND



A College Body Confidence and Anti-Bias Seminar

BE REAL'S MISSION & PURPOSE

OUR MISSION is to spread body confidence resources to schools and homes across the globe, so everyone can have a healthy relationship to food and their body.

BODYKIND ADDRESSES BODY IMAGE ISSUES IN COLLEGE STUDENTS

Body image distress affects nearly **80% of 16-25 years olds** (Milton et al., 2021)

28% of U.S. college students are at risk for eating disorders, which is twice the risk in the general population (Daly & Costigan, 2022)

Over 40% of college students reported engaging in at least 1 disordered eating behavior in the past month (Lipson & Sonnevile, 2017)

Today's explosion of visual social media use--like Instagram and TikTok--has created an epidemic of body image problems for young people. In May 2023, the U.S. Surgeon General issued an [advisory](#) about the effects of social media on youth mental health that warns, "Social media may perpetuate body dissatisfaction, disordered eating behaviors, social comparison, and low self-esteem." (Surgeon General Advisory, 2023). In June 2024, Dr. Murthy recommended a [warning label](#) (like on alcohol and cigarettes!) to be put on social media sites because of the serious mental health risks.

- **Research ties body image issues to eating disorders, anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation** (Perkins & Brausch, 2019; McLean et al., 2022).
- **We know that young people who don't like their bodies often suffer from low self-esteem and are more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol** (Bornioli et al., 2019).
- **There is a critical need for a body image curriculum at the college level.**

BODYKIND RESEARCH FINDINGS

Be Real's college *BodyKind* seminar was informed by years of research and development of Be Real's high school *BodyKind* curriculum. We've kept the core subject matter identical, while deepening the discussion and adding relevant topics for college students. Below are the results from the RCT and pilot studies on *BodyKind*, created and analyzed by our academic team.

- **2024 RCT.** 35 teachers delivered *BodyKind* to 1,150 students in an RCT in Ireland. The RCT found **statistically significant increases in Body Appreciation for students after participating in *BodyKind* lessons.** Teachers and students valued the intervention, with **100% of teachers likely to recommend the program to other teachers.** For research methods, see [BMC Journal of Public Health](#).
- **2023 Pilot.** Minneapolis teachers delivered *BodyKind* to a group of 300 diverse students at 2 Minneapolis area high schools in a pilot trial. See results below.
- **2022 Pilot.** Minneapolis teachers taught *BodyKind* to 150 diverse students at 2 Minneapolis area high schools. Here is the [Body Image journal article](#) on the 2022 Pilot study! See results below.



EMPATHETIC

68% (2024 RCT) 82% (2023 Pilot) of students were able to understand more about others' experiences living in different bodies, creating empathy for their fellow students' experiences

RELEVANT

76% (2024 RCT) 65% (2023 Pilot) 74% (2022 Pilot) of students felt issues addressed in the lessons were relevant to their lives

IMPORTANT

74% (2024 RCT) 70% (2023 Pilot) 72% (2022 Pilot) of students felt the *BodyKind* lessons were important for young people to learn in school

ENJOYABLE

53% (2024 RCT) 69% (2023 Pilot) 65% (2022 Pilot) of students found the lessons enjoyable



"I think there should be more programs that help people feel more confident and overcome their challenges."
-- 2022 Pilot student



MODULE 1 Appearance Bias



Participants learn about appearance bias—when a person is judged and treated differently based on how they look, rather than who they are or how they behave. Participants read a collection of other people's body stories, gaining an awareness of how people of different sizes and abilities, with different skin shades, facial features, sexualities and gender representations experience the world. Participants explore how body confidence can be enhanced by (1) viewing their bodies as instruments, not ornaments, (2) having gratitude for what their body does for them everyday, and (3) accepting natural body diversity.

59% (2022) 48% (2023) of high school students thought this module empowered them to challenge the appearance bias they encounter in their lives



"Sometimes I have issues loving myself, but this helped remind me that my body and personality offer so much more than my negative thoughts!"
-- 2022 Pilot student

MODULE 2 Social Media, Comparisons & Self-Compassion



Once participants become aware of appearance pressures, they analyze how these pressures show up in their lives and in the media. Participants learn how self-compassion can be an effective tool to cope with the negative comparisons people make to other people.

54% (2022) 55% (2023) of high school students believed this module helped them use self-compassion to challenge their self-critical thoughts

"Compassion for myself was something I took (from the lessons) and reflected a lot on."
-- 2022 Pilot student

MODULE 3 Compassion for Others



Module 3 teaches participants how to apply the compassion they have shown to themselves in Module 2, to other people in their lives. Participants discuss challenges college students face to accepting their bodies in order to gain an awareness of Common Humanity. Students learn how to build a kinder environment and reduce appearance pressures by reducing "body talk." Students discuss cultural myths about bodies that we all encounter in the world today, alongside corresponding facts from the research.

69% (2022) 68% (2023) of high school students thought this module helped them realize that being compassionate to others can help everyone feel better about themselves

"I have started to think about the things I say and how they affect others."
-- 2022 Pilot student



BODYKIND WAS CREATED BY AN INTERNATIONAL TEAM OF BODY IMAGE EXPERTS

BodyKind was researched, written, and tested by an international team of teachers, academics, psychologists, and body image experts



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Chemistry major graduate of the University of Chicago



"These topics are NOT what we usually learn in school and having this chance to be able to learn more about myself and my body is great. I hope you know that what you are doing is changing people's lives."
- 2022 Pilot student