

Support for eating disorders and body image

The Healthier Dancer Programme believes that dancers need positive mental health, and that they should build performance focused psychological skills that will enhance their training and professional experiences. Dancers need evidence-informed mental health support for mental health challenges that may arise in the course of training and careers, as well as advocacy to ensure that any concerns that can be prevented are actively reduced through education, healthy working and training practices, and early intervention.



All dancers have the right to:

- psychological wellbeing within and outside the dance environment,
- access tools to build performance-focused psychological skills that will enhance their training and professional experiences,
- access evidence and best practice informed clinical support for mental health challenges that may arise in the course of training and careers,
- advocacy to highlight topical concerns arising from dance practices,
- education to support mental health awareness and psychological skills,
- healthy working and training practices, including early intervention to ensure that any concerns that can be prevented are actively addressed



According to research conducted by the Healthier Dancer Programme, at least 80% of dancers sustain an injury each year, however psychological concerns reported by dancers were even more prevalent than injuries, with **92% of dancers reporting at least one psychological issue, and 85% reporting more than one** (Fit to Dance 2, Laws, 2005).

SUPPORT FOR EATING DISORDERS, DISORDERED EATING, AND RELATIVE ENERGY DEFICIENCY FOR DANCERS

- If you or someone you know is **struggling with a eating disorder**, you can seek help and advice from B-eat: <https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/get-information-and-support/get-help-for-myself/i-need-support-now/>
 - » England: 0808 801 0677
 - » Scotland: 0808 801 0432
 - » Wales: 0808 801 0433
 - » Northern Ireland: 0808 801 0434
- If you or someone you know feels they may be experiencing **difficult relationships with food**, or problems with eating:
 - » MIND’s helpful resource about eating problems: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/eating-problems/about-eating-problems/>
 - » National Eating Disorders Collaboration’s (Australia) resource about disordered eating and dieting: <https://nedc.com.au/assets/Fact-Sheets/NEDC-Fact-Sheet-Disordered-Eating-and-Dieting.pdf>
- If you or someone you know is struggling with **compulsive or excessive exercise**:
 - » Eating Recovery Centre’s resource on compulsive exercise: <https://www.eatingrecoverycenter.com/resource/eating-disorders-compulsive-exercise-athletes>
- If you or someone you know suspects they may be experiencing low energy availability or **Relative Energy Deficiency**: <https://health4performance.basem.co.uk/>
- Find out more about **body image, body dysmorphia, and mental health**:
 - » Mental Health Foundation’s resource on body image and mental health: <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/body-image>
 - » Young Minds’s resource on body image for young people: <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/coping-with-life/body-image/>
 - » MIND’s resource on Body Dysmorphic Disorder: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/body-dysmorphic-disorder-bdd/about-bdd/>
 - » Dancers and body image: <https://dancenutrition.com/body-image/>
- If you are looking for specific **advice and support for eating disorder management**:
 - » National Centre for Sport and Exercise Medicine’s resource, Eating Disorders and Disordered Eating and in Sport: <https://ncsem-em.hosting.lboro.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/disordered-eating-in-sport.pdf>



- If you would like to **learn more about the prevalence of and risk factors for eating disorders among dancers**, low energy availability and relative energy deficiency in dance:
 - » Healthier Dancer Conference 2012: Nutrition and Eating Disorders in Dance: <https://www.onedanceuk.org/resources/the-healthier-dancer-programme-conference-2012-nutrition-and-disordered-eating-in-dance>
 - » Silverii, G.A., Benvenuti, F., Morandin, G., Ricca, V., Monami, M., Mannucci, E. and Rotella, F., 2022. Eating psychopathology in ballet dancers: a meta-analysis of observational studies. *Eating and Weight Disorders-Studies on Anorexia, Bulimia and Obesity*, 27(2), pp.405-414. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40519-021-01213-5>
 - » Keay, N., Overseas, A. and Francis, G., 2020. Indicators and correlates of low energy availability in male and female dancers. *BMJ Open Sport & Exercise Medicine*, 6(1), p.e000906. https://scholar.google.co.uk/scholar?output=instlink&q=info:9RJy6TjoEVYJ:scholar.google.com/&hl=en&as_sdt=2005&scioldt=0,5&as_ylo=2019&scilfp=18157962314747008703&oi=lle
 - » Arcelus, J., Witcomb, G.L. and Mitchell, A., 2014. Prevalence of eating disorders amongst dancers: a systemic review and meta-analysis. *European Eating Disorders Review*, 22(2), pp.92-101. https://repository.lboro.ac.uk/articles/Prevalence_of_eating_disorders_amongst_dancers_a_systemic_review_and_meta-analysis/9628844/files/17277974.pdf
 - » Goodwin, H., Arcelus, J., Marshall, S., Wicks, S. and Meyer, C., 2014. Critical comments concerning shape and weight: Associations with eating psychopathology among full-time dance students. *Eating and Weight Disorders-Studies on Anorexia, Bulimia and Obesity*, 19, pp.115-118. <https://www.proquest.com/openview/234b70e278f3357ee0936bafdce381e6/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=4402912>
 - » Goodwin, H., Arcelus, J., Geach, N. and Meyer, C., 2014. Perfectionism and eating psychopathology among dancers: The role of high standards and self-criticism. *European Eating Disorders Review*, 22(5), pp.346-351. https://www.academia.edu/download/47158542/Goodwin_et_al-2014-European_Eating_Disorders_Review.pdf
 - » What is a Ballet Body? The New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/03/arts/dance/what-is-a-ballet-body.html>