PERFORMANCE PSYCHOLOGY
UNDERSTANDING & MAINTAINING WELL-BEING THROUGH SELF-CARE DURING CV-19

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OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES

1. Wellbeing & Mental Health within Dance in CV-19
2. Stress Model – What is it and how does it manifest
3. The Worry Cycle– What can we do to support unhealthy responses to stress
4. Loneliness in CV-19
5. The Role of Social Support
6. Tips from ACT
7. Take Home Messages
Wellbeing: A Definition

“A state of complete physical, mental and social-well being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”

(WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION)
HOW DO WE RESPOND (TO STRESSORS)?

Physiological Responses – Increased Heart Rate, Sweaty Hands, Muscle Tension

Cognitive Responses – Perceptual Changes and Narrowing, Decision Making, Memory, Response Selection ‘Fight & Flight’

Emotional Responses - Aggression, Frustration, Confusion, Withdrawal from the Situation, Anger
STRESS AND AROUSAL

Performance

Worse

Better

Stress Level

No Stress | Facilitation | Optimum | Mobilization | Degradation | Choking | Panic

Stress State
Anxiety can feed on itself.

It can develop into *the fear of the fear*.

Placing a ceiling on one’s anxiety is crucial.

Once the ‘roof’ has been placed, the cycle tends to be interrupted and anxiety drops off.
PERCEPTION OF ILLNESS: THE SYMMETRY RULE (LEVENTHAL ET AL., 1984)

Illness label

Symptoms or Bodily sensations
SYMPTOMS OF WORRY, ANXIETY & STRESS

- Increased Breathing Rate – Hyperventilation
- Increased Heart rate – Palpitations
- Clammy and Sweaty
- Sore Muscles
- Upset stomach – Digestive issues
- Trembling
RISKS & BARRIERS TO HEALTHY PERFORMING CAREERS

- Injuries – and its management
- Low Self-Esteem
- Self-Worth
- High Levels of Anxiety
- Self-Doubts
- Negative Criticism
- Isolation
- Mental Health Conditions
- Depression
PROCCESS ESCALATION : THE WORRY CYCLE

THOUGHTS

I am going to lose fitness and conditioning

EMOTIONAL RESPONSE

I will never be able to get an audition or a contract again

Physiological RESPONSE

Lethargic, or tightness, e.g. comfort eating, overtraining

Thoughts

I am going to lose fitness and conditioning

Increased worries, anxiety, stress

Sleeplessness

Increased worries, anxiety, stress

I am going to lose fitness and conditioning

Lethargic, or tightness, e.g. comfort eating, overtraining

Sleeplessness

I will never be able to get an audition or a contract again
COPING MODEL

(ADAPTED FROM LAZARUS & FOLKMAN, 1984)
**POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE TO THE WORRY CYCLE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explore</th>
<th>I can explore alternative ways to keep fit – everybody is in the same situation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Set</td>
<td>I can set some specific goals or targets - control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>I can evaluate differently my achievements</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
I may lose some type of fitness – but I can build on other aspects of my physical health

Some anxiety is helpful – it makes sure that a plan can be followed

Too much anxiety and worries can be unhelpful and even harmful – stops us getting on with my plan/goal

Being aware of my thoughts and emotions can help to guide attention to other activities and away from symptoms
ACE

- Achievements
- Closeness
- Enjoyment

Act according to your PLAN rather than according to your mood or emotions
Loneliness is the perception that our social needs are not being met.

Loneliness is a common experience – but some people are more predisposed than others.

- Those aged under 25
- Those who live alone
- Those aged over 65
WHEN LONELINESS CAN BECOME A PROBLEM?

• It is natural to feel lonely during periods of social distancing and isolation but with prolonged periods it can have an impact on:
EVIDENCE-BASED WAYS TO ALLEVIATE LONELINESS:

• Physical distancing does not = to social distancing
• Choose what works best for you
3 TYPES OF SOCIAL SUPPORT
GETTING THE RIGHT TYPE OF SUPPORT

Informational

Government guidance
https://www.gov.uk
Guidance on financial support
https://www.gov.uk

Practical

Accessing remote on-line classes YouTube
Accessing different classes and learning new skills on-line

Emotional

Every Mind Matters:
www.mind.org
One Dance UK:
https://www.onedanceuk.org/
Psychological Support
ADAPTING YOUR COPING SKILLS & RESOURCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informational</th>
<th>Practical</th>
<th>Emotional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Limiting information access to relevant and reliable source</td>
<td>- You can write a daily or weekly schedule</td>
<td>- Be kind to yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Accessing credible information</td>
<td>- Set manageable and realistic tasks</td>
<td>- Try writing a gratitude letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Avoid accessing information before going to bed</td>
<td>- Tick off from your list – and reward yourself</td>
<td>- Organise video calls – where you can share experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Practice self-care and self-compassion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strategies from Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

Focus on what’s in your control

Acknowledge your thoughts, feelings, and sensations

Come back into your body

Engage in what you’re doing

Committed action: flexibly doing what matters

Open up: make space for what’s showing up

Values: check in with what’s important

Identify resources

Disinfect and distance

Adapted from Russ Harris (2020)
TAKE HOME MESSAGES

• There is beauty in the Peace and the Pause of this moment.
• Try to let go of comparisons
• Embrace the notion of ‘Unplugging’
• Embrace the notion of ‘I am enough’.
• There is strength in the opportunity and capacity to Slow Down
USEFUL CONTACTS:

• http://www.artsminds.co.uk/
• British Association for Performing Arts Medicine: http://www.bapam.org.uk/
• International Association Dance Medicine and Science: https://www.iadms.org/
• Mindfulness: https://bemindful.co.uk/
• How to Start: https://www.mindful.org/meditation/mindfulness-getting-started/
• Mental Health Charity: https://www.mind.org.uk/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI0rz92OrK1wIVyuMbCh13DQpCEAAYASAAEgKAOPD_BwE
SELECTED REFERENCES:

QUESTIONS

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