



Eating Disorder Education for Dancers, Teachers and Families

Eating Disorder – Prevention

Everyone can take part in preventing Eating Disorders in the dance world. Here are some practical tips.

Individual Level

- Stay away from diets, diet-talks, body-shaming and any other negative food/body talks
- Practice looking at your non-aesthetic talents and skillsets and do the same towards others (e.g. jot down 10 things that makes you, You, that are not related to your looks or physical traits)

Family Level

- Adopt and nurture a healthy, balanced attitudes on body image, eating and weight
- Avoid using comparative phrases such as “good vs bad food”
- Foster safe and comfortable meal environments
- Engage your child in food preparation and cooking from an early age and let them learn that food is so much more than just nutrients
- Role model healthful body talks and eating behaviours

School Level (classes and studios)

- Encourage regular fuelling and educate your dance students on the importance of adequate nutrition for best performance
- Provide social media literacy training to students
- Create Diet Free Zones, for example, in the waiting room, where people enjoy all conversations other than diets and weight loss. Gradually build this zone to cover your entire school or studio
- Do not tolerate weight- or body-shaming comments and behaviours
- Provide your dance students detailed and specific feedbacks (e.g. “work on building strength through your lower body to prepare for pointe work” instead of “lose weight to prepare for pointe work”)
- Maintain a neutral and caring stance for the menstrual cycle, especially around those who are getting their first menstruation and adjusting to bodily changes

Sociocultural Level (as a society and in the dance culture as a whole)

- Be accepting and respectful towards all bodies

Information courtesy: National Eating Disorders Collaboration

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