



Eating Disorder Education for Dancers, Teachers and Families

Eating Disorder – Risk Factors

Eating disorder is a biopsychosocial disorder. This means that the risk factors for eating disorders are scattered through biological, psychological and sociocultural issues. The aim of knowing the risk factors is to become aware of it, and also take actions to actively make changes wherever possible.

Biological Risk Factors

- Genetics
- Family history of eating disorder(s) and/or other mental health condition such as anxiety, depression and addiction
- History of dieting and other weight-control methods
- Negative energy balance (may be intentional or unintentional)
- Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus

Psychological Risk Factors

- Perfectionism
- Low self-esteem
- Obsessive-compulsiveness
- Neuroticism
- Stress
- Depression
- Negative emotions or cynicism
- Self-worth defined by body- shape, size, and/or image
- Harm avoidance or traits e.g. excessive worrying, anxiety, fear, doubts and pessimism
- Avoidance of social interaction
- Heightened sensitivity
- Inability to cope with negative evaluations
- Trauma

Sociocultural Risk Factors

- Weight stigma
- Societal pressure to achieve and succeed
- Internalised western beauty ideal of thinness, muscularity and leanness
- Peer pressure
- Teasing or bullying, especially those based on weight or body size/shape
- Troubled family or personal relationships
- Involvement in sports or activities that emphasise aesthetics (e.g. ballet, gymnastics, modelling, weight-class sports)

Information courtesy: National Eating Disorders Collaboration; National Eating Disorders Association