

Concerned about Abuse and Harassment on Tour? Some Things to Think About.

Touring can be exciting and educational. It can also be tiring and put you in difficult or unsafe situations. This paper addresses some things you should know as you prepare to go on tour.

Know what the terms Abuse, Harassment and Bullying mean:

Abuse

A pattern of physical, sexual, emotional behavior or ill-treatment by a person in a position of power (e.g. teacher, ballet master, artistic director, coach and dancer). Abuse can result in physical or emotional harm. Deliberate ignoring can also be abusive.

Harassment

Can be verbal or physical conduct that shows dislike of a person because of that person's race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, ancestry, citizenship, disability, sexual orientation, or other category that is protected by law. Harassing behavior can be hostile acts that are spoken or written. *Sexual harassment* includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment may involve persons of the same gender or different gender.

Bullying

Physical, verbal, or psychological behavior by peers (e.g. other dancers). Bullying can include being left out from social events. Bullying can be harmful to the victim's performance or create an uncomfortable or unpleasant working environment.

The effects of being emotionally harmed by these behaviors and ways to address the trauma can be found in the Task Force on Dancer Health informational paper "Big Little Secrets".

Dance/USA in a Statement in Support of a Healthy, Safe and Equitable Culture says, "Abuse of power, bullying and harassment can impact all people regardless of gender identity, ability, race, age or sexual orientation. Anyone can be an offender or victim."

Prevention

Have a basic understanding of the laws where you will be touring.

Many countries have laws that give employees the right to work in an environment free of harassment and physical harm. If you are touring, these laws may protect you. You need to know the practices and rules of conduct related to class, rehearsal and performance where you will be touring. For example, in the United States, there are laws to protect you from discrimination. Assault (threatening bodily harm) and battery (offensive physical contact or

harm) are crimes. On the national level, sexual orientation is not protected by law, but it is in many states and cities. Understanding the basic legal environment where you will be touring will help you understand what to do if something happens while you are away from home.

Know the Employer or Company's Policies.

If your contract or your company's handbook does not describe their policy on discrimination and harassment, you should ask if the company has these policies and if so, where they are located. You should also become familiar with any code of conduct. Know who you should talk to if you have any issues. The person you may need to talk to may not be on tour so you should find out how you can contact the person from wherever you are touring. If the company does not have these policies, you could still ask who you should talk to if you have an issue. Some companies may even have a counsellor available for emotional and work-related issues. Often this is through an employee assistance plan.

Before leaving on tour:

Learn what you can about the cities you will visit. Ask if there are special customs and/or etiquette that you should know especially if you are going to another country (e.g. the prohibition against chewing gum in Singapore.) You should find out about any social events such as meetings with media, audience members and/or donors. Understanding cultural traditions is important so you know ahead of time if a situation has the potential to make you feel uncomfortable. You should feel at ease with politely setting boundaries and getting help if someone is not respecting those boundaries. You should also know if where you are working has had issues with people of different races, sexual orientation, religions or another similar category so that you can remain alert to these safety issues that you may not think about when you are at home.

You may also want to find out about the company's policies toward resolving disagreements or compatibility issues between you and your roommate.

Concerns on the road:

If you are being abused, harassed, or bullied, make it clear that you do not like the behaviour and expect it to change or stop. If you feel uncomfortable telling that person or if the person does not stop the behaviour, tell the person the company has designated to deal with such issues. If you belong to a union you may want to report the harassment. Keep notes of what has happened and a record of the dates on which the incident(s) have happened and who you have told about it. Check out websites on self-care and empowerment and try practices that fit your lifestyle.

In a new environment use the buddy system and let others know where you are going. Your buddy is someone you trust. They agree to look out for you and you agree to look out for them. In airports and trains your tour managers may be able to seat you with your buddy. Ask your tour managers about specific safety issues in the cities you will visit such as how safe is it to walk around.

What to do if another dancer tells you they are being abused, harassed or bullied:

Listen carefully and calmly. Try to be supportive and share any information you have on how to report the situation to the company or local officials such as police. Encourage the dancer to report early rather than waiting. Do not speak poorly of the aggressor as the dancer may have a special relationship with them and be afraid for their or her welfare. If there is no one in the company available to call, the dancer could call an artist's help line. There are several resources outlined below.

Bystander Intervention (what to do if you witness abuse):

Bystander intervention programs are available online or sometimes at community centers and colleges or universities. These approaches can help you identify situations in which you might intervene to help your fellow dancers. You can learn how to identify a problematic situation and choose how to respond. These programs teach you how to help and even implement action. An example of one approach is using the **Five D's**. These are different methods you can use to support someone who is being harassed.

- 1. Direct:** You can use a direct response naming the action as harassment and asking them to stop.
- 2. Distract:** You aim to stop harassment or bullying by redirecting or moving to a safer topic or even drawing the attention to yourself in a creative way. (e.g. spill your coffee, have a loud phony coughing fit)
- 3. Delegate:** Get assistance from a third party (a bystander friend, bus driver, bartender, server). Or you can combine this with distraction by you and your friend working together to change the situation.
- 4. Delay:** If you can't act in the situation you can check on the person harmed and make sure they are safe and safely out of harm's way.
- 5. Document:** It can be helpful to record the incident as it happens. If you make a recording ask the person who was harmed what to do with it, including erasing it. Potentially, it can further embarrass them. Never post online, as this may do harm.

If you witness what you believe to be harassment, you may wish to report it to the designated individuals, even if the target objects. In reporting early, you may be protecting someone else from future harm. The designated individual will sort out what happened. They have the training and policies to assist.

Training is important in employing these tools. Reading more online and discussing and practicing with friends can be helpful.

Avoiding accusations:

Adhere to all policies especially codes of conduct. Try to respect boundaries, especially as a company of dancers grow close and intimate on tour. Affectionate gestures and physical

corrections are common practice in dance. For people outside of dance, these gestures may be seen as intrusive or aggressive. When in doubt, ask if the other person minds.

You may want to have someone with you if you have to speak to someone about their behavior (e.g. constant talking in the van or touching that makes you feel uncomfortable). If you feel you are being accused of something you did not do, you can report that to the person(s) designated in the codes of conduct.

Background Information:

1) <https://www.danceusa.org/danceusa-statement-support-healthy-safe-and-equitable-culture>

2) Ballet Met Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy (1) Ballet Met, Columbus, Ohio

3) Kelly D. Ballerina Vancouver, Greystone Books 2012

4) Canadian Women's Foundation Fact Sheet Sexual Assault and Harassment .

Updated August 2016 <https://www.canadianwomen.org/>

5) Canadian Academy of Sport and Exercise Medicine Position Statement: Abuse, Harassment and Bullying in Sport. (December 2010)

6) Lafleche J. Big little secrets: Traumatic Experiences in the Dance World, Task Force on Dancer Health, Dance USA

7)Forcier Marie-France (2017) Code of Silence. A call to action to address and prevent abuse in dance communities. The Dance Current 20 (3).

8) Times Up Now <https://www.timesupnow.com/sexual-harassment-know-your-rights>

9) <http://tva.sagepub.com/content/13/1/3> When Can I help? A conceptual Framework for the Prevention of Sexual Violence Through Bystander Intervention. McMahon S., Banyard V.L. Trauma Violence Abuse, 2012, 13:3.

Resources:

In USA:

- 1) RAINN National Network Service 1 800 656 4673. (crisis network: you are routed to the closest service by phone number; if cell you are asked to enter postal code.)
- 2) The Actor's Fund 1-800-221-7303 'The Actors' Fund is for everyone in entertainment.' They have free confidential services. They are especially helpful in post-traumatic situations including being a witness. Head Office NYC 1-917-221-7300.
- 3) Better Brave <https://www.betterbrave.org/where-to-find-help>

If you have experienced or witnessed harassment and need guidance on what steps to take, please reach out to Better Brave. They can advise you or connect you with the appropriate resources.

In Canada:

- 1) Login to Canadian Women's Health Network, Type Harassment and nearest large city.
- 2) <https://caea.com/NotinOurSpace> or email notinOURSpace@caea.com

1-800-387-1856 for all professionals in live performance across Canada.

Disclaimer: The information presented here is to help guide and inform the dancer and training staff, it is not meant to take the place of the advice of a medical professional. This information is provided by Dance/USA Task Force on Dancer Health.

Also, the above is not intended to give legal advice. Please contact an attorney familiar with employment law for specific advice.

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