



**Economic
and Social
Research Council**



Deliberate self-harm in UK dance students: Prevalence, predictors, and prevention

ESRC DTP Collaborative PhD Studentship

University of Birmingham and One Dance UK

The Midlands Graduate School is an accredited Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP). One of 14 such partnerships in the UK, the Midlands Graduate School is a collaboration between the University of Warwick, Aston University, University of Birmingham, University of Leicester, Loughborough University and the University of Nottingham.

The University of Birmingham as part of Midlands Graduate School is now inviting applications for an ESRC Doctoral Studentship in association with our collaborator One Dance UK to commence in October 2020.

Self-harm is a serious public health issue disproportionately affecting young people aged 13-18 years. Most self-harm research is based on clinical populations but most adolescents who self-harm do not present to clinical services and there has been increased calls for more research to take place in the community.

Participating in regular physical activity improves young people's mental health and wellbeing. Dance is a popular and accessible form of physical activity that attracts a diverse range of participants across its many genres (e.g., ballet, street dancing). However, no research has yet explored dance (or physical activity more broadly) as a potential risk or protective factor for self-harm. This research and the culturally relevant evidence it will provide will direct future education and prevention efforts as well as clinical services provided by One Dance UK's Healthier Dancer Programme and the National Institute of Dance Medicine and Science.

Dance teachers have reported to One Dance UK that self-harm is a problem they recognise in their students, but they currently lack the knowledge and skills to appropriately respond. We have therefore collaboratively designed this PhD to determine the prevalence and predictors of deliberate self-harm in dancers training in vocational and private dance schools.

The PhD will involve mixed methods research, including both quantitative and qualitative techniques, and co-production of knowledge translation tools. Key questions to be addressed include: What is the prevalence of self-harm in dance students? What dance-specific/non-dance specific self-injury methods are used? Do disordered eating and/or body image concerns coincide with self-harm in dancers? The successful applicant will undertake a research placement at One Dance UK during the studentship.

Person Specification

This PhD would be suitable for a candidate with an undergraduate degree in dance science, psychology, sport science, or sociology, though other strong and motivated applicants will be considered. Interests in child and adolescent mental health, the performing arts, and early specialisation would be valuable.

Application Process

To be considered for this PhD, please complete the Collaborative Studentship application form [available online here](#) along with a cover letter and CV and email this to pg-ses@contacts.bham.ac.uk. Shortlisted applicants will also be required to provide two references.

Application deadline: Friday 28 February 2020

Midlands Graduate School ESRC DTP

Our ESRC studentships cover fees and maintenance stipend and extensive support for research training, as well as research activity support grants. Support is available only to successful applicants who fulfil eligibility criteria. To check your eligibility, visit: www.mgsdtp.ac.uk/studentships/eligibility/

Informal enquiries about the research or School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences prior to application can be directed to Dr Jennifer Cumming (j.cumming@bham.ac.uk).