

## Movement Towards Healing: Documenting the effect of Dance Intervention for Women survivors of abuse

This summary outlines findings from a report conducted in partnership with Dance United Yorkshire, exploring how community-based dance interventions support the recovery and empowerment of women survivors of abuse. Drawing on qualitative interviews with eleven participants aged 20s–70s, the study explores the psychological, emotional, social, and physical benefits of participating in a structured dance programme that culminates in public performance.

### Methodology

Eleven interviews were analysed within frameworks of post-traumatic growth and embodied cognition. The study was ethically approved and focused on lived experiences.

### Key Findings

- **Psychological Empowerment:** Dance helped participants rebuild self-confidence, regulate emotions, and rediscover positive feelings such as joy, pride, and vitality.
- **Social Connection:** Women developed strong emotional bonds within the group, fostering trust, belonging, and a sense of shared purpose, often described as a "little family."
- **Embodied Wellbeing:** Participants reported physical improvements (e.g., energy, flexibility), better posture, and a reconnection with their bodies—crucial for overcoming trauma-induced disembodiment.
- **Life Changes and Coping:** Many women made significant life moves, including employment and education, attributing their success to skills and confidence gained through the programme.

### Recommendations

- Create inclusive, low-cost programmes.
- Embed trauma-informed practices.
- Encourage community and peer bonding.
- Recognise the role of embodied expression in healing.
- Rigorously evaluate programme impact.

### Conclusion

Dance interventions offer more than artistic value — they serve as powerful, embodied, and relational tools for trauma recovery. For policy makers, mental health practitioners, and community stakeholders, the report calls for broader adoption and sustained investment in such integrative approaches.

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