

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT A STUDENT HAS AN EATING DISORDER

- 1 Document the observations that led to your concern. Common warning signs may include:
 - Noticeable fluctuations in weight, both up and down.
 - Difficulty concentrating.
 - Dizziness, especially upon standing.
 - Withdrawal from usual friends and activities.
 - Extreme concern with body shape and size.
 - Frequent checks in the mirror for perceived flaws in appearance.
 - Muscle weakness.
 - Extreme mood swings.
- 2 Contact the student's parents to share your observations and be prepared to suggest they speak with their family doctor. Thank them for listening to your concerns. Useful phrases you might use include:
 - "Do you have time to talk? I'd like to share with you something we've recently observed about your dancer."
 - "We've noticed that these changes are affecting your dancer's energy and mood, and this concerns me for safety reasons."
 - "I care deeply about your dancer's well-being."
 - "Opening up this conversation is difficult, but please know that we are here to support you and your dancer."
 - "There are professionals who specialize in helping young athletes with proper nutrition and hydration. Would you like me to provide some recommendations?"
 - "There are professionals, helplines, and support groups that specialize in helping young people and their families navigate concerns about eating disorders. Would you like me to provide some resources?"
- 3 Refrain from assumptions or judgments; simply share the facts of what has been observed.
- 4 If possible, have a recommendation on hand for a local registered dietitian, as well as resources for mental health support, such as:
 - [Tools from the National Eating Disorders Association](#)
 - [The National Alliance for Eating Disorders](#) helpline: 1-866-662-1235

Sources:

[National Eating Disorders Association](#)

[National Alliance for Eating Disorders](#)

Emily Harrison, registered dietitian and founder, [Dancer Nutrition](#)

Katie Gatlin, licensed professional counselor, [LifeStance Health](#)