Response to: “STRESSORS, RECOVERY PROCESSES AND MANIFESTATIONS OF TRAINING DISTRESS IN DANCERS” 
(J. Robert Grove, Ph.D., Luana C. Main, Ph.D and Lucinda Sharp, M.Psych)

Regardless of the field or lifestyle, stress is experienced universally. However, I chose this article because it does a great job of highlighting the specific instances that dancers experience on a regular basis. The elite expectations, aesthetic requirement and emotional component are just a few aspects that separate dance from other stressful occupations/positions. This article discusses the continuous cycle that dancers experience under stress. It describes potential stressors (manifestations of stress), ways to handle stress (active and passive recovery).

A majority of the distress that dancers undergo originate from, "overreaching, overtraining, overtraining syndrome and burn out" (Grove, Main, Sharp 70). Also discussed is the necessity of balance, which is a difficult task for the dancer to properly fulfill. This article highlights two aspects: training distress states and the training distress process. The education of these two events will manifest in awareness and prevention and thus is extremely important.

In explaining the origin of stressors, the article divides stressors into two sections: training stressors and other stressors in dance. The notorious heavy workload that professional dancers endure on a daily basis, in addition to added physical therapy or fitness agendas, and performances is mentally and physically taxing. Outside of the studio, dancers experience the common stressors of life (daily hassles, role stressors, major life events, etc). Unfortunately, due to the nature of the dancers schedule, there is often an inadequate time allotted for dealing with these situations in a healthy manner. Within the "other stressors" category, Grove, Main and Sharp discuss the negativity associated with perfectionism. Intertwined with this perfection is the impact of a competitive environment that dancers are surrounded in addition to the little to no feedback given. Further, the implications of having a company position (hectic touring schedules, maintaining position, etc) leaves the dancer feeling that they are not in control of their life.

The manifestations of training distress are classified as the following: perceived stress, mood disturbance fatigue, somatic symptoms, sleep difficulties and motivational changes. The article discusses the relevance and appearance of these instances in the life of a dancer. Specifically, the motivational changes aspect is interesting as these symptoms can occur prior to a burn out phase. These include phrases such as "do I have to do this?" and "is it worth it?" (Grove, Main, Sharp, 73). Because of the intense academia and high expectations of our art form, burn out is a very potential occurrence.

In terms of recovery, this article outlines both passive and active recovery strategies. Passive recovery is considered rest and ultimately the most crucial aspect of recovery (isolation, alone time, etc). While this protocol seems simple, it allows for a "mental disengagement" and essential "down time" that is often difficult for dancers (Grove, Main, Sharp, 72). An active recovery process is considered anything outside of the rest category, including electrolyte and vitamin supplements and medicinal action. Specific cognitive practices such as self-monitoring and self-reflection are included in
active recovery. I find the journaling process to be especially helpful as it allows an aspect of discovery and realization that could not be identified otherwise. Journaling also allows the dancer to track their workload and emotions, which issues an aspect of control.