



May 10, 2020

**Re: COVID-19 and reopening More Than Just Great Dancing!® Affiliated Studios**

Founded as a licensed affiliation of studio owners in 2012, More Than Just Great Dancing!® (MTJGD™) is a studio industry leader in providing its members access to resources, training, and best practices in the professional services they deliver. This includes curriculum, teacher training, best practices for business management, and community involvement. Our members currently serve over 100,000 students in the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Aruba, Abu Dhabi, and the UK.

Our members have access to weekly online training, webinars, and coaching calls. Additionally, they are provided with live training opportunities via semi-annual conferences. Member Rally is a 2-day leadership conference that is held alternately at our headquarters and flagship studio in Onalaska, WI, as well as other regional cities. Studio Owner University® is a 3-day business management conference held annually in major cities such as Orlando, New York, San Diego, Las Vegas, Austin, Miami, and Palm Springs. Since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, all events have been seamlessly transitioned to distance learning.

Our members are provided 24/7 access to a robust social learning forum and an online library of business management resources. They also have the ability to extend their learning by attending seminars in management, teacher training, sales training, and content mastery days. Members can also elect to become Youth Protection Advocates in Dance® (YPAD) Certified. Certification requires an additional 8-10 hours of online training in evidence-based research from top experts in safety and wellness, as well as a background check and CPR/First Aid training.

At More Than Just Great Dancing!® the health and safety of our members' staff, students, guests, and communities have always been our highest priority; a commitment that has only been heightened at this time in history. That's why we have used local and national guidelines to inform our best practices for service continuity and re-opening in-person services.

Dance also provides inherent benefits to the students of our members, the importance of which has only been amplified during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. These benefits of dance include, but are not limited to, intellectual, academic, social-emotional, and physical support. Here is a small sample of the research that underscores the importance of returning students to dance as quickly and safely as possible so that student needs are met:

1. Studies suggest that dance and movement therapy are effective for increasing quality of life and decreasing clinical symptoms such as depression and anxiety. Positive effects were also found on the increase of subjective well-being, positive mood, affect, and body image. (Source: The Arts in Psychotherapy)
2. Children-at-risk (those with lower socioeconomic statuses, less family stability, etc.) benefit from arts-rich experiences in that they earn higher grades, are more likely to graduate from high school and further their education, and become engaged learners and citizens. The arts make education more equitable for all, regardless of external circumstances. (Source: James Catterall, National Endowment for the Arts)
3. Dance lessons can encourage children to foster a more positive attitude and explore their own self-expression. This can be particularly beneficial for children who are physically or mentally impaired or those who are attempting to deal with significant emotional problems. (Source: EduDance)



4. Children who regularly participate in dance lessons typically tend to perform better academically than their non-participating peers. Students who have a background in dance tend to achieve significantly higher SAT scores and do better in math and science competitions. (Source: FamilyTalk Magazine)
5. Regular dance practice can increase a child's physical strength, stamina, flexibility, and range of motion. The repetitive movements involved in dance can improve muscle tone, correct poor posture, increase balance and coordination, and improve overall cardiovascular health. (Source: Pro Dance Center)

***A complete list of benefits can be found at [www.morethanjustgreatdancing.com](http://www.morethanjustgreatdancing.com).***

Because dance meets imperative student needs, we are committed to helping our members navigate reopening by developing the following recommendations. Any considerations that our members make to return to in-person services should be done with the utmost care and consultation of their local health departments as well as the best practices included here.

### **Governmental Regulations**

Many rules and regulations will differ from county to county and are dynamic with sometimes daily changes, so decision making should include ongoing input from local government and health departments.

If a member feels the recommendations and/or category their business has been assigned is inappropriate, they should contact their state and local legislators to express concerns, ask for guidance and/or seek legal counsel if warranted.

### **Education**

Staff, parents, and dancers should know the symptoms of COVID-19:

1. Fever
2. Cough
3. Shortness of breath
4. Diarrhea (watery)
5. Sore throat/congestion
6. Headache
7. Chills
8. Muscle and joint pain (multiple)
9. Nausea or vomiting
10. Loss of sense of smell

Dancers and staff should STAY HOME if they have any symptoms of COVID-19. They should also notify the studio owners/administrators and contact healthcare providers if they develop symptoms. If in doubt, sit them out.

### **Return to Training**

1. MTJGD™ recommends a **phased approach** to reopening physical services.
2. MTJGD™ recommends all members develop and clearly communicate a **“Safer Studio Plan”** to address any operational changes, precautionary measures, and policy adjustments being made to facilitate the safest possible return to in-person services. This plan should address:
  - a. **Reinforcement of an attendance policy** that does not allow employees to work when sick or students to attend classes when sick.
  - b. **Reinforcement of proper hygiene and health standards** with all staff members and students, including frequent handwashing and/or sanitizing, not touching the face, and sneezing and/or coughing into elbows.
  - c. **Increased frequency of sanitation** in high traffic areas and high touch surfaces of the studio such as barres, floors, counters, stereos, and bathrooms/locker areas. Guidance for cleaning your studio can be found at this link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>.



- d. When possible and practical, taking into consideration the unique needs of each studio, implement **adjustments to studio operations** based on public health guidelines and recommendations regarding PPE, assembly/gathering/occupancy size, and social distancing.
  - e. Where possible and practical, taking into consideration the unique needs of each studio, **implement adjustments to curriculum** and teacher training to reduce or eliminate hand-holding, equipment-sharing, and mingling.
  - f. **Development of a clear policy for each phase of opening** regarding student drop-off and pick-up, lobby availability, and amenity use.
11. MTJGD™ recommends having a **variety of service options** available including private instruction, small group instruction, traditional classes, and online instruction where possible and practical, to meet the needs of students and staff as well as for the ability to maintain service continuity in any situation.
12. MTJGD™ recommends all members develop a clear **system of communicating** the status of classes, such as a “green, yellow, red” protocol. Green indicates it is safe to attend face-to-face classes. Yellow indicates a cautionary change to service delivery. Red indicates clients should stay home and attend class online.
13. MTJGD™ understands that unlike older children and adults, young children cannot be expected to maintain social distancing at all times. Studios, therefore, should focus on a **hierarchy of measures** beginning with avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms, followed by frequent hand cleaning and good hygiene practices, amplified cleaning, and minimizing contact and mingling.

#### **Additional Considerations**

MTJGD™ does not take a position for or against temperature checking or mask-wearing. Each studio owner should pursue their own education and personal convictions regarding these considerations.

At More Than Just Great Dancing!® we are proud of the work our members have done since 2012 to create the highest quality experiences and environments for our staff, students, and guests. Because of this groundwork, and the strength of our network, we believe our members are in a strong position for a local approach to gradual and responsible phased reopening of in-person professional services.

We are honored to continue to serve our members through this situation and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Misty Lown". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Misty Lown, Founder & CEO