



## ***Dissolving Team Cliques***

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Cliques can occur in any area of social interaction, and they are usually made up of a smaller group of people who share common interests, views, purposes, or patterns of behavior within a larger group. Cliques often exist within dance teams and are characterized by inclusion or exclusion of members of the team. Because it is so important for each and every member to work together in order to achieve the teams' ultimate goals, cliques can have a very negative impact on a dance team.

Some team members hang out together and maintain a close friendship outside of practice, so they tend to interact and stick together inside of practice because they feel more comfortable with each other. Every team member is different, yet there are many team mates who have similar characteristics or find that they have things in common. Whether it is intentional or not, they may form a clique that excludes their other team members.

It is important to make sure you address to your team that cliques are not acceptable and that everyone must feel included when they are a part of the team. This sets the tone at the beginning of your season to avoid any unnecessary conflict. Help them understand that each person is different, and everyone must be flexible and accepting of each other.

Dissolving cliques is simply making everyone feel included while stressing the importance of being a team. One suggestion is to have old members pair up with new members to keep them included and to feel welcome. This "sister" method works well for lots of teams. Seniors are great leaders to set the example for your team as well. Use them to create the positive atmosphere at practices and performances. Maybe try and plan extra events outside of dance such as holiday parties, sleepovers, movie nights, or a day at the zoo. This promotes interaction and friendship outside of practice where all team members are involved and gives the team an opportunity to create friendships amongst each other.

Communication is the key to maintaining a positive team atmosphere. Keep the team constantly reminded of why they are here, what their goals are, and how important each member is to the team. Establish a purpose and have compassion on your team, and it will create a respect for each other that will overcome any clique or negative tension.

Dissolving cliques can benefit your team and help you achieve team goals. It can promote friendship and create lasting relationships. Remember that being a part of a team is something that you should treasure. Dance team may be your only opportunity to be a part of a team. Why not make it one of the best or most fun experiences in your life?