

# HYPER SEXUALIZATION OF CHILDREN IN DANCE

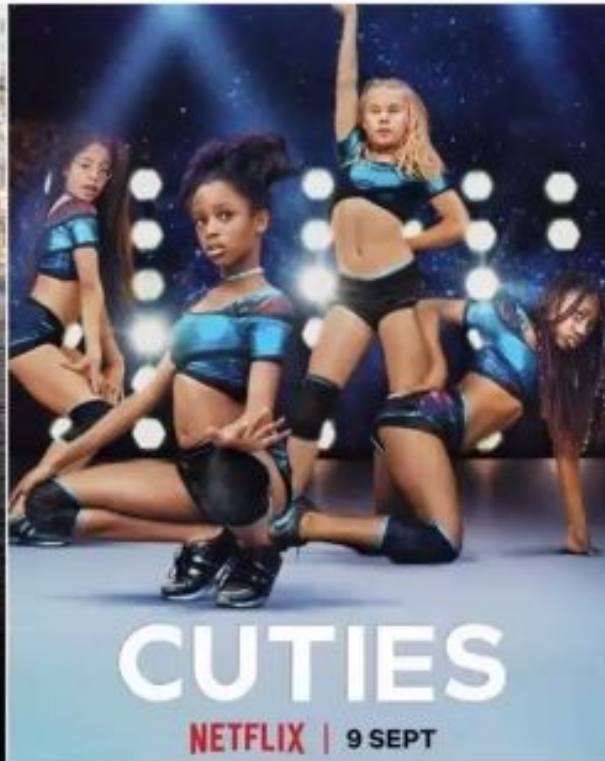
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# Mignonnes - Cuties



- What moved me to talk about this topic, is NETFLIX visual solution of the French film MIGNONNES for US market
- On the left is original picture
- On the right is Netflix's add
- The film is about 11 years old girls who dance
- The visual solution was made to increase rating
- After public protests, Netflix apologizes and returns to original

## SECTIONS

Netflix comes under fire for sexualising teens in new film 'Cuties'; streaming platform apologises, updates pictures

The US-based video streaming platform soon realised its mistake, deleted the older post, and issued an apology on Twitter on Thursday.



**Netflix**   
@netflix



We're deeply sorry for the inappropriate artwork that we used for Mignonnes/Cuties. It was not OK, nor was it representative of this French film which won an award at Sundance. We've now updated the pictures and description.

6:36 PM · Aug 20, 2020



39.7K




29.8K people are Tweeting about this

# Healthy dance vs hypersexualized dance

- Healthy dance is where child explores WHAT his/her body can do, in a way that is fun and free, and it is all about art.
- Healthy dance helps people to express themselves.
- It is for the benefit of the kid.







# Healthy dance vs hypersexualized dance

- ❑ **In many dance studios around the globe, there has been an increase in sexualized, objectified movement for children under 12.**
- ❑ In sexualized dance children have no idea about what they are doing. They are just doing what they were told to do. They are not expressing their own feelings.
- ❑ These studios/teachers often unknowingly model their movement choices on what they see in the media culture. I'll label this cultural shift the difference between healthy, age-appropriate dance versus unhealthy, age-inappropriate dance.

# Healthy dance vs hypersexualized dance

❑ HARMFUL DANCE =  
Hypersexualized Dance  
Children look like adults in adult costumes, choreography and music

❑ HEALTHY DANCE = Educational Dance  
Children look like children dressed in age-appropriate costumes, choreography and music



# Healthy dance vs hypersexualized dance

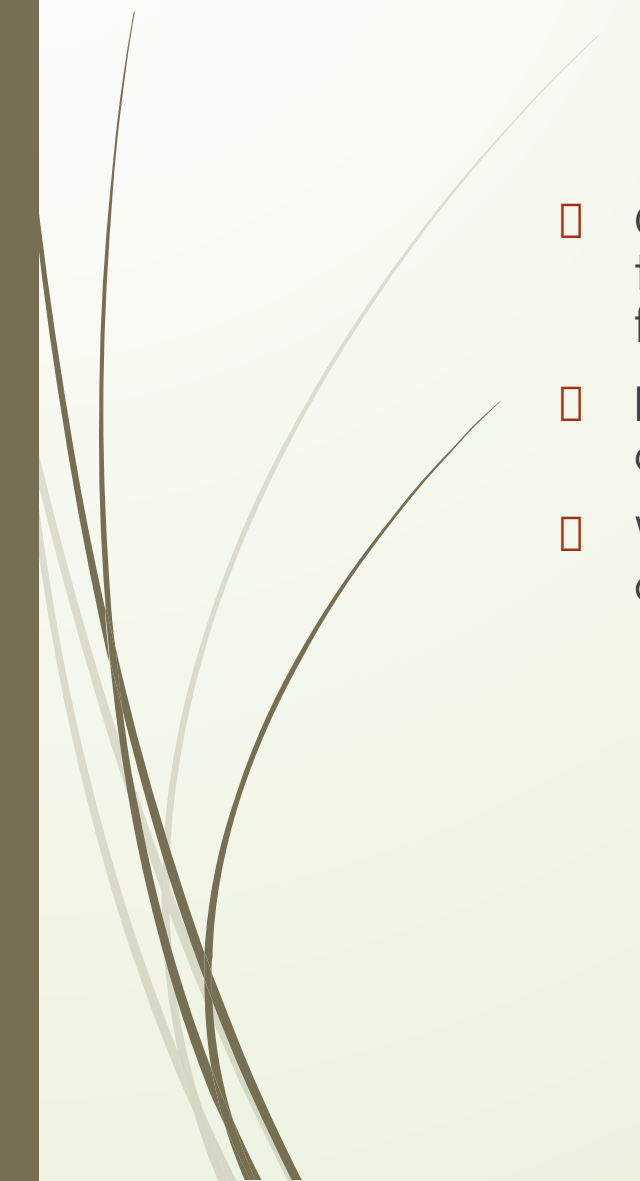


- ❑ Harmful dance objectifies the person who is dancing, and creates a sexualized image of a child.
- ❑ It is for the benefit of adult, who does not have best interests of those kids in mind.
- ❑ It looks like a prep school for soft porn dance videos.
- ❑ It is just preparing children, grooming them, to be more acceptable to future sexual abuse.





# The media invasion

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- Over the course of the last decade, the unfiltered influence of media on the internet has normalized harmful rather than healthy dance outcomes for young children - particularly little girls.
  - In many dance settings, girls are becoming increasingly sexualized in adult costumes, choreography and music at younger and younger ages.
  - We are immersed in a media culture that blurs the line between childhood and adulthood.



# What is sexual abuse?

- ❑ **Sexual abuse**, also referred to as **molestation**, is abusive sexual behaviour by one person upon another. It is often perpetrated using force or by taking advantage of another.
- ❑ When it comes to children and teens, sexual abuse can be inappropriate content – such as sexy costumes, suggestive dance, inappropriate lyrics of the song they are dancing to.
- ❑ In dance, hyper sexualization of children and teens is growing rapidly.



# Definition of Sexualization from the APA

- The American Psychological Association says sexualization is different than healthy sexuality.



- A child is sexualized when:
  - Is **valued only for their sexual appeal or behavior** rather than other characteristics
  - Her/his **physical attractiveness is equated with being sexy**
  - Is **treated as a sexual object** — that is, made into a thing for others' sexual use, rather than seen as a person with the capacity for independent action and decision making
  - Sexuality is inappropriately imposed on child



# Examples



- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ir8BO4-7DkM> (7 years)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=82WwqXyyWXg&list=PLjGkGwynLpkB5VjOmM\\_ZeLQ4wmL4Xb-uw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=82WwqXyyWXg&list=PLjGkGwynLpkB5VjOmM_ZeLQ4wmL4Xb-uw) (10 years)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YJNB\\_Z6S7Yc&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YJNB_Z6S7Yc&feature=emb_logo) (12 years)



# Why is it dangerous?

- In time when SEX is just a means to get more likes, or higher ratings on social media, sexualization of children makes them vulnerable.
- They are in danger of becoming an easy pray for sexual predators.
- They start to look at themselves as sexual objects.
- Thinking sexualisation IS the right way to be popular.
- Making deviant behaviour normal.





# What is NOT OK?

## **A Message for children and teens:**

*It's never OK for someone to make you uncomfortable. If someone is doing things that make you feel uncomfortable, scare you or if someone tries to force you to do something, you could be experiencing sexual exploitation and abuse. It's sexual exploitation and abuse if the person you're communicating with:*

- *encourages you to do sexual things that make you uncomfortable*
- *sends you unwanted nude photos or flashes you on webcam*
- *asks sexual questions about you or makes inappropriate sexual comments*
- *exposes you to pornography without your consent*
- *encourages you to watch them do sexual things without your consent*

# TikTok Tips *for dancers*

**Be open with your parents about the social media sites and accounts you use.**

- Show your parents that you can use social media responsibly - and you'll earn incredible trust from them.

**Use your real age!**

- Part of social media safety is honesty - there's no good reason to pretend to be someone or something you aren't.

**Set your account to "Private"**

- A private account setting makes sure your videos just get shown to people you already know and trust. Limit comments so only your friends can comment on your posts - or turn comments off entirely.

**Limit time & appropriate content**

- Your parents might want to help with these settings. Making and watching TikTok dances is fun - but some screen time limits help make sure you are keeping up with school stuff and quality face-to-face time with your friends and family.

**If you see something that isn't right, talk about it.**

- Like any public place, you need to be aware that there are people you don't know and shouldn't trust on TikTok. Never, ever give any personal information to a stranger - and if you see something that isn't right, tell a trusted adult.

# TikTok Tips *for parents*

**Like all social media, keep communication & access open.**

- Create family standards and an agreement about social media use. Ask your child about what they're seeing and saying on all social media.

**Make sure your child uses their real age**

- The app offers a limited experience for users under 13 that allows them to watch videos and create their own clips to share privately.

**Set your child's account to "Private"**

- Accounts are set to "public" by default, but with a quick change, only people your child approves can see their videos, interact, or message them on the app. This is the biggest safety step. Go to: Privacy and Safety, then hit the switch for "Private Account".

**Limit comments so only your child's friends comment on their posts - or turn comments off entirely.**

- Go to: Privacy and Safety, then scroll to "Who Can Send Me Comments" and choose the preferred setting.

**Limit time & appropriate content**

- Select "Digital Wellbeing" next to the umbrella. There, you'll find settings for Screen Time Management and Restricted Mode

**Connect with your child and stay involved with their use.**

- Ask your child about the newest dance challenge - and try it out with them! Have fun using the app while spending quality time with them.

# The key protective factors

- When we talk about children, the key protective factors are – PARENTS!
- But problem is, that when it comes to dance, parents do not know what is going on.
- So, that burden is on us – DANCE EDUCATORS.





# Sexualization in movement

- Before I go further, I want to clarify what I mean by sexualisation/objectification. The APA (American Psychological Association) report says that there are several components to unhealthy sexuality, and these components set it apart from healthy sexuality.
- When their criteria is applied to dance studio choreography, it's important to identify negative movement patterns such as:  
booty pops, lip-licking, finger licking/sucking, breast or groin stroking, patting or pointing towards breast or genitalia, crotch-grabbing, obscene gestures, suggestive grinding, and seductive props and looks. And the sexual menu continues to increase.



# Sexualization & objectification in movement



## MOVEMENTS

**Hair Whips-** count full head rotations


**Self Touches-** count touching head or upper body

**Unbroken Eye Gaze-** percentage of time looking directly at camera

**Lip Bites-** count

**Sex Acts/Masturbation-** count of simulated masturbation of dancer

**Sex Acts/With Partner-** count of simulated sex acts with a partner



# Sexualization & objectification in movement

- ❑ This is not the art form of dance.
- ❑ It does not promote artistry or creativity.
- ❑ It is hyper-sexualization, and it is hurting the perception of dance when a wide-ranging cultural audience watch it in media, model after it, and move in it. More importantly, it normalizes unhealthy sexuality.
- ❑ It brings our children in danger!



# Where do girls receive sexualization messages from?

- Media  
Including television, music videos, music lyrics, movies, magazines, sports media, video games, the Internet and advertising
- Personal Relationships  
Such as with parents, teachers, and peers
- Girls Themselves  
When purchasing products and clothes designed to make them look physically appealing and sexy, and if they style their identities after the sexy celebrities who populate their cultural landscape, they are sexualizing themselves.

- “Today, pornography is hidden in plain sight, the elephant in the room that nobody wants to talk about but everyone has a hard time navigating around. The new normal.”









# The role of dance educators



- When a child comes to our studio, he/she trusts in us.
- Every choice we make – how we dress, to what song we dance, how we dance, is making an impact at our students.
- They put their future in our hands.
  
- Usually, there are RULES AND REGULATIONS on every competition, which include dance costumes, dance songs, and moves. And usually, they forbid hyper-sexualisation.
- But more and more we see that in dance competitions, rules are not followed.
- The dance routine which is sexier, instead of being disqualified, wins.

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- ❑ Making sexualized choreographies for underage children IS NOT RIGHT!
  - ❑ They should be dancing like children, not like sexually active women!



# Signs of sexual abuse

## **The Importance of Warning Signs**

As prevalent as sexual abuse is, spotting sexual abuse in the dance setting can still be difficult. Most signs of sexual abuse are noticed by one's parent or caretaker. However, learning the warning signs to spot sexual abuse, can be key to protecting a child in danger.

## **A Special Note**

The presence of any single warning sign doesn't mean that a child has been sexually abused. But the presence of several suggests that you begin asking questions and consider seeking help.

It's also important to note that the warning signs of possible sexual abuse can also be caused by other traumatic events in a child's life such as divorce, loss of a loved one, problems at school and home or other stressful situations.



# Signs of sexual abuse



*\*\*The most important thing if you are a dance teacher and you notice a sudden change in a child's behavior, speak up to your studio owner. If you are a studio owner, speak up to the parents. If the behavior change persists, and there is not adverse childhood experience to explain it, it could mean there is sexual abuse happening.*

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# What are the warning signs?

## **Warning Signs of Possible Sexual Abuse in a Child's Behaviors**

According to RAINN.org, physical and emotional warning signs of a young child experiencing sexual abuse are: [1:

- Sexual behavior that is inappropriate for the child's age
  - Bedwetting or soiling the bed, if the child has already outgrown these behaviors
  - Not wanting to be left alone with certain people or being afraid to be away from primary caregivers, especially if this is a new behavior
  - Tries to avoid removing clothing to change or bathe
  - Excessive talk about or knowledge of sexual topics
  - Resuming behaviors that they had grown out of, such as thumbsucking
  - Nightmares or fear of being alone at night
  - Excessive worry or fearfulness
- 

# What are the warning signs?

**According to RAINN.org, physical and emotional warning signs of an adolescent child experiencing sexual abuse are: [2]**

- Unusual weight gain or weight loss
- Unhealthy eating patterns, like a loss of appetite or excessive eating
- Signs of physical abuse, such as bruises
- Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or other genital infections
- Signs of depression, such as persistent sadness, lack of energy, changes in sleep or appetite, withdrawing from normal activities, or feeling “down”
- Changes in self-care, such as paying less attention to hygiene, appearance, or fashion than they usually do
- Anxiety or worry
- Falling grades
- Self-harming behavior
- Expressing thoughts about suicide or suicide behavior
- Drinking or drug use



# Physiological and psychological implications of trauma

**Literature review findings** identifies the psychiatric, social, and disease disorders to which this population is predisposed. Adult survivors experience more depression, obesity, autoimmune disorders (irritable bowel syndrome, asthma, fibromyalgia), eating disorders, and addictions. It is a chronic stressor.

## **Physiological Implications:**

Studies indicate that a history of sexual harassment was associated with an increased risk of high blood pressure, high triglycerides, and clinically poorer sleep quality.

## **Psychological Implications:**

Survivors of childhood sexual trauma are at high risk of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, dissociation, anxiety, self-harm, eating disorders, suicide, and other mental health problems. Childhood sexual trauma may also affect certain developmental processes, such as the ability to develop and maintain relationships. Some survivors experience changes in consciousness and memory, producing a trance-like state or perceptions that one is living in a dream or a movie (APA, 1994). When these experiences are severe, abilities to work, socialize, or engage in other activities sometimes become impaired.



# What can we do?

## What to do if you suspect abuse, exploitation, or child pornography

- Look for patterns of behavior that make children less safe such as grooming.
- Keep track of behaviors that concern you. Using a journal to make notes of behaviors can be a helpful tool.
- Don't wait for "proof" of child sexual abuse.
- Not sure if you have enough info to report? Err on the side of reporting.
- Don't "investigate" or ask leading questions. Simply gather the dates, names of the people involved (if known), and the basic facts of what happened. Let legal, medical and support agency professionals do their jobs.

**Best practice: Speak up whenever you have a concern.**





# What can we do?

**A special word of care regarding disclosures from children, adults, students, and loved ones.**

In closing, please be vigilant about not asking too many questions or taking control away from the survivor. You could inadvertently hurt a potential criminal investigation and cause secondary trauma. Do not investigate yourself or try to find other victims as this can also jeopardize criminal investigations and potentially taint evidence or decrease the perceived credibility of witnesses. Public naming, blaming and shaming (including on social media) can place you and others at risk of a defamation claim and can also re-traumatize the victim or others. Instead, seek help from professionals, law enforcement/child protection services, and/or other survivor resources. Allow those trained in trauma-informed approaches to take over with the facts you provide them.





# Report



**How do I report?** It's important to know how and where to report child sexual abuse BEFORE it happens. That way you can act with confidence if you are ever called upon to report.

## **Agencies That Handle Reports of Child Abuse**

Two agencies handle most reports of child abuse:

- Child Protective Services (in some states this agency has a different name)
- The Police

# Our objectives



- 1. To protect children from hypersexualization in adult costumes, choreography and music, and protect the art of dance
- 2. To educate parents about difference between healthy and harmful dance
- 3. To create healthy dance environment

Thank you for the attention.



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