

ABOUT DANCE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Dance for Social Change (DSC) is a youth leadership initiative where participants learn how to use their artistic talents to advocate for positive change in their communities. It is led by the DSC Teen Company, a group of 15 high school artists that rehearse weekly on Saturdays during the school year, studying dance, exploring advocacy issues, and building skills in creative thinking,

communication, collaboration, and leadership. Each year, they select a social justice topic impacting their community and create an original performance about that issue. They premiere their work at the annual DSC festival and tour the work to community organizations and festivals. They also organize a block party, community forums, and other platforms that use the arts to advocate for social change. Past themes have included the school-to-prison pipeline (2016); women's rights and gender justice (2017); mental health (2018); and gentrification and displacement (2019-2020).

ABOUT DANCING GROUNDS

Dancing Grounds builds community through dance with programs that work at the intersection of arts, education, and social justice. With youth dance companies, summer camps, and the annual Dance for Social Change Festival, we create safe and inclusive spaces in which the lived experiences of youth are truly valued and their unique creative talents are recognized, developed and celebrated. We also bring accessible dance programs to adults citywide with weekly classes and artist residencies, creating a diverse, multigenerational network of support for our young people.

To learn more and support our work visit
[DANCINGGROUNDS.ORG](https://dancinggrounds.org)



“THE EYES OF SOCIETY STUCK ON MY PAIN
BUT NO ONE IS SEEING ME. HEARING ME.”

THE WHAT IF



i see clear blue skies and pretty flowers that never
grow old
i smell the fresh gumbo and jambalaya that moves
from my neighbors house to mine
i taste the fresh breeze as it goes past my face
i hear laughter from both the young and the old. i
hear children running around the playground.
I feel joy. Happiness.

AMELIA GASKEW
DSC TEEN COMPANY MEMBER

YA HEARD MEH? YOUTH STORIES IN A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

The 2020-21 DSC program centered around the creation of an original dance film, *Ya Heard Meh? Youth Stories in a Global Pandemic*, which urges us to listen to young people about how the events of the past year have affected their mental health and wellness. Our brilliant young artists explore oscillating emotions while navigating Covid-19 restrictions alongside the heavy social and political climate of the country. The stories and choreography in the film were created by the DSC Teen Company in collaboration with DG staff Chanice Holmes, Jessica Eugene, and Catherine Caldwell, filmmaker Milo Daemgen, composer Free Feral, and stylist Sage Edgeron.

The film can be viewed at:
[DANCINGGROUNDS.ORG](https://dancinggrounds.org)

DSC TEEN COMPANY 2020-2021 MEMBERS

ALEXCIA MORGAN	DANIEL GRAY
AMAYA SMITH	GABRIELLE BANKSTON
AMELIA GASKEW	KAMARIA GARDNER
AMIRA MUMFORD	LAUREN HUGHES
CALSEY WILLIAMS	MELANI MARTINEZ
CHRISTIANA WILLIAMS	

The DSC Teen Company has been guided by Chanice Holmes, DSC Program Manager, and Jessica Eugene, DSC Program Coordinator.



YA HEARD ME? LISTENING EXPERIENCE

Sound has been a key component of the DSC creative process. Dancing Grounds partnered with Be Loud Studios and free feral to create an original soundscape for the film that would provide relief in the midst of a global pandemic, incorporating youth interviews and original music. The DSC Teen company members also curated a playlist for audiences centered around sounds of joy, healing, and reflection. **Follow the QR code for this audio experience.**

As you listen, we hope that you are able to fully hear the youth voices and reflect upon your own experiences with mental health throughout the pandemic.



YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FAST FACTS

1 IN 3

adolescents will meet the criteria for an anxiety disorder by age 18.

30% INCREASE

In the proportion of emergency department visits by children in mental health crises since March 2020

46%

of parents say their teen had shown signs of a new or worsening mental health condition since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020

Data from CDC and America's Promise

GET INVOLVED

Learn more about these local organizations providing mental health services and resources to our community.

INSTITUTE OF WOMEN
& ETHNIC STUDIES
iwesnola.org

METROPOLITAN HUMAN
SERVICES DISTRICT NEW
ORLEANS
mhsdla.org

NEW ORLEANS
MUSICIANS CLINIC
neworleansmusiciansclinic.org

THE SKIN YOU'RE IN
sph.tulane.edu/the-skin-youre-in

NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL HEALTH, NEW ORLEANS
namineworleans.org

