

Danceable Thoughts for Dance Teams
Student Leadership Scenarios DIRECTOR NOTES
Preparing and Practicing for “When” these Things Happen

Helping students and especially student leaders become better communicators is a natural extension of the Dance Team experience. If you have an officer leadership class or a weekly officer meeting time these would be wonderful for the students to “practice” with their peers. Each scenario can lead to wonderful conversations and with you as their guide, these students will learn how to manage situations that many times will arise and challenge young leaders. Peer interactions need PRACTICE and conflict resolution is another hot topic that’s on the horizon. These are arranged in three sections so that interacting skills can be built over time. The last three scenarios are the “deepest” and the first three are probably the most applicable for the beginning of the school year.

Encourage students to “play act” the scenarios and direct them away from using any actual team member names in role-playing or follow-up discussion. As the leader for these practice scenes, make sure each student has an opportunity to be on both sides of the situation: many times, students have exaggerated fun being the negative party and miss out on the opportunity to do the hard work of correcting off-task or disruptive behaviors.

Using these 9 different practice conversation scenarios with your student leaders, all parties involved will gain valuable insight and practice in common conversations that are part of the Dance/Drill Team Experience.

These scenarios are also available on a separate sheet that is suitable for printing and distribution to your students.

Section 1: For Practice time and the “outside” of practice conversations that may arise. These are also great practice scenarios to establish guidelines for how other leaders can help with team discipline/climate when disruptions occurring while someone specifically is leading

Talking, Talking, Talking – ReDirect instead of ReActing Emotionally

The Commentator: whether a fellow officer or a team member – Someone is adding in comments about the choreography or the teaching/cleaning. Interrupts the flow of the leader, might even be giving opinions instead of facts, could be giving “alternative ways” to do things

The Side Conversation: some small group is carrying on their own conversation while the real work is trying to take place. Could be that they are whispering, maybe even talking loudly, whatever the situation, they are not picking up on the “shhhh” hints.

The Locker Room Gossip: an individual or a small group of friends are using the changing area, locker room, or even the “sidelines” of the dance space as if it is their own personal space to say things and use language that is not constructive or positive about the team or its members.

Section 2: These are extensions of the first set of scenarios in that they probably occur in relationship to practice/performance times.

Excuses, Excuses, Excuses – Action-Oriented Solutions and Constructive Consequences

The Always Late: a member has a hard time arriving on time to any scheduled event and always comes in with a dramatic story about why they aren't on time. They most likely are a distraction to the group activities.

The Frequently Absent: very similar to the scenario above but this team member doesn't show up. Often, they want someone to help them catch up on what they missed, and they may complain that they are "left out" of a part of the dance/the event/the plans.

The Missing Item: someone who frequently forgets to check/double check their required items list. They show up in the wrong uniform or they don't have a pom or something. They often ask you "as their friend" to get an extra for them.

Section 3: These scenarios focus on friendship/peer relationships. This section is also a very important way to discuss when a situation is too big for a peer to handle and when a situation needs the attention and potential intervention of caring and responsible adults.

Pressure, Pressure, Pressure – Conversations that are Tough but Necessary

The Over-Poster: puts too much stuff, and often inappropriate stuff on social media. Thinks that people won't worry or report it because "we're all friends." Needs help understanding that being a member of the team means upholding high standards of social behavior whether acting as a member of the team or just being themselves online.

The Favor-Requester: wants to use your friendship as a means to get out of requirements or to get special treatment. Could be anything from a special part in a dance or for you to help them cover for missing practice.

The Truth-Teller: you find out that your teammate is engaging in some type of risky behavior. You are smart enough to know that this is bigger than just a "talk between friends" and you need to involve responsible adults to help. How to handle the conversation with your director(s)?