

Dance Promotes Well-Being

An Ethnographic and Narrative Interview Study of Older Dancers



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Dance Facilitates Emotional Expression

“Sometimes it makes you feel really good and sometimes it makes you feel tearful. You need to feel your grief as well as your happy bits.”

72 year old Circle dancer

Dance Transforms the Experience of an Ageing Body

“Miraculously, when I dance, the pains in the joints that stiffen, which prevents me moving, goes away.”

71 year old Circle dance teacher

Dance Provides Opportunities to Dress Up

“If you have a kilt as a man, Scottish Country dancing becomes much more a thing to do. I much prefer dancing in a kilt because it’s much more comfortable. You can see the legs working, you keep cool and you feel the part.”

60 year old Scottish Country dance teacher

“I wear a silk sash in the Chisham tartan with a plain white dress and a Scottish brooch. It’s the men who are the peacocks in Scottish dance.”

58 year old Scottish Country dancer

Dance Stimulates Creativity

“I was invited to a 65th birthday party and I made him a card and I wrote him a poem to go with the dance that I created for him.”

77 year old Scottish Country dancer

Dance Provides Support During Bereavement

“I mean, since my wife died, I’m sure it’s extremely good for me to go out and hold people’s hands.”

76 year old Scottish Country dancer

Dance Provides Lovely Music

“There’s so many lovely tunes that when you hear them you just want to dance to them.”

69 year old Scottish Country dancer

Dance Provides Social Benefits

“The enjoyment is working with other people, just keeping in time with other people.”

58 year old Scottish Country dance teacher



Dance Revives Memories

Being in Love

“Whenever I do that dance, I’m immediately transported back into that period of my life when I was in love with this Greek man. Beautiful.”

71 year old Circle dancer

Dancing During World War Two

“In those days it was jitter-bugging and jiving. My brother would dance with me and make me feel I was the best dancer in the world.”

78 year old Circle dancer

Dance Acts as Therapy

“If I’m feeling a little bit low, if I’ve had a bit of a hard time, when I dance, I don’t think about it.”

72 year old Circle dancer