



# Dance, fitness and wellbeing for people with Down syndrome



[inclusionfoundation.org.au](http://inclusionfoundation.org.au)



---

# Dance classes

Our classes are inclusive, supportive, collaborative and encourage creativity and improved cardiovascular health.

## **Ballet, Musical Theatre, Hip-Hop and more**

Classes can cover a wide range of different dance genres, or they focus on one singular type of dance that students respond positively to.

## **Performance Company**

These are classes that culminate into a performance for family, friends and the broader community. It highlights participant's creativity, talent and abilities and promotes social inclusion.

## **Virtual Classes**

We are accessible in rural and remote areas where participants are encouraged get involved through our online and virtual classes.

## **Yoga, Mindfulness and Fitness Classes**

Health and wellbeing classes that are specifically designed to improve mobility, strength, flexibility and the relationship between body and mind. emotion21 is a whole-body program.



**“Our daughter’s self-esteem has skyrocketed. Confidence is not something that can be turned on and off. It shows in appearance, speech, movement, and behaviour.”**

Jenny, mother of emotion21 participant since 2017

---

# Why dance?

People with Down syndrome are often faced with health conditions such as poor muscle tone (hypotonia), cardiovascular disease, hypothyroidism, and weaker immune systems. emotion21 classes improve participants' overall motor skills and fitness reducing the risk of diabetes and obesity.

As people with Down syndrome learn best by demonstrated behaviour dancing provides a fun and engaging way for them to attain these health benefits.



## Outcomes



### Better health and fitness

A creative, fun, and engaging environment encourages participation in physical exercise. Moving the body improves muscle mass, bone density and cardiovascular health.



### Improved cognitive function

Dancing develops cognitive ability by establishing a safe environment that encourages collaboration and socialisation with others.



### Enriched confidence and self-esteem

Concerts and performances allow participants to showcase and celebrate their achievements and individuality increasing their sense of self-worth and improving mental health.



### Meaningful connections

emotion21 is a caring and supportive community that celebrates individuality and creates new friendships. The benefits of the program extend way beyond the participants families, carers and support networks coming together to foster inclusion in the community.

---

# Our programs

Classes are designed for all abilities and are segmented based on age (from 5 years old). As our dance curriculum is strengths-based, classes are customised to suit the capabilities and interests of the participants.

We employ people with Down syndrome as dance teachers. The emotion21 syllabus is co-created and disability led, ensuring our programs are personally empowering and have the opportunity for participants to collaborate and benefit from role modelling.

## Our key pillars

We support our vision through four key pillars:

### Engagement

Community is the foundation of the entire organisation. With the support of volunteers, local and national businesses and donors, Inclusion Foundation has built a strong and nurturing support system for people with Down syndrome and their families.

### Empowerment

We set positive expectations for people with Down syndrome. Our initiatives and programs promote social inclusion, facilitate greater independence, and empower people with Down syndrome to reach their full potential.

### Education

We provide ongoing learning for people with Down syndrome that elevates and inspires them to do more, be more and achieve more. We use education to positively challenge and change societal perceptions of Down syndrome.

### Energy

Inclusion is a goal that requires energy, positivity, and passion from those with Down syndrome and those close to them. People with Down syndrome can fill a room with their infectious spirit and zest for life — traits that run through every aspect of our organisation.



# About our teachers

We have 14 long-term teachers and dozens more active volunteers contributing together to create a dynamic and powerful program. Teachers and volunteers are specially trained to deliver classes.



**Tristan Sinclair**  
**emotion21 Manager and Artistic Director**

Tristan is a performance and multimedia artist, as well as an educator. Their work is focused on the expression of identity and sense of self. They hold a Bachelor's in Design (2013), a diploma in Dance (2016) and a Yoga Alliance recognised qualification (2017).

Tristan's role is to commission, develop and produce new works and programs to support the company's independent artists with a disability, in their artistic growth and development. Tristan plays an integral role in the advancement and delivery of emotion21's artistic programs and community activities.

Tristan was recently recognised, by Building Australian Communities, with an award for their work in 'Sector Innovation' for the Artistic Capacity Building (ACB) Program.



**Nikki O'Shea**

Nikki is a very gifted teacher who cares deeply for her craft, and her students. Nikki has had an illustrious career since graduating from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts and winning the Peggy Van Praague award.

She has been a member of West Australian Ballet Company (Barry Mooreland) and Sydney Dance Company (Graeme Murphy) and was a dancer and resident choreographer for *Phantom of the Opera*, *Cats*, *Beauty and the Beast* and more.

Nikki has also appeared in television and film. We are lucky to have Nikki bring her extraordinary talent to the emotion21 class and share her passion for dance with people living with Down syndrome.



**Kylie Miro**

Kylie's experience in studying, performing and teaching dance, spans over 20 years and covers a vast variety of styles and genres.

She has completed her RAD ballet exams, attended the exclusive Newtown High School of the Performing Arts for Ballet, Contemporary & Music, and studied Commercial, Tap & Jazz at Ettinghausens Dynamic Arts. In 2016 Kylie secured her bachelor's degree of Fine Arts 'Dance' from Victorian College of the Arts (VCA), majoring in Ballet and Contemporary.

Kylie is currently studying for her Masters In Dance Movement Therapy at Melbourne University. Kylie began her independent teaching career after university and fell in love with sharing her passions with others. We are pleased to have her at emotion21 where she revels in supporting her students in expressing themselves freely.



---

# Our teachers with lived experience

Our teachers with lived experience add a fresh, skillful, and inspiring perspective to emotion21. They are instrumental in the co-design of the program curriculum and play a critical role in empowering their students by role modelling their independence and leadership skills.



**Emily Woodward**

Emily is a recent graduate of the Artistic Capacity Building Program, who says she is driven to dance because it is inside of her and makes her feel warm-hearted. In addition to teaching at emotion21, Emily runs classes at Greenbrook Community House, where her work has been recognised by State Parliament member Lily D'Ambrosio. Emily believes that as a dance artist and teacher with Down syndrome she is an advocate for people with disabilities. Dancing with emotion21 since 2010, Emily's performance highlights include World Down Syndrome Congress in South Africa and India and collaborating with The Australian Ballet School, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Circa.



**Jamie Halliday**

Jamie is a passionate dancer and dedicated to developing his skills as a choreographer. He believes deeply in the power of movement to tell a story and wants to make a difference in society by sharing his experiences with others. Poignantly, Jamie recognises that although people may not always listen to, or understand people with disability, dance is a universal language that allows anyone to tell a story. He wants to create dance that makes both the dancer and the audience feel and think. Jamie is an Assistant Choreographer to the Performance Company and is currently co-creating a show for the Melbourne Fringe Festival.



**Daniel Palmer**

A recent graduate of the Artistic Capacity Building Program, Daniel has had a lifelong passion for dance, as it makes him stronger and relaxes him. As a choreographer, Daniel believes dance is the perfect medium to give people the opportunity to feel and express themselves. Daniel loves to help the dancers he works with build their confidence and feel good about themselves. He has previously worked as an assistant dance teacher for secondary school students and is currently an Assistant Dance Teacher for classes at his local emotion21 Rowville class.



**Catherine Annable**

Catherine started her love affair with dance when she was only four years-old. She attended Miss Sue's Dance School in Mornington where she learned ballet, jazz and tap. After joining emotion21 in her late teens, Catherine has often been in the spotlight — she represented Australia at the World Down Syndrome Congress in India, performed with the Australian Ballet, and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and has even appeared on television. Since joining the Artistic Capacity Building leadership program, Catherine has developed her choreography and leadership skills and now teaches at emotion21 in Cranbourne.

---

## Performance company

The emotion21 performance company represents emotion21 to a wide range of audiences with exciting performances at community and corporate events, and festivals. This program is an opportunity for dancers to further develop their love of dance and performance. Past collaborations include The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Circa, and the Australian Ballet School.



---

## Artistic Capacity Building (ACB)

The ideal program for aspiring creators, ACB fosters the creativity and professional capacity of emerging artists with Down syndrome. Providing mentorship and collaboration with established artists, as well as other participants, this program engages more broadly in the creative sector. Outcomes include opportunities to work as dance teachers and choreographers.

**"The skills I learnt in the ACB program helped me become a dance teacher and be a role model for people with a disability. I am currently teaching a dance class every Monday at Greenbrook Community House to people with a disability. I am really proud of myself for doing this."**

Emily Woodward, emotion21 participant since 2010 and dance teacher



---

# Get involved

emotion21 has several opportunities for community engagement.



**Book a special workshop for your school or community group**



**Support us with a donation**



**Learn more about us**

