



Bush Theatre

DREAMING AND DROWNING

**Self-care guide
& content warnings**

What is this document?

This document contains information about ways to look after yourself before you watch, while you're at the theatre or after the play.

It also contains detailed information about the show in order to describe what you should expect when attending. This includes information about the content warnings, the space, lighting and sound, and further access information.

Please note that by discussing the content of the show, the below information will contain key plot points and descriptions of what happens in the performance..

We hope the information and resources in this document will help audiences experiencing the show, and support planning if you are concerned about your visit.

All of the information here was accurate when we put this guide together. As the production is in development, the details may change and we will update as soon as possible.

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What is self-care?

Self-care is a choice to listen to our needs and look after ourselves, so we are able to keep going and live our best lives, despite the difficulties we experience in life and how they make us feel.

Thank you to Clean Break for bringing their care practices, including Self-Care Guides, to the Bush Theatre during our co-production of *Favour* (2022) Clean Break is a theatre company working with women with lived experience of the criminal justice system or at risk of entering it. **cleanbreak.org.uk**

“The concept of self-care comes from the Black Feminist movement. Self-care is important because it’s about recognising that we experience discrimination and oppression because of how others react to who we are, or what we’ve experienced.” - Clean Break

In writing this document, we were inspired by recent approaches taken by several other companies, especially the Nouveau Riche / Royal Court teams.

About the show

The below information contains key plot points.
Skip this section if you want to avoid spoilers.

Malachi has just started university. By night, he has recurring nightmares of a beast hunting him. His anxiety weighs heavy on a daily basis. His housemates ignore him, racism in his lecture goes unchallenged, he swipes on Tinder to no success.

The beast in his dreams is growing more powerful; what started as scratching at the door turns to thudding. After another rejection, he spits up black liquid. His anxiety is getting out of control, he's drowning in his own mind.

He meets Kojo, a second-year jazz pianist. He likes him, but even when he's enjoying himself he feels the beast at his back. Lost in his anxiety once more, Malachi has a panic attack, but on this occasion he is able to break free and shake the beast off. He doesn't want to be ruled by his own fear anymore and in a brave act, he texts Kojo.

Whilst running from a racist in the street, the skin-head chasing him transforms into the beast. He turns to confront him - wielding a machete, he tears the beast apart until it's dead.

He goes to Kojo's with a renewed understanding of himself, his right to happiness, the impact of racism in his life, the root of his anxiety, and his power to choose self love and belief. He is triumphant.

Content guidance

This show contains:

- Use of strong language
- Continued depiction of violence and violent images
- Frequent discussion and depiction of racism and homophobia
- Frequent discussion and depiction of mental illness, particularly anxiety
- Depiction of an anxiety attack
- Depiction of death
- References to sex and drinking alcohol

Lighting and Sound

This show may also contain:

- Flashing lights
- Moments of darkness
- Loud noises

This production is still in development. More information will be available closer to the time of the performances.

Helplines & Support

Mind

Provides advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem.

[mind.org.uk](https://www.mind.org.uk) or 0300 123 3393

BLACK MINDS MATTER

Provides free, 1:1, culturally relevant therapy for Black people in the UK. blackmindsmatteruk.com

BAATN

Support services for people who identify as Black, African, South Asian & Caribbean. baatn.org.uk

akt

Supports LGBTQIA+ people aged 16-25 who are homeless or living in a hostile environment. akt.org.uk

Aashna

Therapists working to recognise the ways in which culture, faith, colour, background, sexuality, gender and neurodiversity affect people's experiences. aashna.uk

Hub of Hope

UK-wide mental health service database. You can filter results to find the right support. hubofhope.co.uk

Samaritans

Provides 24/7 emotional support to anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope, or at risk of suicide.

samaritans.org or 116 123

Self-care suggestions

Watch with someone

Bring a friend or someone you trust to watch the play with you.

Talk to someone

If you find the content distressing try talking to someone you trust, or try one of the organisations suggested above.

Breathe

Breathing is a great way to help you feel calm. Try breathing in for four seconds, holding your breath for four seconds, exhaling for four seconds and holding again. Repeat this for as long as you need.

Find some nature

Look out of the window or go for a walk if you can; experiencing nature can help us feel grounded.

Shepherd's Bush Green is only a minute's walk away, and the Bush has a terrace with outdoor seating.

Know if you need to step away

There is nothing wrong with deciding this isn't for you or it's too much.

Leave the auditorium, walk away, take a break. Do what feels right for you.

Self-care suggestions

Try a grounding exercise

Grounding exercises are things you can do to bring yourself into contact with the present moment.

There are many ways you can do this. Here are some ideas:

1. Notice five things you can see, four things you can feel, three things you can hear, two things you can smell and one thing you can taste.
2. Sit with your feet on the floor and back against your chair and either gently tap each leg or cross your arms and tap your shoulders.
3. Wash your hands or drink some water.



The performance space

This show will take place in the Holloway Theatre, which is the larger of our two performance spaces. For this performance, the space will be in a 'traverse' arrangement, meaning the seats are arranged on two sides of the stage.

The maximum capacity is 142. Access to the Holloway Theatre is on the ground floor and the floor is level.



There is step free access to row A in all banks.

A wheelchair space is available to book for every show.

Please note that due to the intimate nature of the performance space latecomers may not be admitted, and we cannot guarantee readmission once the performance has begun.



Access information

The Bush Theatre building has two theatre spaces – the Holloway Theatre and the Studio – as well as our Library Bar. There are two entrances to the building:

The first entrance is via the Bush terrace to the right hand side of the building, accessible via a ramp suitable for wheelchair users and buggies or via three steps. There is a red automatic double glass door.

From here the Box Office is to the left and the Library Bar and Gianni and Michael Alen-Buckley Script Library are beyond the Box Office around the corner. The Holloway Theatre entrance is just beyond the bar and to the right of the Script Library.

Access information

If you enter through **the front entrance** on Uxbridge Road through the porch up some steps, the theatre's Library Bar is straight ahead on the right, the Script Library is to the left, and the Box Office to the right. The entrance to the Holloway Theatre is straight ahead on the left.

The toilets are situated on the first floor and are accessible via stairs or the lift. There is also an **accessible toilet** on the ground floor beneath the stairs which access patrons have priority to use.

The Bush Theatre aims to be as accessible as possible in everything we do. The whole building is accessible for wheelchair users, a hearing loop is available, and Assistance Dogs are welcome at every performance.

Discounted tickets for disabled bookers and free tickets for essential companions are available.



**If you have any
questions or
would like more
information, don't
hesistate to get
in touch with our
team:**

**email:
boxoffice@bushtheatre.co.uk**

**phone:
020 8743 5050**