

A street scene at dusk with a red brick building and a black sign with yellow text. The sign reads "Bush Theatre". The background shows a street with people walking and a red double-decker bus. The sky is a pale blue.

# Bush Theatre

FEELING AFRAID AS IF  
SOMETHING TERRIBLE  
IS GOING TO HAPPEN

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](https://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.**

*Feeling Afraid As If Something Terrible Is Going To Happen* is a one person play that combines a monologue and a stand-up set. The central unnamed character is a stand-up comedian. He makes a few false starts to his set, starting over. He eventually tells us that he's 36, a comedian, until recently he's never been in a proper relationship, and he's about to kill his boyfriend.

The comedian tells us about the first date with his American boyfriend, which ended in a kiss. The comedian gets a call from his mum and while she talks, he opens a gay dating app to browse, then goes to have sex with a friend, Michael.

As the American and the comedian get to know each other, the comedian invites him to his stand-up gigs and realises he never laughs. The American asks him about some of the trauma underneath the jokes. They have sex, and for perhaps the first time the comedian doesn't feel shame. Afterwards, the American tells him he can't laugh and if he laughs he could die. He suffers from cataplexy, a medical condition which means that he might die if he laughs.

They start seeing each other regularly, and it begins to feel like a proper relationship, which the comedian struggles with.

The comedian goes to Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. He describes feeling afraid as if something terrible is going to happen, catastrophising, negative thought patterns and his compulsion to make his boyfriend laugh in spite of the risk. He lets slip that maybe he loves him.

The comedian goes to Michael's, where they end up kissing and having a threesome. While they're having sex all the comedian can think about is the American. After, feeling ashamed, he goes to the American's house but he isn't there.

When the American arrives the comedian tells him everything, about how he keeps making mistakes and his self-destructive urges. Tells him he loves him. He tries to go to him and on his way, falls over by accident slipping on a banana peel. The American laughs at the slapstick. And he collapses and seems to die. Just as the comedian realises he's dead, the American opens an eye and winks.

The comedian looks up, and thanks us for being a wonderful audience.

# Content guidance

This show contains:

- Use of strong language
- References to and descriptions of sex throughout and graphic descriptions of pornography
- References to and description of the consumption of drugs
- Repeated mention of blood
- References to mental illness, particularly anxiety and depression, and therapy
- Frequent references to chronic illness, death and grief
- Depiction of invasive thoughts, including reference to animal cruelty
- Direct audience address

## Lighting and Sound

This show may also contain:

- Flashing and bright lights
- Moments of darkness
- Loud noises
- Haze effects

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

***Feeling Afraid* lasts around 60 minutes with no interval.**

# Helplines & Support

## London Friend

Provides services to improve the health and wellbeing of the LGBTQ+ community in London, including pay-what-you-can counselling and support groups.

[londonfriend.org.uk](http://londonfriend.org.uk) or 020 7833 1674

## Switchboard LGBT

The national LGBTQ+ helpline, offering non-judgemental, confidential support, run by LGBTQ+ volunteers. Phone, online chat or email.

[switchboard.lgbt](http://switchboard.lgbt) or 0800 0119 100

## ELOP

A holistic lesbian and gay centre that offers a range of social, emotional and support services.

[elop.org](http://elop.org) or 020 8509 3898

## Mind

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

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

## Hub of Hope

UK-wide mental health service database. Lets you search for local, national, peer, community, charity, private and NHS mental health support.

[hubofhope.co.uk](http://hubofhope.co.uk)

## Samaritans

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

[samaritans.org](http://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 'thrust' arrangement, meaning the seats are arranged on three sides of the stage.

The maximum capacity is 206. 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. Row AA is two steps down from ground level, and is level with the stage.

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**