

A street scene at dusk. On the right, a red brick building has a black sign with yellow text that reads "Bush Theatre". Below the sign, a woman in a beige coat stands on the sidewalk. To the left, a red double-decker bus is visible, and several people are walking on the sidewalk. The sky is a pale blue.

Bush Theatre

SHIFTERS

**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.

The play jumps between present day and eight years in the past, when Dre and Des were at secondary school, and moments in between.

The play opens in the present day. Dre is at his grandma's funeral. Des, who now lives a plane ride away, arrives late and misses the service. So many years have passed so after the funeral they decide to go for a drink and catch up. Her plane home is a matter of hours away.

In the past, Dre moves to a new area to live with his grandma after the death of his father and starts at a new school. He meets Des, an outspoken and opinionated classmate. Dre persuades her to join the debate team with him, and the pair work closely to prepare for a big competition with a significant cash prize.

Back in the present, and we discover how much their lives have moved on. Dre is now a father and owns a local restaurant, having achieved his ambitions. Des is newly engaged, and working as an artist. After heading to Dre's restaurant, which they find closed, they decide to continue the evening at Dre's grandma's where there is always a strong supply of good alcohol. Over Grandma's whisky, they talk, reminisce and question what might have been.

In memories, we see them grow closer, we uncover their pasts, their loves and losses, including the death of Dre's brother and his mum moving back to Lagos leaving him with his grandmother, and Des' experiences of sexual abuse in her childhood leaving her experiencing panic attacks. On the day of the big debate, Des has one of these panic attacks, meaning their lose shot at winning the prize money. Dre reveals it was never really about the prize money, but about spending time with her.

As a tapestry of moments and memories, past and present, unravels, Des and Dre attempt to unpick whether they were truly destined for each other, or if they should ultimately part ways.

Content guidance

This show contains:

- A depiction of a panic attack
- Use of strong language throughout
- Depiction of alcohol consumption and drunkenness
- Infrequent references to sex
- Themes and discussion of illness, death and grief
- Discussion of disability and neurodiversity
- Allusions to sexual abuse

Lighting and Sound

This production also contains:

- Flashing, flickering and pulsating lights
- Infrequent moments of darkness
- Sudden lighting changes
- Loud noises

The running time is approximately 1 hour 45 minutes with no interval.

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

Provides various services for psychological support for people who identify as Black, African, South Asian and Caribbean. baatn.org.uk

At A Loss

The UK's signposting website for the bereaved. They can help you find bereavement services and counselling, as well as resources. ataloss.org

Hub of Hope

UK-wide mental health service database. Lets you search for local, national, peer, community, charity, private and NHS mental health support. You can filter results to find specific kinds of 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 184. 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. Seats in rows AA and BB are stepped down from ground level, below a raised stage. There are steps at either ends of the rows. 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**