



**Bush Theatre**

# THE CORD

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.**

Ash and Anya have just had a baby. When Ash's mum Jane comes to visit for the first time, it becomes clear that Anya had a tough labour and now their baby is having trouble feeding. Anya's parents were at the hospital immediately after the birth. Jane it seems, was not.

They drive to visit Jane, and it is strained. We learn that Jane is struggling with chronic pain and has struggled with mental illness in the past. On their drive home, Ash and Anya argue after Ash almost falls asleep while driving on the motorway.

As Ash begins to break under the pressure of being a new father, his issues surrounding his relationship with his mum are brought to the surface. He eventually goes to see her and speak through things long unspoken.

We find out that perhaps this isn't the first time Ash has had to parent, feeling burdened by his mum, always trying to look out for her.

He feels as though he is losing himself in fatherhood, but he knows he has a responsibility to both Anya and their child.

In the final scene, he returns home to play with his son, soothing him for the first time.

# Content guidance

This show contains:

- Use of strong language
- Depiction of heightened emotional distress
- Depiction of a mental illness crisis
- Discussion of postpartum depression and psychosis
- References to surgical treatment, blood and injury (including of a child)
- Scenes of a sexual nature
- Depiction of pain and allusions to chronic illness
- Scenes containing a threat of violence

## Lighting and Sound

This show also contains:

- Flickering and pulsating lights (not strobe lighting)
- Moments of darkness
- Haze effects
- Unscore throughout played live on a cello

**Performances of *The Cord* last approximately 1 hour 20 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**

## NCT

Provides support for parents during pregnancy, birth, and early parenthood. [nct.org.uk](https://www.nct.org.uk) or **0300 330 0700**

## Family Lives

Provides targeted early intervention and crisis support to families. [familylives.org.uk](https://www.familylives.org.uk) or **0808 800 2222**

## Nafsiyat

Provides short-term intercultural therapy in over 20 different languages, to individuals, groups, and couples.

[nafsiyat.org.uk](https://www.nafsiyat.org.uk) or **020 7263 6947**

## Hub of Hope

UK-wide mental health service database. Lets you search for local, peer, community, charity, private and NHS mental health support. You can filter results to find specific kinds of support. [hubofhope.co.uk](https://www.hubofhope.co.uk)

## Samaritans

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

[samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org) or **116 123**

## Action on Postpartum Psychosis

Supporting and advocating for families affected by postpartum psychosis, including peer support.

[app-network.org](https://www.app-network.org)

# 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-the-round, meaning the seats are arranged on all four sides of the stage.

The maximum capacity is 182. 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.

The set is a raised, carpeted platform in the middle of the space with a glowing square lightbox ceiling above it.

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**