A street scene at dusk with a brick building and a sign for Bush Theatre. The sign is black with yellow text. The street is paved and has a few people walking. A dog is on a leash. The sky is a pale blue-grey.

**Bush Theatre**

# THE HORSE OF JENIN

**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.

## Contents

What is self-care? ----	3
About the show ----	4
Content guidance + Lighting and Sound ----	5
Helplines and support ----	6
Self-care suggestions ----	7
The performance space ----	9
Access information ----	10

## **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](http://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 and Royal Court teams.

# About the show

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

The Horse of Jenin is a one person play written and performed by Alaa Shehada. It follows the life of a boy growing up in Jenin, Palestine.

Alaa takes us through playing in the streets, forming friendships and falling in love for the first time. At the heart of these memories is the famous 'Horse of Jenin' - a sculpture made by an artist and members of the community out of the wreckage of destroyed buildings. The horse becomes a powerful symbol: a reminder of freedom, imagination and the strength of a community that continues to rebuild.

But life in Jenin is also marked by military occupation. As Alaa grows older, the play navigates this contrast between childhood joy and the realities of military occupation. Alaa shares the loss of a close friend, the destruction of homes, and the eventual demolition of the horse sculpture.

Alaa uses mask work, physical storytelling and comedy to hold space for both pain and hope. The horse remains a central metaphor and, even when destroyed, its spirit lives on.

## **Content guidance**

This show contains:

- Use of strong language throughout
- Use of masks throughout
- Discussion of gun violence, mass killing and military occupation, specifically within Palestine
- Discussion of displacement
- Discussion of death and grief, including the loss of a friend
- Discussion of the destruction of cultural symbols/community landmarks
- Descriptions of blood (no use of fake blood on stage)

## **Lighting and Sound**

This show contains:

- Moments of complete darkness
- Sounds of gunshots, sirens and marching troops

This performance also contains brief moments of audience interaction with audience members in the first two rows.

# Helplines & Support

## **Family Lives**

Provides targeted early intervention and crisis support to families.

[familylives.org.uk](http://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](http://nafsiyat.org.uk) or 020 7263 6947

## **Inspired Minds**

A faith-based charity providing non-judgemental, confidential support to those experiencing mental health problems.

[inspiredminds.org.uk](http://inspiredminds.org.uk)

## **Muslim Community Helpline**

Provides a confidential, non-judgemental listening and emotional support service in English, Arabic, Urdu, Punjabi and Gujrati.

0208 908 6715 or 0208 904 8193

[muslimcommunityhelpline.org.uk](http://muslimcommunityhelpline.org.uk)

## **Hub of Hope**

UK-wide mental health service database. Lets you search for local, 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:

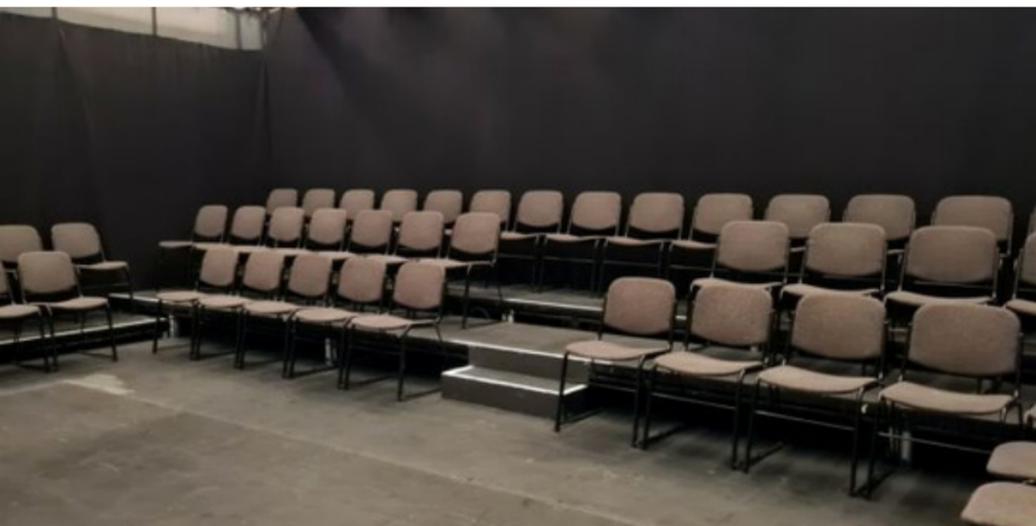
1. Notice five things you can see, four things you can feel, three things you can hear, two things you can smell and one thing you can taste.
2. Sit with your feet on the floor and back against your chair and either gently tap each leg or cross your arms and tap your shoulders.
3. Wash your hands or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



## **The performance space**

This show will take place in the Studio, which is the smaller of our two performance spaces.

Access to the Studio 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. The Studio is immediately to the right, down a corridor with floor-to-ceiling windows.

## 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 and Studio to the right.

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  
hesitate to get in  
touch with our  
team**

**email:  
boxoffice@bushtheatre.co.uk  
phone: 020 8743 5050**