

A street scene at dusk. On the right, a red brick building with a large black sign that reads "Bush Theatre" in yellow. Below the sign, a window displays a red and white advertisement for "THE BOOKS BACK". On the left, a red double-decker bus is visible. The street is paved with light-colored stones, and several people are walking. A small black dog is in the foreground. The sky is a pale blue.

**Bush Theatre**

# HEART WALL

**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 and Royal Court teams.

# About the show

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

Franky is back at her local pub, The Sun Inn, for the first time in years. Motown music drifts from the tinny speakers, and karaoke starts at eight. It's reassuringly familiar. Like nothing's changed.

But, haunted by grief, Franky's family is quietly unravelling around her. Her dad Dez is hiding himself away, her mum Linda seems to be staying with her Nana a lot, her childhood friend Charlene seems to have moved on and be managing without her just fine, and her family friend and bar man of The Sun Inn, Valentine, doesn't want to kiss her.

When reconnecting with her parents and friends, buried secrets are brought to the surface and their shared pain demands to be felt. Franky realises that her Mum and Dad aren't really together anymore, and that Linda's been staying with her new partner and is not always at her grandma's.

The longer she stays at home, the more Franky sees how much her parents are struggling. Valentine and Charlene say they see Dez walking around in the middle of the night. Franky finds out that he's been going to a reservoir, being around to help anyone that may want to hurt themselves. When Franky and Dez visit the reservoir together, Dez reveals that Franky's sister drowned in the reservoir, and was only 7 when she died. Bringing their grief out into the open, together they must decide whether they let it divide them or bring them closer.

**The show will last approximately 1 hour 40 minutes, with no interval.**

# Content guidance

This show contains:

- Discussion of grief and death
- Discussion of suicide
- Depiction of burns on the skin
- Discussion of self harm
- Discussion of death of a child
- Discussion of drowning
- Strong language

## Lighting and Sound

This show may contain:

- Loud noises
- Haze effects
- Moments of darkness

**Please note - bags of peanuts are part of the set of Heart Wall - but they will remain unopened and will not be eaten on stage.**

# 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**

## Samaritans

Samaritans is the charity that prevents suicide through the power of human connection. Connecting people in crisis with trained volunteers who will always listen.

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

## Aashna

Therapists working to recognise the ways in which culture, faith, colour, background, sexuality, gender and neurodiversity affect people's experiences. **[aashna.uk](https://www.aashna.uk)**

## The Good Grief Trust

Run by bereaved people, helping those experiencing grief. Provides information and support on grief and bereavement, including a map of bereavement services.

**[thegoodgrieftrust.org](https://www.thegoodgrieftrust.org)**

## Child Bereavement UK

Child Bereavement UK helps families to rebuild their lives when a child grieves or when a child dies. We support children and young people (up to the age of 25) when someone important to them has died, and parents/the wider family when a child of any age dies or is dying.

**[childbereavementuk.org.uk](https://www.childbereavementuk.org.uk) or 0800 02 888 40**

# 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.

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. 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 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. These are non-gendered. There is a single-use cubicle on the ground floor which is accessible (right-hand transfer), has baby-changing facilities, includes a sink within the cubicle and has floor-to-ceiling walls.

**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**