

A street scene at dusk with a brick building and a sign for Bush Theatre. The sign is black with yellow text. The building is red brick with white window frames. The sky is a pale blue-grey. There are people walking on the sidewalk, and a dog is visible in the foreground. A woman in a beige coat is standing on the right side of the frame, talking on a phone. A window on the right has red text that is partially visible, including "THE" and "DUO".

Bush Theatre

I'M NOT BEING FUNNY

**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 and Royal Court teams.

About the show

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

I'm Not Being Funny follows Peter and Billie, who are husband and wife, over the course of an evening. They are preparing for a stand up comedy set the following day, each trying to put together a 'tight five'.

The play begins with Billie coming home to Peter practicing his jokes, before she joins in and they decide to stay up together until they have their sets finished. They have a young daughter called Ruby, who they interact with periodically throughout the play, keeping an eye on her throughout with a baby monitor. The play jumps between flashbacks to earlier points of their relationship, telling stories to the audience in a standup format, and the present moment as they put together their sets.

Settling on telling funny stories about their 'firsts', they remember and re-enact moments from their relationship, from the first time they met to their first kiss and first holiday together. They approach the task of comedy differently, with Billie wanting to tell real stories about them, and Peter taking a less personal 'knock knock' approach. It is gradually revealed that the friction between their methods is heavily shaped by Billie's diagnosis of cancer, and wanting to make Ruby laugh again since they told her.

The play switches in tone from hilarious and silly to emotional and poignant, reminding the audience of mortality and the importance of living in the present. It ends with them imagining a bright and hopeful future together, and a flashback to a conversation between them when their daughter Ruby was a newborn.

Content guidance

This show contains:

- Use of strong language throughout
- Themes of grief and loss
- Discussion of diagnosis of chronic illness, including terminal cancer
- Mention of suicide
- Depictions of anxiety and a panic attack
- Depiction of alcohol consumption
- Depiction of mild aggressive behaviours and acute distress
- Moments of direct audience address.

Lighting and Sound

This show contains:

- Moments of darkness
- Loud noises
- Sudden lighting changes

This performance will last approximately 1 hour 30 minutes with no interval.

Helplines & Support

Macmillan

Offers support to people with cancer, including specific support for pregnant people.

macmillan.org.uk or in person at their Information and Support service at Charing Cross Hospital, W6 8RF

Mummy's Star

Offers cancer support in and around pregnancy, birth, loss and beyond. Includes recorded information sessions in their Ask the Expert series.

mummysstar.org or 0808 800 2222

Family Lives

Provides targeted early intervention and crisis support to families.

familylives.org.uk or 0808 800 2222

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

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:

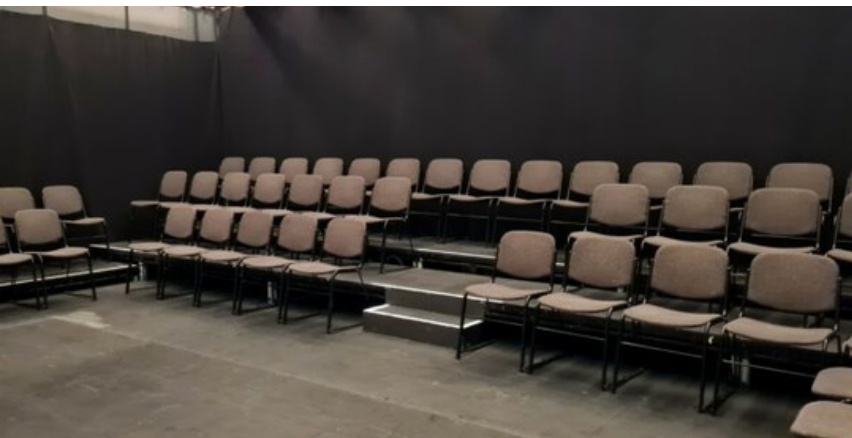
1. Notice five things you can see, four things you can feel, three things you can hear, two things you can smell and one thing you can taste.
2. Sit with your feet on the floor and back against your chair and either gently tap each leg or cross your arms and tap your shoulders.
3. Wash your hands or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



The performance space

This show will take place in the 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**