

The Empty

Self-Care Guide

What is *The Empty*?

The Empty is a Clean Break commission written by Emma Dennis-Edwards, directed by Lakesha Arie-Angelo and performed by Clean Break's Young Company.

The play follows climate activist collective GenZero as they navigate group dynamics, leadership tensions and opposing campaigning methods from their squat in a young couple's lavish second home in the countryside.

What does 'Self-Care' mean?

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. 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.

"Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare." - Audre Lorde, a Black Feminist and pioneer of self-care.

Why Self-Care?

The Empty might be challenging to engage with, especially if you are personally affected by the content. This guide will help you look after yourself before, during and after seeing the play.

Contents

This guide includes:

1. Content Notice List
2. Self-Care Suggestions
3. Helplines and Support
4. Further reading and resources about self-care

Content Notice List

This play contains the following content:

- Criminalisation and the criminal justice system
- Discussion about the climate crisis
- Precarious housing
- Gentrification

Self-Care Suggestions

Check the content notice list

This will help you prepare for any difficult bits or decide if the play is right for you.

Watch with someone

Ask a friend or someone you trust to watch the play with you.

Try a Grounding Exercise

Grounding exercises are things you can do to bring yourself into contact with the present moment to relieve distress. There are many ways you can do this before, during or after seeing the play:

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. 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.
4. Connect with water by washing your hands, having a shower or taking some sips.

Talk to someone

If you find the content distressing, try talking to someone you trust, or contact one of the organisations we have listed below.

Find some nature

After the play, go for a walk if you can, experiencing nature can be beneficial to our wellbeing and help us feel grounded.

Know if you need to step away

There is nothing wrong with deciding that you would rather not see the play if you know the content will be activating. Equally, please know that you can leave the theatre at any time if you decide you need to step away.

Helplines and Support*

Bindmans – a UK based law firm with specialism in protest rights.
bindmans.com | 020 7833 4433

Green and Black Cross – independent grassroots project providing protest legal support.
greenandblackcross.org | Protest Support Line: 07946 541 511

The Resilience Project - a youth-driven organisation providing peer-support, intergenerational mentoring and emotional resilience around climate action.
theresilienceproject.org.uk

Unlock - provides a voice and support for people who are facing stigma and obstacles because of their criminal record.
unlock.org.uk

Women in Prison - supports women affected by the criminal justice system and campaigns to end the harm caused to women, their families and our communities by imprisonment.
womeninprison.org.uk | 020 7359 6674

Further reading and resources about self-care

This guide takes inspiration from [20 Stories High](#) and [The Survivor's Trust](#).

[London Survivors Gateway self care guide](#) - this guide has been written for people who have experienced sexual violence, but it includes lots of helpful self-care tips which could be useful for anyone.

[Anna Freud Self Help Hub](#) - this resource hub has been created for young people, but it contains lots of self-help tips and suggestions which anyone could find useful.



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