

Time to Talk: Women, Incarceration and Mental Health Self-Care Guide

What is *Time to Talk: Women, Incarceration and Mental Health*?

Time to Talk: Women, Incarceration and Mental Health is an event that is a part of Time to Talk day, a national day devoted to talking about mental health.

The event will feature panellists talking about the experiences of women who are in prison or secure hospitals, and how art and creativity can support wellbeing. There will also be a screening of a new short film, *Lara*. *Lara* follows the story of a woman who is sectioned following a mental health crisis. The event will finish with an opportunity for the audience to ask questions.

Why self-care?

This event might be challenging to engage with, especially if you are affected by the content. This guide will help you look after yourself, whilst you're watching online.

This guide includes:

1. Content Warnings
2. Helplines and Support
3. Self-Care Suggestions
4. Further reading and resources about self-care
5. Clean Break Contact Details

Content Warnings

As the event involves a discussion, it is difficult for us to pre-empt all the content that will be covered. The topics we will be discussing and those that are in the film are:

- Mental health distress
- Incarceration
- Isolation

Helplines and Support

Agenda - a charity for women and girls at risk of abuse, poverty, poor mental health, addiction, homelessness and contact with the criminal justice system. They offer support and help women and girls get the protection they need.

weareagenda.org

0203 883 7792

Hibiscus – a charity working with Black, minoritised and migrant women and families at the intersection of the immigration and criminal justice systems.

hibiscusinitiatives.org.uk

020 7697 4120

MIND - provides advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem.

mind.org.uk

[0300 123 3393](tel:03001233393)

Narcotics Anonymous - is a society of men and women for whom drugs has become a major problem.

ukna.org

0300 999 1212

Rethink - improves the lives of people severely affected by mental illness through their network of local groups and services, expert information and successful campaigning.

rethink.org

Samaritans - provides emotional support to anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope, or at risk of suicide.

samaritans.org

08457 90 90 90

Turning Point - supports individuals with a learning disability and complex needs. It offers a wide range of health and wellbeing services and works across mental health, learning disability, substance misuse, primary care, the criminal justice system and employment.

turning-point.co.uk

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

unlock.org.uk

WISH – Women in Special Hospitals is a national, user-led charity working with women with mental health needs in prison, hospital and the community.

womenatwish.org.uk

020 8980 3618

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

Self-Care Suggestions

Watch with someone

Watch the event with someone you trust.

Talk to someone

If you find the content of the event distressing, try talking to someone you trust or contacting one of the organisations we listed 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.

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:

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, have a shower or drink some water.

Find some nature

Look out of the window or 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 this isn't for you or it's too much. Walk away or turn it off, do what feels right for you.

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.

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.

Find out more and get in touch

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