

# TYPICAL GIRLS

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## Self-Care Guide



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## Typical Girls Self-Care Guide

### What is Typical Girls?

*Typical Girls* is a play with songs set in a specialised unit inside a prison. It is structured as part-play and part-gig. The story follows a group of women who discover the music of punk rock band The Slits and form their own group. An outlet for their frustration, they find remedy in revolution. The play questions if rebellion can be allowed in a system that suffocates.

Age recommended 14+

### Why self-care?







*Typical Girls* 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 at the theatre or watching the live stream at home.

This guide includes:

1. Content Warnings
2. Helplines and Support
3. Self-Care Suggestions
4. A Synopsis
5. Further reading and resources about self-care

### Content Warnings

In the synopsis below we have used symbols to show when the topics in this content warning list come up, so you can see them at a glance.

Topic	Symbol
Mental ill health	
Substance misuse	
Loneliness	
Mother/child separation	
Domestic violence	
Imprisonment	

## 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](http://weareagenda.org)

0203 883 7792

**Birth Companions** - offers practical and emotional support to women before, during and after their baby's birth in prisons across England and in the community in London.

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

020 7117 2824

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

[ukna.org](http://ukna.org)

0300 999 1212

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

[samaritans.org](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://womeninprison.org.uk)

020 7359 6674

## Self-Care Suggestions

### Watch with someone

Bring a friend to the theatre or watch the livestream with someone you trust.

## **Talk to someone**

If you find the content *Typical Girls* distressing try talking to someone you trust or contacting one of the organisations we listed above.

## **Read the Summary**

If you think the content warnings suggest that you might find the play difficult to watch, read the full synopsis. This will help you prepare for any difficult bits or decide if the play is right of you.

## **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.

## **Synopsis**

The names of the characters in the play are Jane, Geordie, Marie, Mouth, Munch, Precious and Jo Eccles.

 *The whole of the play is set in a prison, but we have included this symbol when specific issues related to imprisonment come up.*

The play starts with a band together on stage, talking about being a band. They perform *In The Beginning* by The Slits.

In the next scene, two prison staff, Jo Eccles and Marie, are talking about the plans for a punk music workshop in a PIPE unit of a prison (psychologically informed planned environments) with the potential of doing a gig for the public. The group are introduced and discuss what they want to achieve. They talk about the benefits of music, the promise of better food and Geordie shares that she used to play the violin but had to stop when she was in care. They talk about punk and how empowering it was growing up in the punk era.

They get to work. Marie is trying to get the group excited, but upsets Mouth and the others react and become tense. They have a difficult and intense meeting but everyone is calmed.

They talk about punk and how they can rebel and assert their individuality.



▲ Precious talks about only seeing her children once a month for two hours and what it feels like to miss them. She talks about how she copes with trying to remember them and how it may be better not to be seeing them, as it is too difficult.

Tension begins to build between Munch and Jane. Jane invites the group to start playing with her but they create a huge racket. Jane acts scared so Jo asks them to stop. They begin to play again but Munch is teasing Jane.

Marie teaches them a song to help them pick up the music.

Marie talks about the rebellion within punk and sings *Typical Girls*. Jo comes in and says she's been having complaints about the noise and that they should be careful.

▲ Geordie talks about the routine of the prison life. She says that she copes with it by cleaning but she doesn't sleep much. She sings *New Town*.

Munch asks Marie for a tambourine and starts playing it with the others and everyone dances, cheers and has fun.

Munch asks when she gets to play anything other than tambourine and Marie suggests she could sing instead. Munch refuses so Jo calls the end of the session.

They find out they can practice with the instruments outside the workshop hours which makes them excited. They talk about how each of them copes – meditation, sleeping, etc.

▲ Marie gives them instructions about prep for the next session and uses the phrase "*when you go home*". This upsets the women and Marie realises it's a very insensitive thing to say.

Jane is playing the drums. Munch comes in and startles her but they play together.

▲ Munch explodes with anger about her girlfriend having been sent to high-security and she thinks Jane had something to do with it.

Marie and the rest of the group enter and Marie gives them new lyrics.



Geordie explains everyone is irritated for different reasons (Precious has seen her children, Mouth and Much had a falling out). Mouth really upsets Munch, calls her a bitch and she gets aggressive before rushing out of the room.



Geordie tells the group that Mouth is nervous about making parole and not having anywhere to go.

Jane says her mum has been reading about these workshops and how the public don't think it's a good way to spend taxpayer money.

Marie mentions the gig, but the group have mixed feelings.



Munch takes the microphone and starts talking about her experience of domestic violence and abusive relationships and how they led her to drugs. She talks about a relationship which was good for her but she couldn't sustain it. She sings *Ping Pong Affair* and Mouth and Munch reconcile.

The group talk about why the public would not be supportive of them having those workshops and Jane talks about how it isn't a joke.

Munch asks to sing another song; Precious joins her and they sing *Shoplifting*.



Jo comes in with bad news; a woman who was on ROTL (Release on Temporary Notice Licence) which means she was temporarily out of the prison and working in town, but there was an incident. This means the ROTL scheme will be discontinued and the relationship with the local community is strained.

Jo is now questioning the choices of songs and music they've been using in the workshops, telling Marie to consider the tone of the music because it could incite violence and crime. Jo tries to convince Marie to change the music from punk and The Slits, so that the workshops can continue.



Marie talks about her struggles with mental health.

Jane comes in; then Munch comes in and grabs her. She talks about a conflict Jane had with her girlfriend Annie and threatens Jane with violence. They all start playing *So Tough*.



Jane gets up and says she doesn't want them thinking she is a walk over; Mouth tells her they don't because they know what she did to get there.

Marie comes in and tells them the gig is going ahead and they are ecstatic.

They start playing *Instant Hit*.



Mouth comes back in irritated; her parole has been set and she is worried that she may get it and that she'd miss the gig. She talks about leaving, having a taxi taking her to a hostel, struggling being by herself, having to restrain herself from drinking alcohol and how testing it will be for her to stay sober and how lonely she will be.

The rest of the group talk about how much they'd like to get parole and go home. Geordie reminds them they have somewhere to go and Mouth doesn't.

An alarm sounds; the prison guard rushes out and Jo comes in, trying to keep them calm.



They all start worrying about if there is an issue with Mouth; they worry she may have hurt herself; Marie tries to help them settle by playing music. She plays *Man Next Door*.

Mouth bursts in and everyone is relieved she is ok. Marie is upset and says it's because of her ex.

Mouth says she got her parole and that her sister has been in touch and that was a good sign and helped her case. She will be in the gig and they are excited to play together.

Jo tells Marie off for telling them personal information about her ex-boyfriend.

She says there's been negative press about the different types of therapeutic workshops they've been using to help the women.

Marie is adamant about this being the best way for them to express themselves; Jo wants them to prepare different songs for the gig in order to impress the local community. They start arguing and the women notice.



Jo asks Marie to leave, she heads out with her but in the last moment Marie closes the door behind Jo and barricades them in. The women are excited at first but then get scared. Marie is trying to rally them up and speaks up against the system, but the women are unsettled and remind her that her actions will affect them negatively much more than it will affect Marie. Prison guards come in and escort Marie and the women out.

Mouth is speaking to the audience about the fact that the story doesn't have an ending like in the movies, where justice wins. Jane comes back in and Mouth asks if her Mum is the person who told the press about their workshops. Jane admits her Mum doesn't call and it was all made up.



Mouth says they didn't get the gig in the end and that they don't know what's happened with Marie.

The women all start coming back, wearing 'punked up' prison tracksuits. Mouth talks about her past and the different person she used to be and that she is now a better person. She envisages the gig they would have played and they all stand tall and proud. Munch takes the microphone and the band start playing *Number One Enemy*.

Jo and Marie come back on stage and start performing *Typical Girls* with them.

The play ends.

## 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 Fried 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.