

Lay Down Your Burdens Audience Care Document

At the heart of *Lay Down Your Burdens* is the understanding that we all carry baggage with us; during the evening we will learn about the characters' burdens. These stories are based on real life testimonials and lived experiences. We've put some extra detail here about the themes of the show so that you can be prepared along with some support resources.

At points during the performance, audience members will be invited to participate, including sharing their own burdens. This is completely voluntary, and we ask you to only share what you're comfortable with.

If you need to leave the theatre during the evening, a quiet space is available. The hosts will assist you and if you'd like to come back in at any point, we will readmit you as soon as we can. After the performance the auditorium will be held open and you are welcome to take time to reflect before leaving the theatre.

Age guidance: 16+

This production contains adult language and explores themes of grief, serious illness and personal suffering.

Please note the show is set in a pub and some members of the audience will be offered alcoholic beverages. A soft drink will also be offered. This will also be voluntary, so please let a member of staff know if you do not want to be offered a drink.

This performance also includes brief references to the following experiences, for more information, read the 'Further details' section at the bottom of this document:

Depression

Cancer

Suicide

Childhood trauma

Loneliness and abandonment

Postnatal Depression

Dementia

Sexual assault

Abortion

Miscarriage

OCD

ADHD

Violence

War

Please note contributions by audience members may contain references to themes or experiences not listed.

Further details

If the content warnings suggest that you might find the show difficult to watch, you can read these character summaries. This will help you prepare for any difficult bits and decide if the show is right for you. [This section contains spoilers.](#)

Donni is a stranger who blows in from the cold, he is carrying a lot of emotional baggage. His mother committed suicide by stabbing herself and he had to clean up the blood. He is carrying her ashes and her memory with him and struggling to make sense of the world. He tells us the impact it's had on him and mentions his OCD feeling like his head is cracked.

Fin worries about the state of the world, she has anxiety about the future, about climate change and humanitarian crisis and struggles with constant feelings of responsibility and guilt. She reflects on current conflicts around the world mentioning bombing of hospitals and violence against children.

Shirley focuses on her high powered job to distract from her feelings of being lost. These feelings date back from when she was a child and she describes ambiguous moments of childhood trauma. She also mentions the impact of undiagnosed ADHD. Shirley also describes the difficulty of being a woman, briefly referencing experiences of sexual assault, pregnancy and abortion.

Dick is our happy go lucky gamesmaster, life and soul of the party but under the smile he struggles too. He has a little baby boy and the pressure and fear of being a parent bothers him constantly. His partner suffered with post-natal depression and his grandmother is living with dementia and he feels the responsibility to them both deeply.

Sammy's dad left when he was young, he waits and hopes that he will show up one day to have a pint with him and tell him that he's proud of him.

Sara is the glue that holds us all together, the pub landlady who takes care of everyone. She has been diagnosed with cancer and during the evening she learns that it has spread. We see her processing this information and becoming less stable; she has to admit that she needs the others' support now.

Support Resources

If you are affected by any of the issues in the production, the following organisations can provide confidential advice and support. This is not an exhaustive list and is not intended to replace support from a GP or therapist.

Samaritans

Whatever you're going through, a Samaritan will face it with you. If you or someone you are supporting are in need of urgent Mental Health support - please call 116 123. The Samaritans are free to call 24/7, 365 days a year to support you with whatever you are going through

www.samaritans.org

SHOUT

The UK's first and only free, confidential 24/7 text messaging support service for anyone who is struggling to cope, Text 'SHOUT' to 85258.

Mind - Mental Health Charity

Mind provides information, helplines and an online community for anyone experiencing mental health problems and those who support them.

Infoline: 0300 123 3393

Email: info@mind.org.uk

www.mind.org.uk

We Are With You

With You provides free, confidential support with alcohol, drugs or mental health via local services or online

Online chat: <https://www.wearewithyou.org.uk/help-and-advice/about-our-online-chat/>
<https://www.wearewithyou.org.uk/>

Macmillan Cancer Support

Because cancer can affect your life in so many ways, we do whatever it takes to give people the support they need. Macmillan provides support and information about different cancer types.

- Macmillan Support Line on 0808 808 00 00 (open 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm. Opening times may vary for different specialist teams).

- Online Chat

<https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/get-help/chat-online>

<https://www.macmillan.org.uk/>

Rape Crisis UK

Get help and support after rape, sexual assault, sexual abuse or any form of sexual violence. We are the charity working to end sexual violence and abuse.

www.rapecrisis.org.uk