



Mental Health and Wellbeing Toolkit 2020



Introduction

**“You can’t reason yourself back into cheerfulness any more than you can reason yourself into an extra six inches in height”
- Stephen Fry**

With funding from Time to Change we are working alongside...

The Samaritans

Lamp (Leicestershire Action for Mental Health Project)

De Montfort University

Equity (Union for Acts and Performers)

...to ensure that the festival is accessible and supportive to those people that may be experiencing a difficult time. We have put together this toolkit to try and offer advice and support on how to make the best of the festival and what to do if you need support.

Leicester Comedy Festival recognises the benefits of laughter and its positive impacts on many aspects of life. There is evidence to suggest that laughter is actually good for you and can help reduce stress and improve your mood. Therefore, we wish to welcome everyone to join the exciting 19 day festival and hope that a bit of laughter makes a positive difference for you.

Approximately 1 in 4 people experience difficulties with their mental health at some point in their life and EVERYONE can be prone to bad days when we don’t feel at our best. We hope that this festival will be a welcoming environment for you and hopefully help to make you smile, and perhaps even have a laugh!



We appreciate that some environments can be intimidating or anxiety inducing to some people. If you think that you might be uncomfortable with some of the venues, then you can always consider requesting a seat by the door or a window if you feel that may help.

Most of the shows in the festival do not have allocated seating therefore we advise getting there a bit earlier to get a seat that will help you feel comfortable - or you could try contacting the venue in advance to see if they can reserve a certain seat for you if possible.

**“Just because you don’t understand it doesn’t mean it isn’t so.”
- Lemony Snicket**

Please don’t hesitate to contact us at wellbeing@bigdifferencecompany.co.uk if you require any support with this.

Unfortunately, we cannot always guarantee that we can reserve specific seats for you however we can always try.

If you have any other concerns about things that may make you feel uncomfortable, such as loud noises, flashing lights etc. then please contact us and we will try to find out if the show you are interested in has any of these.



Being a good audience member!

To ensure that everyone involved or attending the festival has a great time and feels safe and comfortable, we hope that you can work with us to be a good audience just as we are doing our best to offer you a great experience. Remember that anyone can be experiencing a difficult time or having a bad day, even the staff or acts.

Be polite and courteous to the venue and festival staff - many may be volunteers.

Be supportive of all acts.

Audience participation can be entertaining sometimes, however this is not always appropriate so please judge the situation sensitively.

**Please do not be rude or offensive to the acts.
You may be asked to leave if this is the case.**

Drink alcohol responsibly!

**“A day without laughter
is a day wasted”
- Charlie Chaplin**

Audiences



In need of support?

If you find yourself or someone you are with to be upset or in crisis then here are some tips:

- Take time out, somewhere quiet and safe
- Get some air
- Give yourself/others space
- Offer or ask for a glass of water
- Concentrate on deep controlled breaths

Useful numbers:

NHS Advice 111

Turning Point 0808 800 3302

Shout - 24/7 free text support
Text to 85258

999 if there are physical symptoms
or potential harm to themselves or
others

"Everyone you meet is fighting
a battle you know nothing
about. Be kind. Always."
- Robin Williams

Contacts

Samaritans
Free Call 116 123
Text 07725 90 90 90
www.samaritans.org

Lamp
Advocacy and information
0116 255 6286
www.lampadvocacy.co.uk

Time to Change
www.time-to-change.org.uk

Leicester Comedy Festival
wellbeing@bigdifferencecompany.co.uk

