



# 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.**

**For 2020, Leicester Comedy Festival is having a specific focus on mental health and wellbeing including ways in which those performing and attending the festival can look after each other across the 19 days.**

**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 would like to welcome everyone to join the festival and hope that a bit of laughter makes a positive difference!**

**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 by helping to make you smile, and perhaps even have a laugh!**



When working with acts, please remember that they may be feeling anxious before their show therefore the following things may be useful:

- Advise the nearest exit so they can get some fresh air if needed
- Make sure there is plenty of water available
- Be supportive and offer kind words when appropriate
- Give them time alone if they wish
- Try not to be offended if they don't want to talk to anyone

## Volunteers/Promoters/Staff/Venues

**“1 in 5 people have dandruff. 1 in 4 people have mental health problems. I've had both.”  
- Ruby Wax**

If this is your first-time volunteering/promoting or you are feeling nervous about an event you are involved with:

- Inform the festival team
- If you are not sure what you are supposed to be doing - just ask someone!
- Make sure you have access to the event call sheet - this should have any relevant instructions and contact details that you require
- Get there in good time to familiarise yourself with the venue and who you are working with
- Consider asking to volunteer with a friend so that you have someone to go with
- If you are working with another staff member or volunteer that seems anxious or upset, perhaps ask them if you can do anything to help



# Comedians/Acts

**“There are so many clichés associated with mental health - such as the 'fine line between lunacy and genius' - which are, on the whole, a load of rubbish.”  
- Jo Brand**

We really hope you have a fantastic time at Leicester Comedy Festival, it's a great opportunity to showcase your talent and meet other people in the comedy industry.

However, if you are feeling stressed, anxious or low during the event then please consider reaching out and speaking to someone. Feel free to contact any of the local services listed on this toolkit to get the support you need.

Feeling festival fatigue? Leicester Comedy Festival is 19 days of fun, but we appreciate that it can be a tiring experience for some. If you are an act/volunteer/promoter/venue/staff then we encourage you to look after yourselves and those around you to prevent burnout! Remember:

- Nobody will be offended if you want an early night after your event - a lack of sleep can worsen stress and anxiety so we all need an early night sometimes!
- If a colleague doesn't want to go out after an event - please don't pressure them instead perhaps just check they are feeling OK.
- If you fancy a break from the festival, but are not familiar with Leicestershire why not consider a walk in a park? Victoria Park, Abbey Park or Castle Gardens are all near the city centre. Other attractions include Richard III Visitors Centre, the National Space Centre, New Walk Museum
- If a colleague reveals to you that they are feeling low/anxious/stressed then be kind and supportive and perhaps signpost them to the support numbers in this toolkit.



For any further info on this or other suggestions please contact the team festival on [wellbeing@bigdifferencecompany.co.uk](mailto:wellbeing@bigdifferencecompany.co.uk)

## 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

**“My point is, life is about balance.  
The good and the bad. The highs and  
the lows. The pina and the colada.”  
- Ellen DeGeneres**

### 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**

## Contacts

**Samaritans**  
Free Call 116 123  
Text 07725 90 90 90  
[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

**Lamp**  
Advocacy and information  
0116 255 6286  
[www.lampadvocacy.co.uk](http://www.lampadvocacy.co.uk)

**Time to Change**  
[www.time-to-change.org.uk](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk)

**ArtsMinds**  
[www.artsminds.co.uk](http://www.artsminds.co.uk)

**Leicester Comedy Festival**  
[wellbeing@bigdifferencecompany.co.uk](mailto:wellbeing@bigdifferencecompany.co.uk)

