



HOW TO CATCH A BEAR

Audience guide



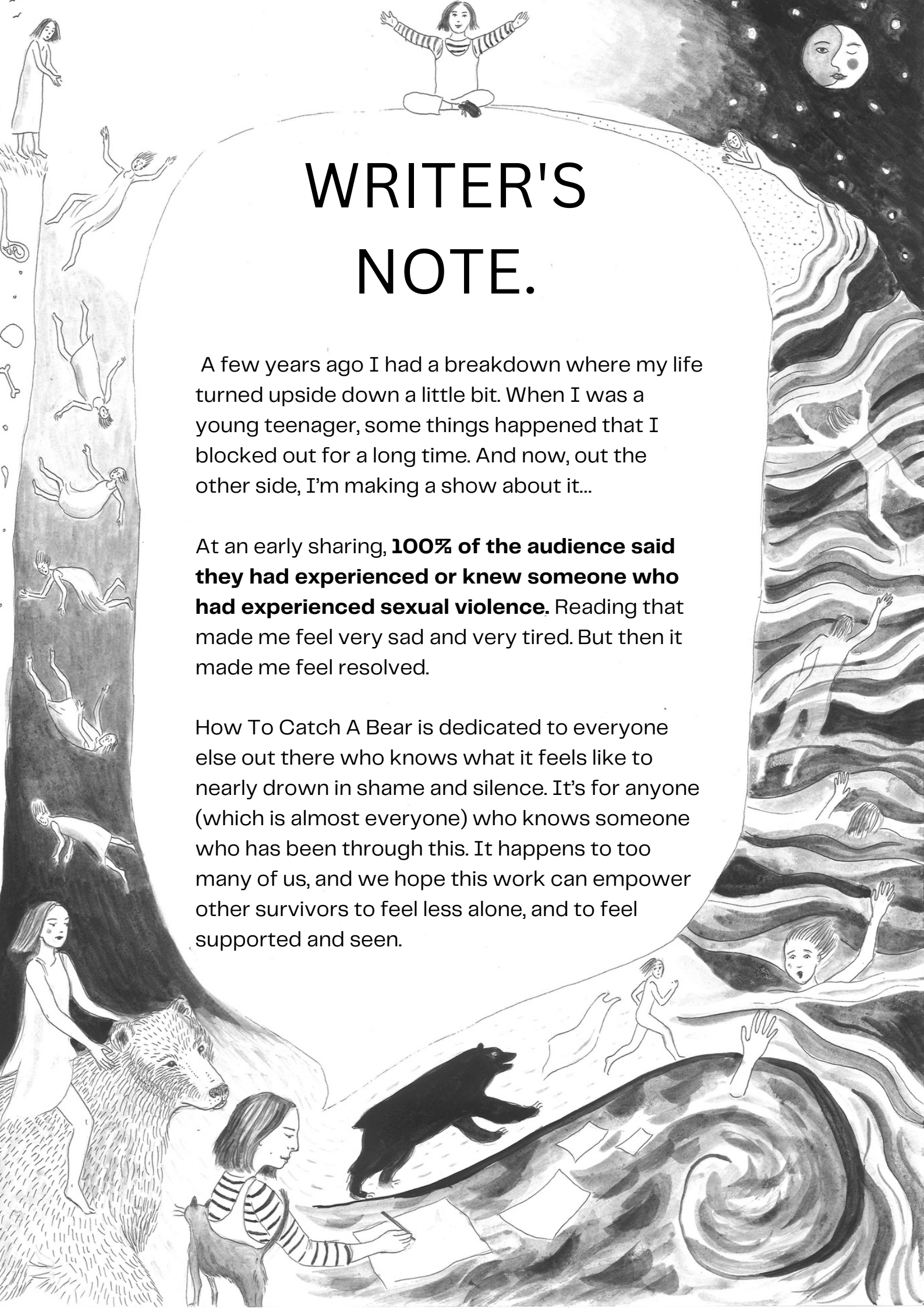
ABOUT THE SHOW.

This guide has been developed to support audiences of *How To Catch A Bear*, performed as a work-in-progress at VAULT Festival in 2023.

How To Catch A Bear is a play with songs and animation that tells the story of finding hope and the ability to move on with life following sexual violence at a young age. It is based on the lived experience of writer and performer Carys Wright.

We acknowledge the themes of the show will be challenging for some audiences, so have created this guide to provide information both before and after watching the performance. If you're a bit apprehensive about how you'll feel watching the show, we hope this guide will help give a clearer understanding of what to expect.

This guide uses the term 'sexual violence' to describe a range of non-consensual acts of sexual contact. It uses the term 'survivor' to describe people who have experienced and survived any form of sexual violence and/or abuse. Not everyone with this shared experience refers to themselves as a survivor, but we find this term to be useful.



WRITER'S NOTE.

A few years ago I had a breakdown where my life turned upside down a little bit. When I was a young teenager, some things happened that I blocked out for a long time. And now, out the other side, I'm making a show about it...

At an early sharing, **100% of the audience said they had experienced or knew someone who had experienced sexual violence.** Reading that made me feel very sad and very tired. But then it made me feel resolved.

How To Catch A Bear is dedicated to everyone else out there who knows what it feels like to nearly drown in shame and silence. It's for anyone (which is almost everyone) who knows someone who has been through this. It happens to too many of us, and we hope this work can empower other survivors to feel less alone, and to feel supported and seen.

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ABOUT THE SHOW.

How To Catch A Bear is a one-woman show that uses animation, songs and performance to tell the story of someone living with the impact of a history of sexual violence.

It follows the character of Carys, as she navigates growing up in a society that perpetuates rape culture, as she seeks to suppress her feelings, has a nervous breakdown, seeks help and support from professionals and her community, and moves towards healing and integration. She speaks directly to the audience and is at times telling stories of the past and at others, addressing the audience as her current self.

The play deals with a range of themes including:

- Sexualisation of young women and girls
- 'Lad culture' and issues of consent
- Sexual assault
- Rape and abuse
- Substance abuse
- Self harm
- Mental ill health

How To Catch A Bear has been developed with the hope that it will help survivors of sexual violence feel less alone, and that it will open conversations about how to live a full life in the face of sexual violence. However, it does not seek to speak for the experience of all survivors as everyone is unique, and brings their own set of identities to the experience.

CONTENT WARNINGS.

Whilst being an examination of the impact of sexual violence, the show includes no descriptions of exactly what has happened to the character of Carys, or of any acts of sexual violence to others. This was important to the creative team, who believe there is no need to further depict sexual violence. The words 'rape' and 'rapist' are used twice in the play,

There is the use of strong language in a couple of places, using common swear words. Age recommendation is 14+ (while accompanied by an adult if under 18).

AT THE SHOW.

During the performance of How To Catch A Bear, audience members are free to exit the theatre space if they need a moment alone.

VAULT Festival staff working on this show are aware of the content, and its flexibility on exit and re-entry. If you need a moment sat down somewhere quiet, they can guide you to a quiet space within the Vaults, and/or a chair outside the venue. You are welcome to re-take your seat as you wish.

SELF-CARE SUGGESTIONS

READ THIS GUIDE

In reading this guide, you will be familiar with the content warnings, and you can make up your own mind on whether you feel up for coming to the performance.

WATCH WITH SOMEONE ELSE

Attending the performance with someone else might make the content easier to manage as you will have the support of someone you trust.

COME AND GO AS YOU PLEASE

As described above, if you'd like a moment away from the performance you can leave and come back in as you please, with the support of VAULT staff.

TRY SOME GROUNDING EXERCISES

There are many ways you can do this. One is to 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. Other suggestions can be found here, in a guide that includes helpful self-care exercises and information.

*"And I remember what
it's like to feel joy in my
body."*

ABOUT SELF-CARE.

Self-care comes from the Black Feminist movement. It means listening to one's own needs, to be able to continue living as we would like to whilst recognising that we can experience discrimination and oppression based on who we are, or what we have experienced.

“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 SUPPORT & INFORMATION.

In the UK, **1 in 4 women, 1 in 20 men** and **1 in 6 children** have suffered sexual violence. **You are not alone.**

If you've been impacted by the themes and content of the show, there are lots of organisations there to support you. Here is a non-exhaustive list:

SURVIVORS TRUST - a national umbrella trust for over 125 specialist voluntary sector agencies throughout the UK and Ireland providing a range of support services working with women, men and children who are victims/survivors of rape, sexual violence and sexual abuse.

thesurvivorstrust.org 08088 010 818

RAPE CRISIS - a charity working to end sexual violence and abuse. They provide resources, information and a 24/7 rape and sexual abuse helpline on 0808 500 2222. Rapecrisis.org.uk

LONDON SURVIVORS GATEWAY - the hub for sexual violence support in London. They have an excellent guide for survivors that can be accessed here. survivorsgateway.london 0808 801 0860

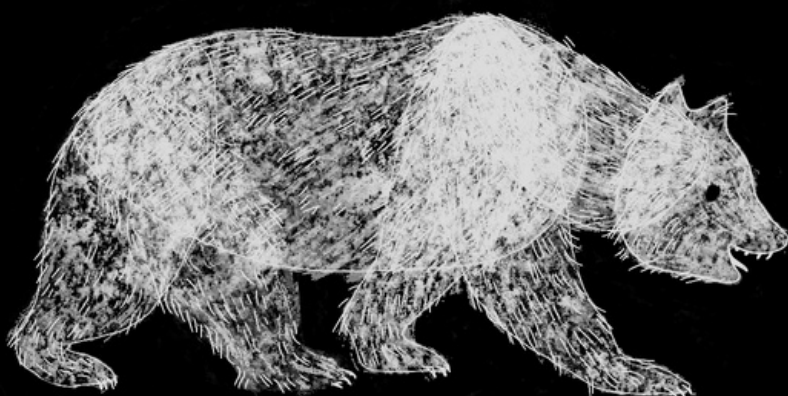
GALOP - specialised support for LGBTQ+ survivors of sexual violence offering helplines, resources and an online community. galop.org.uk 0800 999 5428

SAMARITANS - provides emotional support to anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope, or at risk of suicide. samaritans.org 08457 90 90 90

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS - is a society of people for whom drugs has become a major problem. ukna.org 0300 999 1212

The creation of this guide has been inspired by audience care guides created by Clean Break, 20 Stories High and Wildcard.

If you have any questions you don't feel were answered by this guide, please let box office know and they can pass on your details to the creative team for a chat.



"And slowly, slowly, it began to lose its power."