

Sensory-Friendly/Relaxed Performances FAQ

Note: All scenarios and questions refer to attending a Sensory-Friendly/Relaxed Performance with a family member, friend, or client who has unique sensory needs.

What are Sensory-Friendly/Relaxed Performances?

- Sensory-Friendly/Relaxed Performances create a performing arts experience that is welcoming and inclusive for individuals with autism, sensory processing disorders, or other sensory needs. The performance is presented in a relaxed way with lower sound levels and reduced lighting effects, among other things, to ensure a comfortable environment. We promise a judgment-free, fun experience for the entire family.
- Individuals of all abilities and with any and all behaviors are welcome.

What is different about a Sensory-Friendly/Relaxed Performance?

Accommodations for these performances include:

- Audience size is limited
- Small coping tools (fidgets, weighted blankets, earplugs) are welcome and encouraged. Fidgets, earplugs, and sensory activities are also available to patrons in our lobbies.
- A reduction of strobe lighting or lighting focused on the audience
- Patrons are free to talk and leave their seats during the performance
- Designated quiet areas within the lobby spaces
- Space throughout the theatre for standing and movement
- Lower sound level, especially for startling or loud sounds
- Lights remain on at a low level in the theater during the performance
- Limited crowds and visitors at The Bushnell during the day and timing of the performance
- Bushnell staff and volunteers are trained to be inviting and accommodating to patron's needs.

We have difficulty with transitions. Is there anything we can do to prep for this new experience?

- Read the plot synopsis available on the event webpage and in ticket reminders to prepare for the experience.
- Describe the people and objects they may encounter at The Bushnell (I.e. volunteers, ticket scanners, ushers, etc.).
- Arrive early to find your seat and meet our volunteers and staff.
- If needed, you can schedule a time to "meet the seat." You can come to The Bushnell prior to the performance to walk through the theater and become comfortable with your seat and the event space. To schedule a "meet the seat," contact Kate Pierro (kpierro@bushnell.org; 860.987.6084) or Catt Gruszka (cgruszka@bushnell.org; 860.987.6033). We encourage patrons to use these tools to prepare for the whole theatrical experience, from beginning to end.

Can we bring fidget toys, headphones or other items that help us stay calm?

- Absolutely! We encourage you to bring any items that might make the experience more comfortable and enjoyable.

What happens if we make noise during the performance?

- No problem! Our staff, volunteers, and cast are trained and know what to expect in terms of noise and movement in the audience. If the noise from the show or other audience members is too much, you are welcome to step out of the theater, but this is not necessary.

If we need to step out of the theater, can we return to our seat?

- Yes. Volunteers and staff are available to help guests inside and outside of the performance. If someone in your party decides they cannot finish the show, you can absolutely leave the theatre early. If they simply need a break, there is a designated Quiet Area. When you're ready, return to your seat or ask a volunteer for assistance.

Who can attend this performance?

- Anyone may attend the performance, however, Sensory-Friendly/Relaxed Performances are specially designed for children and adults with sensory-input disorders, autism, or other developmental or cognitive needs, as well as their families and caretakers. All children must be accompanied by an adult. All ticket buyers will be informed of these alterations.

Are service animals allowed in the theater?

- Yes, certified-trained Service Animals as allowed by law are permitted. If you intend to bring a service animal to an event, please notify your ticket representative at the time of purchase so an appropriate seat may be arranged.

We are in need of dietary accommodations.

- Snacks from home are permitted.
- Water bottles are allowed in theater.
- Snacks, food, and drinks are available for purchase at most performances.

How can I buy tickets for the Sensory-Friendly/Relaxed Performance?

- [Click here for a list of Sensory-Friendly/Relaxed Performances](#) and to purchase tickets online or call the Box Office at (860) 987-5900.

Have another question about the Sensory-Friendly/Relaxed Performance?

- Contact Kate Pierro (kpierro@bushnell.org; 860.987.6084) or Catt Gruszka (cgruszka@bushnell.org; 860.987.6033).