



## FAQ

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### **What is a Sensory Friendly Performance?**

These select performances are designed for our patrons with heightened sensory needs, allowing them to enjoy live theatre in a welcoming environment. We have trained staff and volunteers to assist audience members as needed, and we work closely with professional consultants, including the TDF National Autism Friendly Performance Training Program, to make these shows accessible and enjoyable for everyone.

### **What makes it Sensory Friendly?**

- House lights on at a dim level, and reduction of jarring stage lights and sound levels (no loud or startling sounds; no strobes, haze, or blackouts).
- Available sensory supports, such as noise-canceling headphones, fidgets, and an activity area. You may also bring your own comfort devices, manipulatives, seat cushions, headphones, and any other supports.
- Relaxed theater rules. These performances are “Shush-Free,” meaning that you are welcome to talk, make sounds, and walk around as much as needed to enjoy the show. We also welcome the use of therapeutic devices, including iPads and smartphones, during the performance.
- A designated quiet area located in The Barter Lounge.
- Social stories outlining what to expect upon arrival and during the show, as well as character cards with photos identifying the characters in the performance.
- An optional “Theatre Introduction” before the performance, where actors describe how we use props, costume pieces, and scenic elements in the play.

**What if it's too loud in the theater?**

If you find it too loud, we have a limited number of noise-canceling headphones available at the theater, or you can bring your own. You're also welcome to visit our quiet area in The Barter Lounge.

**Do you offer hearing assistance?**

A hearing loop has been installed at both Gilliam Stage and Barter's Smith Theatre to assist those with hearing aids or cochlear implants equipped with Telecoils. By request, FM Phonis headphones are also available at the Gift Shop for those hard of hearing.

**How long are performances?**

Barter Player performances run between 45 and 60 minutes.

**Can I leave if sitting through the performance is difficult for me?**

Absolutely. If you find yourself feeling restless or overwhelmed, an usher (anyone wearing a white shirt and black pants) can help you exit the theater. Just outside the theater, in The Barter Lounge, there will be a quiet activity area you can visit. There will be coloring sheets, fidget toys, and tactile toys available. In the lobby, we will also have a live video feed of the performance, if you'd rather enjoy the show from there!

**What's the seating like? Is it wheelchair accessible?**

Smith Theatre has stadium-style seating, which means there are stairs to access all seats except those in the first row. A limited number of wheelchair-accessible seats are available; if you require one, please notify the Box Office when you purchase your tickets. Our ushers are also trained to help you transfer into the seats at the theater if you'd prefer.

**When does the theater open?**

The theater will open approximately 30 minutes before the start of the performance.

**Are we allowed to bring our own headphones, fidget toys, or other comfort items into the theater?**

Absolutely! You are welcome to bring any item into the theater, including but not limited to: snacks, stuffed animals, toys, sensory support items, personal technology, and headphones.

**Is photography or videography allowed?**

Photography and videography are not allowed during the performance. However, some of the actors will be out to talk with after the performance, and you are welcome to take photos then.

**More questions?**

For more information about ticketing, directions, parking information, food and beverage options, theater policies, or assistance during your visit, please visit [Barter Theatre FAQ](#). You may also speak with any Barter Theatre staff member on duty at the theater, or contact Sarah VanDeusen White directly at (276) 619-3347 or [svandeusen@bartertheatre.com](mailto:svandeusen@bartertheatre.com).