

Sensory Advisory Guide for How to Dance in Ohio

Run-time:

Act One: 1 hour 10 minutes

Intermission: 15 minutes

Act Two: 1 hour

Total: 2 hours 25 minutes

Plot Synopsis:

How to Dance in Ohio is a musical based on a true story about seven Autistic young adults at a group counseling center in Columbus, Ohio, who are preparing for a spring formal dance.

General Sensory Notes:


How to Dance in Ohio is designed to be a sensory friendly show.


- In general, people with sensory sensitivities should be aware that the orchestra and sound effects might be suddenly loud. Sound effects include phone sounds, car sounds, and club sounds.
- Sometimes singers will sing different things over each other at the same time.
- People may also find that the stage is very bright and that sometimes shiny things on the stage (like mylar curtains and disco balls) can reflect light into the audience.
- Similarly, people may notice a spotlight leading from the audience onto the stage, and there will be lighting effects throughout the show that often include moving lights and lights that change colors.
- There may be loud applause if the audience is enjoying the show. It will usually be after songs, but there may be some unexpected cheering, clapping, and laughing throughout the show.

If you are particularly sensitive to lights and/or sound we recommend bringing headphones and/or sunglasses. If you do not have these, sensory kits are available to borrow from the merch stand that include them, as well as some fidgets and communication cards.

Additionally there are Adaptable Sound Accessible Headphones available at the Accessibility Booth. These are volume-adjustable headphones that provide an audio feed of the show at a lower volume level while also lowering background sounds such as audience noise or street noise.


Certain seats may be more subject to light reflections or loud sounds. Please see an usher if you need to move your seat in order to better enjoy the performance (subject to availability).


 Loud music, phone sounds, car sounds, crowd sounds


 Bright stage, reflective disco balls, shiny curtains, glittery outfits, bright letters, lights moving around the stage


Breakdown by Act:


Act 1


 During the first song in the show, “Today Is”, you will hear three different clock alarms and the sound of a clock ticking. There will also be the sound of knocking on a door, and the sound of a shower running.

 After the parents sing “And that’s what a parent does” in “The How-Tos,” a phone alarm goes off.

 After Tommy’s monologue in the scene before “Unlikely Animals,” where Marideth and Michael sit at a diner counter, you will hear various diner sounds like customers talking, plates clinking, and the order bell ringing. These sounds will be heard again during the song.

 In the song “Butterflies,” where the group is at the Center, characters throw a ball back and forth. The ball should not bounce on the ground or go into the audience.

 Also in “Butterflies,” characters practice counting with a metronome, which makes a ticking sound like a clock.

 After “Butterflies” two characters are at a bus stop. We hear sounds like a van pulling up and honking.

👂 After Remy's second cosplay video scene there will be two phone rings.

👁️👁️ After Ashley's song "Come Home, Recover", a few characters go to Macy's. There is a shiny mylar curtain, shiny dresses, and several disco balls. The disco balls do not rotate.

👂 At the end of Mel's monologue at Paws and Claws, the music gets louder and a phone rings four times, each one louder than the one before it. A character will yell "Mel!" twice.

👁️👁️ The set of the show has many letters made out of light bulbs. In "Waves and Wires" individual bulbs and letters will light up and quickly travel in horizontal and vertical motions. Sometimes the letters will become quite bright.

👁️👁️ At the end of "Waves and Wires" there will be a blackout on the stage, and red numbers on a scoreboard will stay lit. This will be shortly after Drew sings "a person can grow."

Act 2

👂 At the end of intermission, Act 2 will start with a loud musical chord that may startle some audience members.

👂 After Jessica says "your boyfriend is kind of a jerk" in "So Much In Common (Reprise)" there will be car revving sound effects as well as a car crash sound.


👂 After "Admissions," there is a scene between two characters in which they raise their voices. After this scene a character will push binders off of a chair. They shouldn't make a loud sound.

👂 👁️👁️ At the end of "Two Steps Backwards," two characters are in a nightclub. There is a disco ball and club music playing in the background. At one point the music will get louder. There will be a DJ airhorn and crowd sounds.

👁️👁️ During Remy's song, "Nothing At All," characters dance with cell phone flashlights. They may briefly point into the audience. There will also be bright lights and busy reflections on the floor in a gridlike shape throughout this number that some may find startling.

👁️👁️ When all the characters are on stage singing "Sha-la-la" a homemade mirror ball that has CDs, mylar balloons, and other shiny objects on it, will raise up to the ceiling. It may spin and reflect light into the audience. The balloons will

not pop. There will also be several shiny mylar curtains, and a lot of characters will come out wearing glittery outfits.

 During “Finale” there will be lots of clapping and cheering from the characters, especially after Drew asks for a drum roll to announce the Second Chance Superhero!