



Columbus

With more than 1,200 affiliates, NAMI is America's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to improving the lives of all individuals affected by mental illness.

Inside This Issue

- Resources for Coping During COVID-19.....2
- How to Protect Your Mental Health.....3
- Mental Health Coping Strategies.....4

NAMI Columbus

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Board of Directors:

- Shelley Reed, Ph.D President
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Georgia Crisis & Access Line

Single Point of Entry to access mental health, addictive disease and crisis services 24/7/365
 Adults, Children & Adolescents
 1-800-715-4225

Peer Support "Warm Line"

1-888-945-1414 (toll-free)
 The Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network operates a state-funded, consumer-directed "warm line" for anyone struggling with mental health issues, 24 hours a day

Columbus ACT Team

AmericanWork, Inc.
 706-641-9663

Meetings & Classes

Due to continued concerns related to COVID-19, all in-person NAMI support group meetings are cancelled at this time.

Also, all NAMI Georgia Affiliate Family to Family, Peer to Peer, Youth In Crisis, Basics, Family & Friends Seminars, other classes, and presentations are cancelled through May at this time.

Thursday Educational Webinars

Starting April 2nd, NAMI Georgia and its community partners will be offering weekly educational webinars on Thursdays from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM Eastern Time.

[Join the Meeting on Zoom](#)

Weekly Webinars
<https://zoom.us/j/462368458>

- April 2nd Noon** Join NAMI Georgia as we host Otsuka Pharmaceuticals for a Psych Webinar on Wellbeing in Mental Health. We will explore the scientific understanding of wellness, and share tips to build resilience during COVID-19.
- April 9th Noon** Dr. Moriah Caswell will host a live webinar on A COVID-19 Response to Youth in Crisis. He will share strategies to de-escalate crisis scenarios with youth due to current events.
- April 16th Noon** A leading expert from Child Welfare Training Collaborative out of Georgia State University will explore the concept of Secondary Traumatic Stress and COVID-19.
- April 23rd Noon** Prevent Suicide Today, a project out of Chatham County Safety Net, will join in to discuss the importance of Self-Compassion During COVID-19.
- April 30th Noon** Two leading experts from iResearch will check back in one month after their first educational meeting in partnership with NAMI Georgia. These experts will lead an interactive discussion titled Updates: Mental Health During COVID-19.

NAMI Georgia
 National Alliance on Mental Illness

This issue of our newsletter is devoted to **RESOURCES** to help us cope during the COVID-19 situation.

HelpLine



NAMI Georgia offers a **non-crisis** HelpLine that can provide information about resources for persons with mental illnesses and their family members in Georgia. We can provide information on NAMI programs, community services, education, support groups, and peer support. **Our operators are not trained to provide counseling, nor emergency services for those in crisis. We are not a suicide hotline. If you are in a crisis situation, please call 911 to receive emergency support. Request that a CIT officer be sent, if one is available.**

HelpLine Number: 770-408-0625

HelpLine is available Monday-Friday, 9am to 5pm. Please leave a message if a resource specialist is not available and you will receive a callback as soon as possible. You may also reach the HelpLine by email at helpline@namiga.org. Please leave a phone number if you would like to be contacted by telephone.

[Georgia Patient Resources](#)

[4 Self-Care Tips for How to Deal with Anxiety](#)

[How to Care for Yourself While Practicing Physical Distancing](#)



[How Do I Know Someone is Experiencing Anxiety or Depression?](#)

[How to Support a Loved One Going Through a Tough Time During COVID-19](#)

[How to Ease Childrens' Anxiety About COVID-19](#)

[Tips For Social Distancing, Quarantine, And Isolation During An Infectious Disease Outbreak](#)

RELIABLE RESOURCES: [NAMI COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\) Information and Resources](#), [Find Your Local NAMI](#), [American Psychiatric Association](#), [American Psychological Association: Pandemics](#), [Anxiety and Depression Association of America \(ADAA\)](#), [Psychology Today Therapist Directory](#), [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) and [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#). SAMSA Disaster Distress Help 800-985-5990, NAMI Helpline 800-950-6264, Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741 and National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800-273-8255.

How To Protect Your Mental Health During The Coronavirus Outbreak

By Lynne S. Gots, Ph.D. | Mar. 31, 2020



The coronavirus outbreak, and the social-distancing measures now in place to prevent its spread, have turned all our lives upside down. But if you have a mental illness, the pervasive climate of anxiety, stress and isolation may be especially harmful to your well-being.

Here are several steps you can take to prevent this stressful time from derailing your mental health.

1) Maintain A Routine

If you're not used to working from home, you may find the transition challenging. Creating a new teleworking routine will help you get into the right mindset, feel more productive and keep the boundaries between work and home from blurring.

It may be tempting to work into the night, sleep in and log onto your computer from your bed. This is not a good idea! Instead, stick to a regular bedtime and waking schedule. Shower and dress in the morning, and keep normal working hours if you are not required to be on-call. You don't have to put on a suit, but wearing casual Friday work clothes instead of sweats will serve as a cue to start the work day.

Designate a work area. Even if you are quarantined in a tiny studio apartment, you can set up a home office on a snack tray in a corner. If you normally watch TV or scroll through social media while sitting on the couch, you may get distracted if you try to work from the same location.

2) Take Reasonable Precautions, But Don't Go Overboard

Use only reliable sources of information, such as the [CDC](#) or [Johns Hopkins University](#), to inform and make a plan for your health habits. As hard as it is, it's important not to give into compulsive behaviors.

This is especially important if you have OCD or health anxiety. Follow the rules you've made in advance, so you don't let anxiety dictate your behavior. For example, if 20 seconds of hand-washing is the accepted guideline, don't wash for 40 or 60 seconds "just to be safe."

3) Find Ways To "Get Going"

Now more than ever, you need to tend to your own health. Practicing sound mental hygiene can help boost your psychological immunity. If you are prone to depression, you might be finding it harder to get out of bed in the morning, motivate yourself to accomplish chores or get started on a work project. "[Behavioral activation](#)"—the technical term for "getting going"—is a research-proven antidote.

Exercise is an excellent stress-reliever and mood-booster. The gym may be closed, but you can go out for a brisk walk as long as you keep your distance from others. You can also practice yoga at home and even work out virtually with a personal trainer.

4) Try Not To Fixate On Sleep

The changes in your usual schedule, coupled with anxiety, can wreak havoc on your sleep. If you're resting, try not to stew about not sleeping — staring at the ceiling at 2 am will just create a cycle of worry and insomnia. If you find yourself lying in bed wide awake for more than 15 minutes, get up and change the mental channel by watching TV, reading a book or listening to music.

You could also listen to a guided meditation available on YouTube or one of the many meditation apps, such as [10% Happier](#), [Headspace](#) or the [UCLA Center for Mindfulness](#). Keep in mind, however, that you are not meditating to try to fall asleep. Having sleep as a goal will likely backfire and cause more anxiety. Instead, you can use meditation to notice what is going on in your mind and body and observe your thoughts rather than getting caught up in them.

5) Stick To Consistent Meal Times

Sticking to consistent meal times, rather than stress-snacking throughout the day, can also help you maintain your mental and physical equilibrium. Nourish yourself with healthy foods. However, it's also perfectly fine to build in some comfort foods, like freshly baked cookies. Now is not the time to start a restrictive diet.

6) Follow Your Regular Mental Health Treatment Plan

Make sure you have an adequate supply of medication and take it as prescribed. Continue with therapy appointments. Many practitioners are now offering teletherapy, either by phone or video, to comply with social distancing requirements. Check with your insurer to see what services they will cover.

7) Practice Mindfulness And Acceptance Techniques

Whether you use meditation, yoga or prayer, focusing your attention on the present moment, rather than ruminating about a catastrophic, uncertain future, can help you manage your distress. If you tend to compound your negative emotions with a cascade of negative thoughts ("I should be handling this better;" "This is unbearable"), mindfulness training can be useful in tempering your emotional reactions.

One good introductory resource, among many, is "Mindfulness: An Eight-Week Plan for Finding Peace in a Frantic World," by Mark Williams and Danny Penman. The [UCSD Center for Mindfulness](#) also has free, guided meditations and useful information about the practice.

8) Be Kind To Yourself

A vast body of [research](#) conducted by the psychologist Kristin Neff and colleagues has shown the value of self-compassion for coping with emotional challenges and adversity. To ease feelings of isolation, acknowledge your struggle

with kindness, rather than self-judgment, and recognize that millions of people world-wide are sharing your experience right now.

This time is challenging for everyone. But you don't need to compound the difficulties by neglecting your mental health. If you follow these suggestions, you can face this crisis — you may even come out of it stronger in the end.



Coronavirus: Mental Health Coping Strategies

By Katherine Ponte, BA, JD, MBA, CPRP | Mar. 20, 2020



The coronavirus can significantly affect mental health for everyone, but especially for those with mental illness. Both the anxiety of contracting the disease as well as the increase in loneliness and isolation can worsen and trigger symptoms.

Acknowledging, recognizing and acting on mental distress in these uncertain times is key to lessening the impact.

What Are The Mental Health Implications?

A working knowledge of different mental health implications can help us understand and address the mental health risks of this global health pandemic. Here are the potential symptoms to watch out for.

Anxiety

Anxiety related to the coronavirus is to be expected. A [survey](#) of Chinese citizens published in February found that 42.6% of respondents experienced anxiety related to the coronavirus outbreak.

A poll by the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#) found that the key worries related to the coronavirus pandemic were:

- You or someone in your family will get sick
- Your investments, such as retirement or college savings, will be negatively impacted
- You will lose income due to a workplace closure or reduced hours
- You will not be able to afford testing or treatment if you need it
- You will put yourself at risk of exposure to the virus because you can't afford to stay home and miss work

Obsessions

In a situation like this one, it is easy to become obsessive about disease prevention, especially for those with OCD who already experience [contamination obsessions](#)— “unwanted, intrusive worry that one is dirty and in need of washing, cleaning or sterilizing.”

Loneliness

Social distancing is considered critical to slowing the spread of the coronavirus. However, it can understandably lead to loneliness. Numerous studies have shown the adverse [mental health and physical impacts](#) of loneliness, including the potential to trigger a depressive episode.

Traumatic Stress

Individuals who have been [quarantined](#) may also experience traumatic stress. A [survey](#) of people subject to quarantine during the SARS outbreak in 2003 found that nearly 29% experienced traumatic stress.

What Can I Do?

With the awareness of these mental health risks, we can work towards coping with this challenging situation and reduce the potential impact on our mental health. Here is a list of coping strategies to help get you through these uncertain times.

Be Mindful Of Your News Consumption

The news can be helpful by encouraging precautions and prevention, but compulsively and obsessively reading and watching about the outbreak can be detrimental to mental health. Here are a few suggestions that may help you follow the news while protecting your mental health.

Limit your sources

Rely on only one or two reliable sources of news as misinformation and bad reporting are rampant. The [CDC](#) is a great resource for updates and precautions. You can also select a news medium that allows you to avoid potentially triggering content. For example, when reading from an article on your phone or computer, you can scroll past disturbing photos and quickly reach the information you are interested in.

Practice acceptance

Accept that the news coverage will not answer all your questions or address all your worries. Accept uncertainty. Trust that officials around the globe and the medical community are trying their best to address the situation.

Limit consumption

Establish a reasonable rate of consumption, which may be checking for updates one or two times a day. Consume only what you need to know, what's most relevant to you and particularly what is happening or anticipated in your own community.

Distinguish between global and local

The virus will not necessarily take the same course in the U.S. as it has in other countries. It's important to think critically about the information provided and not jump to conclusions.

Ask someone for help

If you feel you need separation from the news, have a friend or loved one filter the news for you, and give you updates based on a reasonable assessment of what's relevant to you. This will allow you to reduce direct news consumption.

Make a Health Disruption Plan

Education can be critical to alleviating stress and anxiety. Speak to your health care advisor about coronavirus precautions specific to your health needs, including a health disruption plan.

Learn about coronavirus preventative and precautionary measures from reliable sources such as the [CDC](#). Make a plan for your household needs—a shopping list, a pharmacy list. It may also help to develop an emergency plan, especially for elderly members of the family.

Stay Connected

Stay connected with friends and family by Skype, Facetime, email, messenger and text, especially those who may be isolated. Be ready to listen to their concerns and share yours. Learn effective listening skills to help your friends and loved ones.

[Reflective listening](#) is an excellent communication technique, where you listen to what a person is saying and repeat it back to them. You may help validate their concerns, and show them you understand their concerns, which can help put them at ease. Talking to another person about worries and fears can help, and just knowing that others share them can validate your own fears and worries.

Social connectedness is critically important to warding off loneliness and resulting depression. There are many online peer support communities to turn to, including those for people with mental illness and their caregivers, such as [ForLikeMinds](#), and for people living with mental illness such as: [7 Cups](#), [Emotions Anonymous](#), [Support Groups Central](#), [Therapy Tribe](#), [Support Groups](#), [18percent](#) and [PsychCentral](#).

Take Care Of Yourself

It's essential to make your health a priority during this time. The critical self-care activities are sleep, physical exercise and a healthy diet. Find [ways](#) to address forms of stress, such as journaling, going for walks or calling a loved one. Maintaining a sense of normality and routine can also reduce stress.

It can be especially helpful to practice mindfulness and try not think of the future or worst-case scenarios. There are many online references, including Kindle books on Amazon, YouTube guided meditation and yoga videos, and apps such as [Headspace](#).

Find Things To Do/Distractions

Activities that distract you from current events can be helpful. Here are a few ideas:

- Household chores, such as spring cleaning, will give you a sense of purpose and accomplishment when completed.
- Free [online university courses](#) and courses through [cousera](#), such as Yale University's most popular class ever: [The Science of Well-Being](#). They offer a great learning opportunity.
- [Movies](#) are moving from theaters to online. Netflix is also a good option.
- TV programming has expanded during the crisis, particularly through streaming services like Netflix. You can also currently [stream](#) the Met Opera for free. The [NFL](#) and [NBA](#) are also offering complementary access to online streaming platforms.
- [Virtual](#) parishes, which the Pope and other faith leaders are offering, can help maintain religious connections.

Help Others

The [helper principle](#) shows that helping others is also a benefit to the helper. In hard-hit Europe and other impacted communities, people are [helping](#) those self-isolating by shopping or running errands for them. Canada has developed a movement called "[caremongering](#)."

[Mutual aid communities](#) are developing across the U.S and online organizers have put together an [exhaustive list](#) of resources. There are a few [different kinds of organizing](#). Some focus on "local efforts to build networks that can respond at the neighborhood or community level," while others "build networks to serve more at-risk groups, like the immunosuppressed or -compromised, incarcerated folks, and workers who will be out of jobs." [This document](#) enables people who need help to ask for it and [this one](#) enables people who can provide help to offer it.

In these uncertain and unprecedented times, it is natural to experience stress and anxiety. However, an awareness of these stressors better positions us to address them. And there are many tools and coping strategies available to combat the strains on our mental health.

We are creative creatures. We are also social creatures. So, we are finding ways to remain socially connected while physically disconnecting. Perhaps we will also emerge from this crisis with a better appreciation and respect for our fellow humans and citizens.



Columbus

P.O. Box 8581
Columbus, GA 31908
(706) 320-3755
Our Area's Voice on Mental Illness



Many people find their way to our classes by first attending a support group. If you are a NAMI Columbus "long timer" (we don't want to call you old), please attend either of the two weekly NAMI Connection support groups or the weekly Family support group. Newcomers can use your wisdom and hard-earned experience. Sharing a message of recovery gives the hope they are searching for. Many people tell us that the NAMI motto "**You Are Not Alone**" is the initial feeling they realize at their first meeting. If you are willing to train to be a support group facilitator, let us know!

I want to support NAMI Columbus and NAMI's mission.

✂ Please Cut and Mail ✂

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Numbers (do not enter a number if you do not want to be listed in the Membership Directory (members only).

E-Mail (Please include so we can be green and email you our monthly newsletter.)

Please check type of membership desired:

- Individual Membership - \$40 Dues
- Household Membership - \$60 Dues
- \$5 Open Door Membership (financial hardship)**
(All dues are for 1 year and are tax-deductible.)

All memberships include NAMI National, NAMI Georgia, and NAMI Columbus membership.

I am not joining at this time, but I would like to make a contribution of \$ _____. (Thank you!!!)

NAMI National, NAMI Georgia and NAMI Columbus are dedicated to eradicating stigma and improving the lives of persons with mental illnesses thereby also benefiting their friends, family and community. Catch the wave and be a part of change.

NAMI Columbus is an affiliate of NAMI Georgia, which is a 501(c)3 non-profit charitable organization. Dues and donations are tax deductible. Membership includes a subscription to our monthly newsletter and access to immediate news on advocacy, treatment and support issues from our national, state and local organizations.

Please make checks payable to:
NAMI Georgia & enter "**NAMI Columbus membership**" in the memo field.

Mail your check and membership form to:
NAMI Columbus
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You can also join safely online at www.nami.org/join .