



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.



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NAMI Columbus

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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.



NAMI Columbus

CONNECTION Recovery Support Group

Virtual Meetings

Although in-person support groups are still cancelled, NAMI Connection Support Groups will meet virtually. Details below.

The graphic features a colorful, abstract border in shades of green, orange, and blue. In the center, there is a white box containing the Zoom logo and the text "Zoom Into NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group". Below this, it states: "We may be socially distant, but we can still make a social connection by attending a virtual NAMI Connection Support Group meeting." It lists meeting times: Saturdays - 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm and Thursdays - 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm. It also provides the email address: Vanessa.M.Vivas@Gmail.com and a note to email at least 24 hours prior for an invite link.



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2020

NAMIWalks is going to be a little different this year. On October 10th, NAMIWalks will be a virtual experience and joined by NAMIWalks across the country. **NAMIWalks Your Way** means what it sounds like: participants get to make NAMIWalks their own. You can walk a 5K—through your neighborhood, around your backyard, on your treadmill. Or you can do something else meaningful and fun to celebrate our virtual walk day.

What Participants Are Doing On Event Day:

- Walking 3,500 steps for a *5K their way*
- Planning a craft day with their kids
- Holding a virtual bake-off with their team
- Practicing self-care with a favorite hobby: yoga, gardening, knitting
- Doing a 5K on the treadmill or stationary bike
- Hosting a virtual paint and sip party

Take photos and videos and share your activity on a favorite social media with the link to your walk fundraising page and the hashtag #NotAlone and #MentalHealthForAll. Together we can make a difference for people affected by mental illness – *Mental Health for All*

Why We Walk

To promote awareness of mental health and reduce stigma by sharing stories and walking together

To raise funds for NAMI's mission of advocacy, education, support and public awareness

To build community and let people know they are not alone

Virtual Rally

NAMIWalks
Kick-Off

The **Kick-Off Event** for NAMIWalks Georgia is right around the corner - and we'd love for you to be there! **Now happening virtually**, "get together" on **August 14, 2020 from 12 - 1 p.m.** with other NAMIWalks Georgia supporters and get ready for our upcoming Walk this fall, all from the comfort of your own home or office!

To register for this event please go to <https://forms.gle/UuHBMv5t7KSbfku48>.

Embracing the Diversity Within Us

By Katherine Ponte, BA, JD, MBA, CPRP

Everybody has multiple identities whether or not they're living with mental illness. Among those most important to me: I am a kind-hearted person, a wife, a daughter, a friend, a volunteer, an entrepreneur, a Portuguese-Canadian-American, a Catholic, an Ivy League graduate, and I happen to be a person living with mental illness.

All of this and much more is me. I am proud of all of me. The many aspects of my identity greatly enhance who I am. They give me multiple sources of strength to draw on which help me cope with the challenges of mental illness.

In order for our identities to [promote mental health](#), we have to let ourselves be empowered by them. In particular, a person's identities can enhance their sense of belonging because they can allow membership and connection with multiple communities. This can be particularly helpful to mental health.

Our Identity Can Enhance Our Mental Health

I live my life, day-by-day, with the goal of spreading kindness and see it as a large part of my identity.

Performing acts of kindness makes me extremely happy. It's sometimes known as the [helper's high](#) and shows the positive impacts of helping others. I am very fortunate that I am able to intertwine my volunteer and work activities, which brings me immense pleasure that also triggers a helper's high. The "volunteer-nature" of much of my work compensates me in ways far beyond economic gain.

I was born and raised Catholic. My religious beliefs and practices have provided very effective coping strategies for me, such as meditation in the form of prayer. There are [many](#) potential mental health benefits of religion and spirituality. These include gaining a framework for understanding the meaning of life and inclusion in a faith community.

I am Portuguese-Canadian-American. I love the "small village life" in Portugal's rural communities. I love that in Canada medical care is accessible to all. I love America's dogged determination to overcome any challenge. This "ethnic pride" protects my mental health. I celebrate all of my ethnicities, cultures and traditions, because I can be all three. This is a source of both emotional strength and protection.

I proudly consider having a mental illness as one of my identities. There is no community that I could possibly be prouder of. My recovery journey is the greatest challenge of my life. It tested me, it brought out my courage and strength, my resilience. It made me more empathetic and compassionate.

Our Identity is More Than One Piece

"We [cannot separate](#) the importance of a sense of belonging from our physical and mental health." Lacking a sense of belonging can lead to depression, anxiety and suicide. One [study](#) of people living with schizophrenia found that a sense of belonging was vital, yet they more frequently felt isolated and/or like they didn't belong. Even the [smallest](#) social belonging interventions can yield lasting positive effects.

Unfortunately, stigma prevents many people from viewing themselves fully to recognize their belonging and sources of strength from multiple identities. In many cases, when a person develops a mental illness, their diminished self-worth and self-stigma leads them to *only* identify as a person living with mental illness.

Families often reinforce this belief by focusing on a person's mental illness as their primary reason for engagement. Society reinforces the concept as well with damaging stereotypes. Stigma can also make it impossible to realize the basic, most important identities we develop through our interactions with others — to be accepted, to belong and to contribute. Therefore, due to stigma, a person living with mental illness may be regarded to hold a "[socially devalued role](#)," which can make it extremely difficult to reach recovery.

By ignoring a person's multiple identities, this narrow-minded view ignores a person's many sources of strength and value. It ignores the social roles that give a person meaning and purpose.

The social role valorization (SRV) model seeks to make it easier for socially devalued people to obtain the "[good things in life](#)," such as family and friends, community and work, among many others. The SRV model helps place socially devalued people into a role of social value by using "culturally valued means to enable, establish, enhance, maintain, and/or defend [valued social roles](#) for people at value risk." The Keys to a Good Life [Handbook](#) provides a good overview.

(continued...)

Our Identity is Our Strength

I will not let people define me by my mental illness *alone*. I'll proudly and adamantly assert that my mental illness is a part of who I am, an important part. Our mental illness community needs a whole lot more pride, self-esteem and self-worth. We need to love ourselves and accept the love of others, because we deserve it.

In the end, it is of course up to each person to decide how to identify themselves. But many parts of our identities can be sources of untapped strength that can help us cope with the challenges of living with mental illness.

Our society has to focus more on our similarities than our differences. While it may be our differences that make us unique, it is our similarities that are more likely to bring us together.



Living with family amid the pandemic? Follow this mental health advice

A psychologist offers this advice to alleviate tensions that may arise.

By [Kayla Rivas | Fox News](#) <https://www.foxnews.com/health/young-adults-moving-home-amid-coronavirus-pandemic-could-benefit-from-these-mental-health-tips>

The number of young adults living with an adult or grandparent during the [coronavirus](#) pandemic is at an all-time high, according to a Zillow [analysis](#). Psychologist [Jennifer Dragonette](#), Psy.D, Newport Institute executive director, recently offered advice to alleviate family and financial tensions.

An estimated 2.7 million U.S. adults aged 18 to 25 moved in with an adult family member in March and April as the pandemic ensued, according to the analysis. While living arrangements for this age group are usually seasonal given college semesters and stints in jobs, pandemic-related school closures, job losses and financial burdens sent many packing for home.

Dragonette recently told Fox News of several ways young adults can maintain a sense of independence at home while alleviating family tensions during the pandemic.

Before young adults move home, Dragonette said it's important to establish clear boundaries and expectations to avoid misunderstandings.

"It's wonderful that parents are able to and willing to accept their children back at home but parents really have to understand that this is going to look different," Dragonette said. "Parents (should go) into this situation with an open mind that this is an adult who's coming back to live at home and not a kid. 'It's my child but they're not a child anymore.'"

Dragonette said it's important for young adults living at home to have their own space, (if possible) their own bedroom or an area of the house where they can go away from family and it not be seen as an "affront," but rather an adult who needs space.

At the same time, young adults should also be a part of the household and take on some responsibilities like cleaning, shopping, helping with food or paying rent. This can help a young adult feel more like an adult in the household and less like a child, she said.

During the coronavirus pandemic, many young adults missed out on milestones like formal graduation ceremonies, birthdays and weddings. Dragonette advises parents to take a step back, acknowledge that this is a real loss and allow space for their children to feel sad.

"There's a lot that's not within our control right now and, for young adults in particular, if they're living at home, they have almost little to zero control over their lives."

Plan virtual reunions or trips after the pandemic ends to regain some control, she said. Try reaching out and connecting with others who are likely going through similar experiences.

Furthermore, one-third of 40,000 U.S. adults showed clinical signs of anxiety and depression in early to mid-May, according to a recent [report](#) from the U.S. Census Bureau, and other federal agencies.

"I think one of the benefits that's come out of this crisis is that in some ways mental health is becoming even less stigmatized right now or mental health problems because they're so common in our society in this moment in time," Dragonette said. "It wouldn't be unsurprising for someone to experience depression or anxiety for the first time in their lives right now because of the trauma that's happening in our culture."

Dragonette says one of the things that maintains depression and anxiety is not acknowledging their presence. She recommends reaching out to local resources to address mental health issues.

Finally, while adequate sleep, exercise and nutrition won't directly fix financial issues experienced by many during the pandemic, Dragonette says proper self-care can help alleviate stress and anxiety associated with financial strain.

"For a lot of people, those can be the first things to go when we feel real-life pressures and real-life stress; we feel like we don't have the time, or energy, or the bandwidth to take care of ourselves and that's exactly the opposite of what we should be doing," Dragonette said.

"Those moments in our lives when we're feeling the most stressed are also when we need to be the most gentle with ourselves and remind ourselves that it's important to sleep and even just get a walk around the block; to treat ourselves like someone whose care we are responsible for."



The Music of the Mental Health Movement

By Jessica Walthall

Last year, I found myself on the verge of tears during a concert. There I stood, in a sea of people, most of whom were a few years younger than me, all singing:

"Now the night is coming to an end
The sun will rise and we will try again
Stay alive, stay alive for me."

If you've ever been to a big show, you know the kind of singing I mean. The kind when the real performers could remain silent, leave the stage if they wanted to, and the words would carry on. These moments are powerful. But they hold even more weight when you realize you are witnessing thousands of young people in the midst of a mental health movement.

Being part of the "older" crowd in the audience, I wasn't tearing up for myself, necessarily. What made those few minutes so poignant was the presence of an entire generation below me — a generation of kids — that was vocal and unashamed about the struggles that come with mental health and mental illness. Kids who, despite a world offering every reason to believe things are bad and not going to get any better, will grow up with musicians, celebrities and athletes telling them they deserve and *need* to be here.

Still today, as we navigate the reality of a routine-shattering pandemic, an openness about mental health pervades popular culture. Of course, the "physical" effects of our new world are paramount. People are getting sick, health care workers are making unimaginable sacrifices and the ever-present injustices of society continue. But the impacts on mental health and individuals with mental illness are here, too. And we're talking about them.

Through pop culture, mental health gains a type of visibility that would not otherwise be possible. For better or worse, the people we hear on the radio or watch on TV have an enormous amount of power over the way we live our lives. This is especially true for young people, grasping for guidance as they form their own identities and decide what is "normal." We cannot underestimate the effect of a relatable song lyric or a celebrity's personal story to make us feel a little less alone and propel us to ask for help. Maybe these things seem inconsequential. Maybe they save a life.

Pop culture surely has not been the only driver in the broader mental health movement. There are countless clinicians, researchers, advocacy organizations, families and friends who are normalizing mental illness, providing critical treatment and contributing to a friendlier world for individuals with lived experience.

Pop culture is not always in the right, either, with films that inaccurately portray serious mental illness and songs that use words like "crazy" or "psycho." However, when rappers are highlighting the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and NFL commentators are sporting the NAMI green, I see a unique role in the mental health sphere — perfectly filled by popular culture.

Put yourself in the shoes of your 12-year-old self. Think about how much you looked up to your favorite musical artist or the basketball player whose jersey hung on your bedroom wall. If the idols and influencers of today are using that platform to advocate for mental health, I think we're making progress.

Lyrics from "Truce" by Twenty One Pilots



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
P.O. Box 8581
Columbus, Georgia 31908

You can also join safely online at www.nami.org/join .