



National Alliance on Mental Illness

Southwest Ohio

NAMI Southwest Ohio's Coping with COVID (CWC) is an interactive workshop that has been developed to open the conversation with parents about their children's situational anxiety during this global pandemic. This 50-minute virtual presentation is designed for parents. Anxiety and depression are more prevalent than ever due to the pandemic, and many individuals with no prior history of mental health challenges may experience them for the first time. **Youth may be particularly susceptible to anxiety** in a world where they have little control. With the new school year looming, **kids will need help adjusting to their new normal**, whatever that may be. This workshop will **build on the foundation of May's presentations of CWC for Parents**. Now is the time to **equip kids with real world strategies**.

How Important is Mental Health During a Global Crisis?

- One in five youth aged 13 - 18 experience mental illness each year, and these numbers are expected to increase significantly during these unprecedented times.
- When adults in the home discuss health and economic concerns, children may be listening and internalizing those fears, creating anxiety about situations they are unable to control.
- Prevention and early intervention are key to helping people avoid serious mental illness.
- Isolation, loss of routine, caregivers' loss of income and insurance, and difficulty accessing healthcare visits add to existing challenges for those already living with a mental illness.

How Does the Program Work?

- Presented virtually via NAMI Southwest Ohio's secure Zoom.
- Delivered by a trained two-person team with lived experience of anxiety or anxiety-related disorders.
- Includes lived experience of one presenter with a child dealing with anxiety, their recognition of new challenges brought on by the pandemic, and coping skills.
- Includes the professional perspective of Dr. Helen Asbury PsyD, a local psychologist with a specialty in parenting and anxiety disorders. Dr. Asbury will offer insight into how kids will handle the return to school, and tips on how to support them through it.

How is This Program Unique?

- As with all NAMI SWOH's programs, CWC is offered at no cost to participants.
- Parents have the opportunity to learn about anxiety directly from another parent dealing with their child's anxiety. The sharing of personal lived experiences is powerful and authentic.
- Parents have the opportunity to ask questions directly of both their peers and a professional, to share their own coping skills, and to motivate one another to persevere.

How Does *NAMI Southwest Ohio's Coping with COVID* Benefit Parents?

- Parents receive resources and tools to help their kids who may be experiencing symptoms of anxiety.
- By engaging in a discussion about anxiety among their peers, parents dealing with their children's ongoing or situational mental health issues may realize they're not alone.
- Connecting with other individuals with children experiencing mental illness dispels myths about anxiety and those dealing with it, and encourages parents to reduce the associated stigma.
- CWC instills a message of hope and recovery.

What Are the Key Messages of *NAMI Southwest Ohio's Coping with COVID*?

- Anxiety, depression, and mental illness are medical conditions like any other physical conditions.
- We are living in stressful times. Not feeling mentally healthy is not anyone's fault or something to be ashamed of.
- You can help your kids, other loved ones, and yourself by being aware of signs of anxiety and depression and making sure treatment is sought as soon as possible.
- Although it may feel like it sometimes, you are not alone, and there are many resources you can turn to for support and information.
- There is hope, and we will get through this together.

Testimonials

- *"This was very helpful during a time like this because nobody is used to this situation; this was the best time to hear about stress relievers and coping strategies. It was also helpful to hear them share their stories because they let me know we are not alone."*
- *"Thank you for sharing your stories from your hearts and being so open to our questions and comments. We value you so much. I took so many notes during your presentations! You all are a wonderful team. We look forward to more opportunities! THANKS AGAIN!"*
- *"I am so grateful for the resources and encouragement during this time. It is unprecedented in our lifetimes and I have felt completely unprepared to help my kids through it."*

CWC Presenter Perspectives

- *"There was an energy and excitement I could feel through the video chat that I didn't expect! When people engage after a presentation it really adds to the level of intimacy and their takeaway from the experience. I believe this platform's chat room feature allowed people to feel more comfortable asking us questions. Every single time someone shares that they are living with a mental health condition it creates space for others to do the same. To be able to share my story and have a positive impact on these lives is a gift to me. I am truly honored to be a part of this program." - Marisa, CWC Presenter*
- *"The development of this new program to confront the anxiety that is part of living through the COVID-19 pandemic for so many of us is just one example of how much NAMI cares about the community. The present fear, uncertainty, and social distance that we feel can have a big impact on our mental health. This has been an opportunity for me to share my story and the coping strategies that I've had to change in order to deal with the unprecedented circumstances. Guests seemed to appreciate the openness that this program offers and the opportunity to ask questions. It is so encouraging to remind yourself and others that we are in this together!" - Allie, CWC Presenter*