

# Substance Abuse Prevention Collaborative

May 15, 2020

Hello everyone, we are here to support you in any way we can during these challenging times. This newsletter is designed to provide your family with a variety of educational links, activities, and resources on overall wellness and substance abuse, on a weekly basis. Welcome to week 8!

## CDC—Coping with Stress

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html#community>

The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. **Coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.**



## Mental Health Month – NAMI COVID-19 Resource & Information Guide

<https://www.nami.org/getattachment/Press-Media/Press-Releases/2020/COVID-19-and-Mental-Illness-NAMI-Releases-Important/COVID-19-Updated-Guide-1.pdf?lang=en-US>

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. NAMI has over 600 state organizations and affiliates across the nation



Find your local NAMI:  
<https://www.nami.org/findsupport>

## WHO ARE WE?

### SAPC

*SAPC is a coalition of eight communities working together to help reduce substance abuse with specific intentions for youth below the age of 18.*

#### Communities include:

Billerica—Mike Higgins  
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# Teen Brain Development

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EpfnDijz2d8>

NIDA explores in this video the intriguing similarities between the processes of brain development and computer programming. The analogy helps us understand why toxic environmental factors like drugs, bullying, or lack of sleep can have such a long-lasting negative impact!



## Trauma, Complex Grief, & How We Heal (Part1)

When we think about the last 90 days, we can understand one thing very concretely: the entire globe is experiencing and suffering from this pandemic. Maybe 90 days ago you had no idea what “pandemic” meant or maybe you did but thought “I’ll never experience one in my lifetime”, but the reality is that for the past 90 days, and for the foreseeable future, the globe has and will continue to experience trauma and complex grief associated with the COVID-19 Pandemic. The most important thing to recognize and work on during this is how we cope, how we move through the stages of grief, and how we challenge ourselves to be comfortable sitting with the unknown so that it doesn’t handicap us now and more severely in the future. Only 90 days in statistics are showing the following: suicide hotline call rates have increased by 800%, amongst healthcare workers suicide rates have increased by 3x, isolation effects has significantly lead to increased depression symptoms, and antianxiety medication scripts are being written 5x as often.

Although the above is our reality at the moment, every single one of us is experiencing this pandemic differently, but remember – everyone IS experiencing something in relation to COVID19. These experiences may seem “minor” to some or “crazy” to others, “courageous” or “stupid”, but the bottom line is that **everyone has and will continue to be changed by this.**

It is normal to feel concerned at the uncontrollable and unpredictable times we are living in, it is normal to try to find places that feel the safest, it is normal to feel new unusual physical feelings in our bodies. These are all responses of our autonomic nervous system. This system is consistently juggling and assessing our environment with one focused question: “am I safe”? We will all be able to cope and learn to manage with the new circumstances around COVID19 when we learn how to be and feel safe within our own body. The first step of this is recognizing what we feel in our body, is it inflammation in the joints, stomach tightness (anxiety), heart racing (panic), joyful (throughout body), nauseous (angry), and then learning how to respond to these reactions emotionally. This includes expressing our fears, anxieties, concerns to a trusted person whom will listen and not be trying to change or overtake your experience; it is important during this time to talk about how we are feeling and how this pandemic is impacting us so that we are not having to sit in these feelings and responses alone, rather truly feeling part of the greater globe in that everyone has one reaction or another.

**Book recommendation:** The Body Keeps the Score by Bessel von de Kolk

<https://www.besselvanderkolk.com/resources/the-body-keeps-the-score>

## Next Week Look For:

Resources to help you and your family deal with grief of lost loved ones and the desire to be normalized – “Trauma, Complex Grief & How We Heal (Part2)

Do you have a topic you would like to hear about? Let us know!

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- Samantha (Wilmington): 978-447-2296