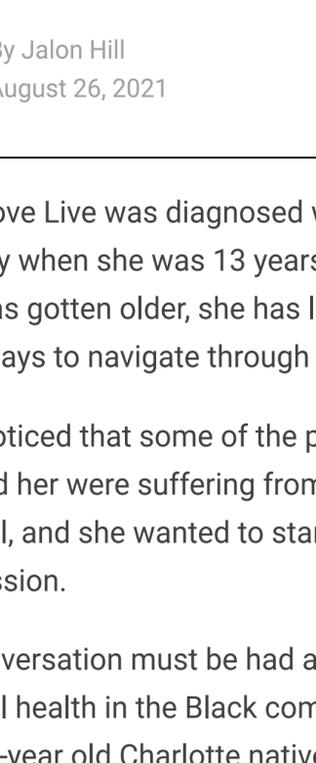




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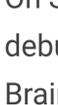
Charlotte woman shares battle with anxiety through performance

With the debut of her one-woman show, Mia Love Live seeks to shed light on mental health in Black communities.



Mia Love Live said she has learned to navigate through anxiety and wants to share her story to help others.

Photo: courtesy of Mia Love Live



By Jalon Hill

August 26, 2021

Mia Love Live was diagnosed with anxiety when she was 13 years old. As she has gotten older, she has learned new ways to navigate through it.

She noticed that some of the people around her were suffering from anxiety as well, and she wanted to start a discussion.

“A conversation must be had about mental health in the Black community,” the 31-year old Charlotte native said during a recent telephone interview. “I decided to tell my story and be relatable.”

On Saturday, Live will perform in her debut production titled “This Is My Brain on Anxiety,” a one-woman show that reveals her personal struggles with anxiety. (The show takes its title from a 1987 anti-drug campaign sponsored by Partnership for a Drug-Free America.)

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Performed in Duke Energy Theater, the five-part show uses storytelling, comedy, creative graphics, music, and audience participation to bring exposure to a topic that is often overlooked, especially in communities of color.

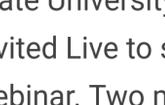
According to the [Anxiety and Depression Association of America](#), more than 40 million adults in the United States suffer from some form of anxiety, yet only about one-quarter of Black American impacted by the condition seek mental health care, compared to 40% of White Americans.

Therapy has helped Live through her mental health journey, and she hopes the show can be a group therapy session for others who cope with anxiety as well.

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“For that hour, we’re in it together,” she said. “In that moment, knowingly or unknowingly, we are vulnerable.”

The show comes as an extension to her web series, “[So ANXIOUS](#),” a mini-episode Youtube series that uses humor to illuminate Live’s everyday struggles with anxiety.



Screenshot from Mia Love Live's Youtube series, “So ANXIOUS.”

Live said she first got the idea to start the series back in 2017, but after a failed attempt in 2019, she decided to put her series on hold.

When the Covid-19 pandemic arose, she saw that while she was fighting her own battle, others were struggling too. After talking with friends and observing social media, she decided to relaunch her web series.

“We had nothing but time during the pandemic,” she said. “Why not try and solve some things?”

After shooting film in July 2020, her first season of episodes premiered in October, and she released her second season in March 2021.

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As time went on, people began to take notice of her series, and Live got other opportunities to tell her story.

In May, a professor at Appalachian State University — her alma mater — invited Live to share her story in a webinar. Two months later, she received an opportunity to speak at Wingate University.

She decided that, instead of showing students episodes of her web series, she would create a live performance.

Live said that while in the planning process for these two events, she decided to kick off her tour with an inaugural show in Charlotte, among friends and family.

“It’s, in some way, homage,” she said. “Some of the women and men in my family deal or dealt with anxiety and mental health. The show includes graphics from some of my family to help detail my experience and journey and to also help explain the overall Black experience.”

This being her first show, Live said her anxiety has become an on-going issue, but she remains excited and optimistic to tell her story.

She credits her production team with helping her develop every aspect of the show.

“They’ve been vital. Without them, I couldn’t have done this,” she said.

Live said she hopes that her experience will make others more aware of their own mental health.

“I want people to actually start considering themselves and their mental state and factoring that into what they do and what they feel,” she said

Tickets to “This is My Brain on Anxiety” start at \$20 and are available online via [CarolinaTix](#). Two showtimes are scheduled — at 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.

In keeping with pandemic protocols, visitors are asked to practice social distancing and wear face coverings, as required under Charlotte’s masking mandate.

Jalon Hill

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