

WEEKLY

NEWSLETTER



Editorial Note

Dear Readers,

As we close another impactful Mental Health Week, I want to take a moment to reflect on the deep conversations, learning, outcomes and growth that took place over the past week.

With the theme “Marital Stress and Mental Health,” Dr Bridget Binion-Byrd navigated us through the complexities of marriage, the emotional toll it can take, and the tools we can use to nurture both our relationships and our mental well-being.

As usual, our WhatsApp Weekly was lit up with discussions focused on how marital stress affects not only individual partners but the entire family dynamic. From Motivational Monday's to Reflection Sunday, empowering message on peace and vulnerability to the lighter, fun-filled moments of Love Language Charades, it was evident that each day presented valuable insights into how we can better understand and manage the stress within our marriages.

Our Special Event of the Week was last month's Webinar Training. The thought-provoking sessions with Dr. Marufah Dupe Lasisi, Dr. Bashir Adah Abubakar, and Dr. Tajudeen Abiola provided rich dimensions into the importance of cultural competence in supporting survivors of sexual assault, an issue often compounded by the complexities of intersecting identities. These discussions not only expanded our understanding but also deepened our commitment to advocating for systemic change and support for survivors from marginalized communities.

A heartfelt thank you from the president of ICTMH Dr. Stephanie Okolo and all staff to all who participated, shared, and engaged throughout Mental Health Week. As we continue to explore more issues and solutions in the incoming days, you are encouraged to always be part of our journey. Together, we are building a community of support, understanding, and healing!

**Warm regards,
Ese Ogheneovo
for ICTMH**

Weekly Webinar Training

Theme: Navigating Marital Stress, Family Relationships, and Mental Well-being

Date of Webinar: *May 2nd, 2025*

Facilitator:

Dr. Bridget Binion-Byrd

Highlights

Stress Management while juggling marriage, family, and our own mental health is vital. This session will expose causes of stress in marriages and explore practical ways to build healthier relationships as well as ways to navigate them

Key Discussion Areas addressed by Dr. Bridget

Marital stress affects not only couples but the entire family unit. Key symptoms include:

- Frequent arguments
- Emotional distance
- Withheld intimacy
- Irritability and miscommunication

Unaddressed, these stressors can lead to emotional burnout for both partners.

Coping Tools & Strategies

1. Open Communication – Schedule regular check-ins with your partner.
2. Clear Role Definition – Define who handles what in the home to reduce chaos.
3. Financial Planning Together – Align spending habits and create a joint budget.
4. Shared Parenting Goals – Agree on discipline and values to avoid conflicting messages.
5. Mental Health First – Seek help and speak up when you're overwhelmed

Words on Marble

"You must first be mentally healthy to help anyone else. Your wellness is not selfish—it's essential." – **Bridget Binion-Byrd**

Speaker's Personal Story: A Week of Unexpected Stress

Bridget shared how a single week tested her resilience: broken A/C, squirrels in the vents, and family conflict involving her adult son. The lesson? Even when we feel like collapsing, prioritizing self-care allows us to support others from a place of strength.

Four T's to Mitigate Marital Stress

- Talk before the tension builds.
- Touch—physical affection reassures and reconnects.
- Take a breath—sometimes space helps perspective.
- Therapy is strength—never weakness

Outcomes of Group Discussion

Pedro – Group 1

- Stressed the importance of understanding love languages
- Highlighted the need for shared responsibilities
- Addressed financial pressures as a common marital stressor

Laura – Group 2

- Advocated for resolving conflicts privately, away from children
- Emphasized effective communication and mutual appreciation
- Encouraged clear role allocation and maintaining intimacy

General Group Insight

- Agreed on the importance of seeking professional advice rather than relying on casual or informal counsel

Dr. Bridget (Conclusion)

- Urged couples to practice empathy, patience, and grace
- Reminded participants that each partner is on a unique journey, and the goal is to grow together in love and harmony

Star Event of the Week

Theme: Cultural Competence in Supporting Survivors of Sexual Assault from Minority Communities

Date: May 3rd, 2025

Facilitators: Dr. Marufah Dupe Lasisi, Dr. Bashir Adah Abubakar, Dr. Tajudeen Abiola, and Emerald Unufi

Opening Remarks – Emerald Unufi

Welcome participants and set the tone for the session. Emphasize the importance of cultural competence in supporting survivors of sexual assault from minority communities. Share the session's outline and introduce each speaker, highlighting their expertise throughout the day.

Cultural Competence in Care – Dr. Marufah Dupe Lasisi

Discussion: Ensuring services are responsive to cultural diversity.

First Question: "How can we ensure that our support services are culturally competent and effectively address the unique needs of survivors from minority communities?"

Second Question: "What role does cultural humility play in delivering effective support to survivors of sexual assault from minority communities?"

Dr. Lasisi's Insights: Understanding trauma's cultural context, societal norms, and the need for cultural humility in healthcare training.

Intersectionality and Trauma – Dr. Bashir Adah Abubakar

Discussion: Exploring how various forms of oppression intersect to affect the trauma of survivors.

First Question: "In what ways do intersecting forms of oppression, such as racism and sexism, shape the experiences of survivors of sexual assault from minority communities?"

Second Question: "What are the best practices for providing trauma-informed care that recognizes and responds to the intersectional experiences of survivors?"

Dr. Bashir's Insights: The compounded trauma of multiple oppressions and the need for a multi-dimensional healing approach.

Policy and Advocacy – Dr. Marufah Dupe Lasisi

Discussion: The role of policy in improving care for survivors.

First Question: "What policy changes or advocacy efforts are essential to better support survivors of sexual assault from minority communities?"

Second Question: "How can healthcare providers and support services advocate for the needs of survivors from minority communities, ensuring the promotion of culturally competent care?"

Dr. Lasisi's Insights: Creating inclusive policies to address systemic barriers and advocating for marginalized voices.

Personal Stories and Experiences – Dr. Bashir Adah Abubakar

Discussion: Addressing the importance of personal narratives in shaping care delivery.

First Question: "How can we create safe and supportive spaces for survivors of sexual assault from minority communities to share their stories and experiences?"

Second Question: "What insights can we gain from the personal stories and experiences of survivors of sexual assault from minority communities, and how can we apply these lessons to enhance our support services?"

Dr. Bashir's Insights: The therapeutic power of survivors' voices and how stories influence support model

Innovative Approaches – Dr. Tajudeen Abiola

Discussion: Wrapping up with forward-thinking strategies and technological solutions.

First Question: "What innovative approaches or strategies can be implemented to provide culturally competent support to survivors of sexual assault from minority communities?"

Second Question: "How can technology, such as online support groups or mobile apps, be leveraged to offer accessible and culturally competent support to survivors?"

Dr. Abiola's Insights: Technological innovations like online counseling and mobile apps for accessible, confidential support.

WEEKLY WHATSAPP INTERACTIVE SESSION

ICTMH Mental Health Week Report

Theme: Marital Stress and Mental Health

Date: 28th April – 2nd May 2025



Overview

The Initiative for Cognitive Therapies and Mental Health (ICTMH) successfully hosted its signature Mental Health Week—a virtual wellness program held via WhatsApp. This year's theme, “Marital Stress and Mental Health,” provided a safe space for reflection, discussion, and healing. Each day featured themed content, interactive activities, and participant engagement centered on building emotional resilience and mental well-being, especially in the context of marital relationships.

Motivational Monday The week began with a powerful message from Ms. Lizzie on Marital Stress and Mental Health. She encouraged participants to normalize exhaustion, embrace vulnerability, and prioritize peace. Her heartfelt reminder:

“Peace in our homes starts with peace in our hearts. One step at a time, one day at a time—you’re doing better than you think.”

Participant Reflections:

HAFSAT: “Married life is full of ups and downs, but it is not slavery—it’s symbiotic, not parasitic.”

EMERALD: “Marriage is amazing with the right person; then the stress is manageable.”

ESE: “Forgiveness is the epicenter of marriage—it’s a union of two imperfect people.”

VICTORIA: “Marriage to the wrong spouse can be deadly. Someone once said, ‘Marriage kills love’—and I tend to believe him.”

Talk-it-Out Tuesday

Participants engaged in a Mental Health Awareness Survey, prompting open and honest conversations in a judgment-free environment.

TALK IT OUT TUESDAY

LET’S TALK ABOUT HEALTH SUPPORT FOR IDPs



Have you witnessed challenges faced by IDPs in accessing healthcare? Do you have ideas on how support can be improved?

We'd love to hear from you.

Take a moment to share your thoughts here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9GMRSTH>

Let's talk it out – and make a difference together.



Thursday – Thankful Thursday

This day focused on cultivating gratitude amidst the challenges of marriage.

“Gratitude lightens burdens, soothes stress, and opens the heart to joy.”

Participants reflected on love, growth, second chances, and the value of shared journeys.

Friday – Fun Friday

The day featured “Love Language Charades”, a lighthearted game aimed at highlighting the emotional needs within marriage. Participants took a love language quiz and explored how unmet emotional needs can escalate marital stress. It was both educational and entertaining.

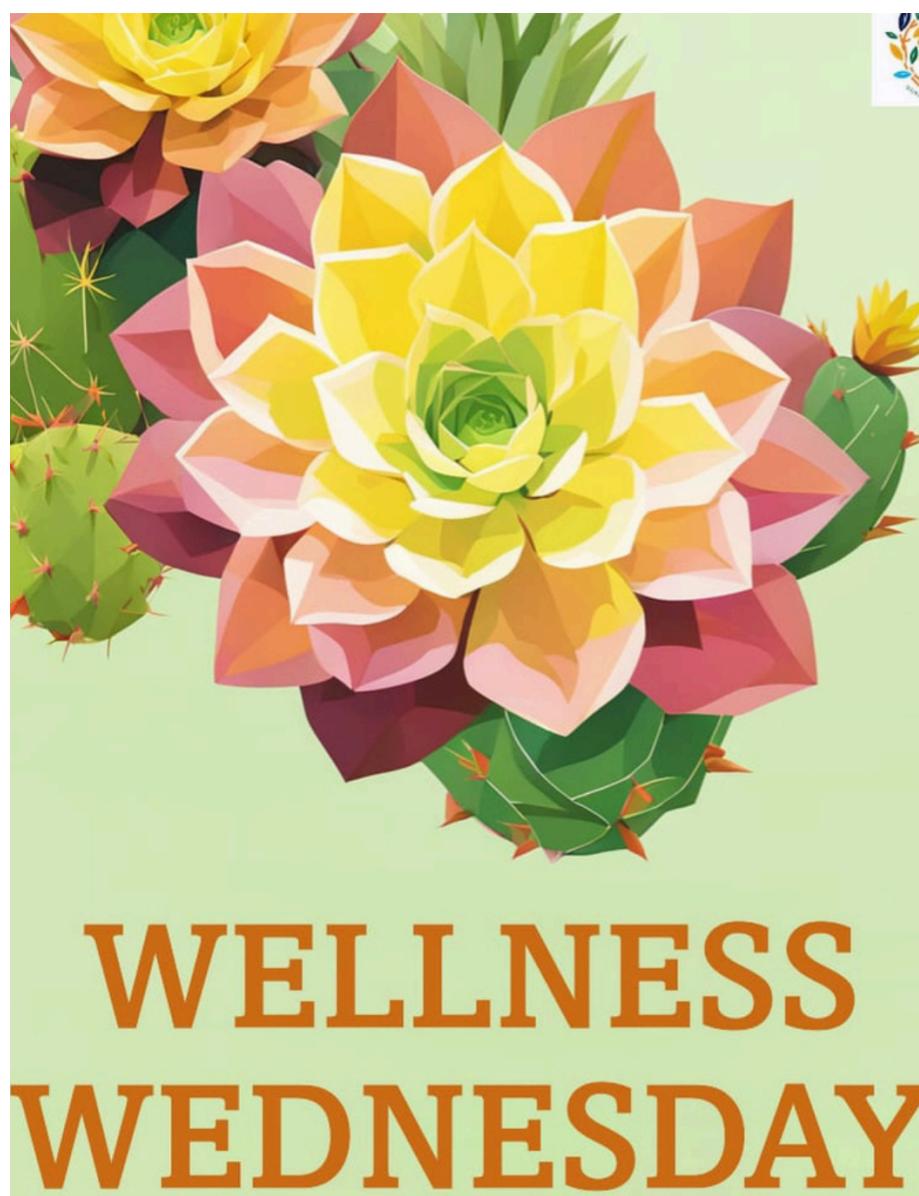
Saturday – Self-Care Saturday

Self-care centered on Setting Healthy Boundaries. Lizzie emphasized the importance of protecting one’s peace without guilt.

“Healthy boundaries aren’t walls they’re spaces where respect and emotional balance can thrive.”

Sunday – Reflection & Questions

The week ended with guided reflection exercises, helping participants consolidate their learning and commit to ongoing personal development.



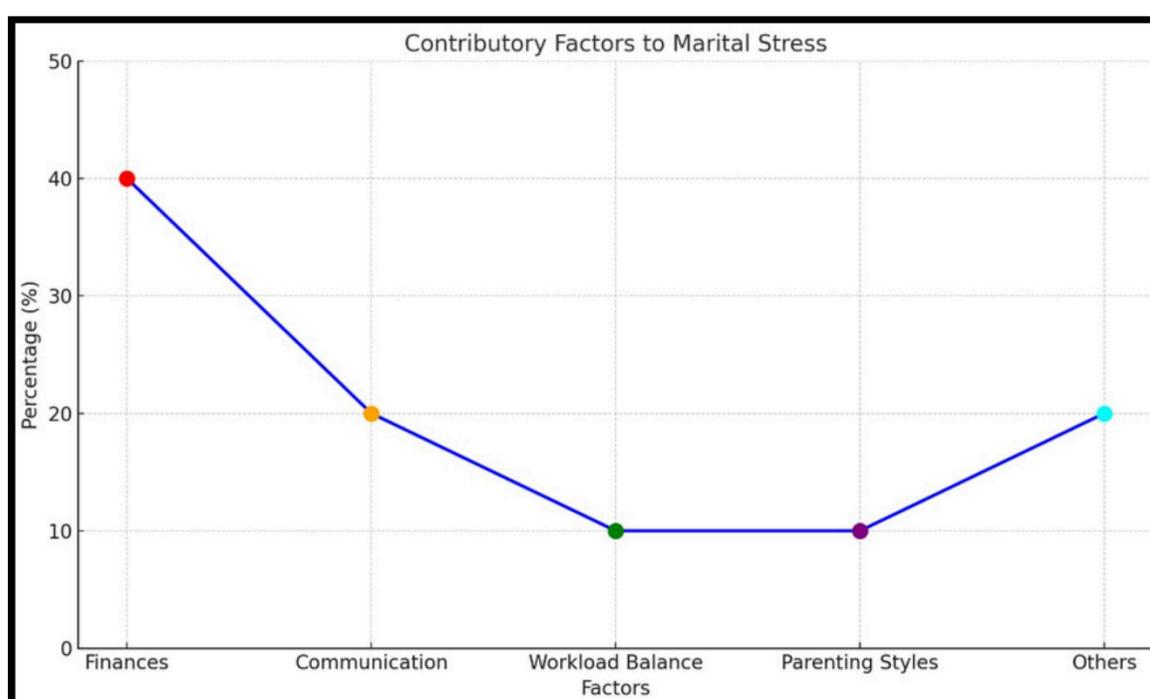
Wellness Wednesday

Lizzie shared the theme “Peace Begins with You.” She encouraged participants to speak kindly, listen deeply, and be quick to forgive, even when emotions run high in marriage.

“You’re not getting it all wrong—you’re growing through it. That’s something to be proud of.”

Emphasis was placed on:

- Speaking kindly, even in frustration
- Listening to understand, not just to respond
- Forgiving quickly to prevent resentment



Data sourced from ICTMH April 2025 Event Log and compiled by Elizabeth Idowu

RESOURCE & ANNOUNCEMENTS



ONLINE TRAINING

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPS)

Rev. Fr. J. Bature
Speaker

FRI, 9 MAY

@08:00 PM(WAT)

<https://us06web.zoom.us/join/register/XnwiTqnqQlKgbcCdJyUIPg>

REGISTER NOW

Call for Journal Articles - ICTMH

ICTMH invites submissions of journal articles focused on mental health and cognitive behavioural therapies, especially those offering African-based solutions.

A list of suggested topics is available, but you're welcome to propose your own. Writing guidelines, including word counts and tips, are also provided.

Interested?

Contact Ese (07068487474) or Latifa (07064269139) on WhatsApp.

We're happy to support you through the process.

Thank you!

To get feedback or stories? Email us at enquiry@cognitiveng.org

For volunteering opportunities, join our team via social media

[@www.cognitivetherapiesng](https://www.cognitivetherapiesng.org)

www.cognitiveng.org