

WEEKLY

NEWSLETTER



## Editorial Note

**Dear Readers,**

This week, our work at the Initiative for Cognitive Therapies and Mental Health (ICTMH) has been a powerful reminder of how easily we can find ourselves caught in the “competent middle”, that quiet space between comfort and growth. From Dr. Maureen Salami.

This concept was similarly reechoed in our July Mental Health Wellness Week, where we saw how courage, self-awareness, and community can help us break free from stagnation and rediscover purpose. We also took important steps to expand our impact beyond conversations.

During our courtesy visit to the Director General of KADBUSA, we were challenged to reimagine our outreach efforts for lasting change. Instead of a single event, we are exploring the creation of a dedicated community space where sustained care and recovery services can take root. This is in a bid to providing pivotal shifts from temporary solutions to transformational engagement.

As you read through these highlights, we invite you to reflect on your own journey and thank you for being part of this growing community committed to mental health, purpose, and hope.

**Warm regards  
Ese Ogheneovo  
for ICTMH**

# Weekly Webinar Training

**Theme:** The Curse of the Competent Middle – Breaking Free from the In-Between

This engaging session explored a powerful paradox: being skilled and successful yet feeling unfulfilled, a state Dr. Maureen Salami described as the *competent middle*.

Here are some practical insights on recognizing this hidden trap and taking intentional steps to rise above it.

## What Is the Competent Middle?

A place where an individual is:

- Capable but no longer challenged
- Successful but not satisfied
- Appreciated but out of alignment with purpose

## Why Do people Stay Stuck?

Common barriers discussed included:

- Fear of failure or disappointing others
- Impostor syndrome
- Past trauma from rejection
- People-pleasing

## 3Steps to Break Free

- 1.Awareness: Identify where you feel stagnant.
- 2.Courage: Confront what staying costs you—your peace, joy, or purpose.
3. Action: Design small but intentional steps to move forward.

## Breakout Reflections

Participants shared candid experiences of feeling stuck in careers, relationships, and personal growth. Many resonated with the idea that comfort can quietly become a prison and expressed renewed courage to take action.

## Words on Marble

*“Breakthrough doesn’t happen because you wish for it. It begins the moment you step out of your comfort zone.”*

— Dr. Maureen Salami



# Weekly WhatsApp Interactive Session

## ICTMH Mental Health Week Report

**Theme:** The Curse of the Competent Middle: Breaking free from the Middle

**Date:** July 7th–July 13th, 2025

**Overview** ICTMH successfully hosted its Mental Health Wellness Week from July 7th to 13th, 2025. Held virtually via WhatsApp, the event explored the theme: “The Curse of the Competent Middle: Breaking Free from In Between” a powerful concept highlighting the silent struggle many individuals face when stuck between adequacy and greatness.

Participants engaged in reflective conversations, interactive challenges, and self-care practices tailored to promote emotional awareness, growth mindset, and psychological wellness. Each day featured targeted themes, discussions, and community-driven responses.

### Theme Background

The "Curse of the Competent Middle" refers to a condition in which individuals perform consistently well but find themselves overlooked for advancement or deeper personal fulfillment. They are not failing, yet they’re not flourishing trapped in a cycle of high functionality and low visibility. This theme was chosen to:

- Help participants identify when they’re stuck in this zone.
- Encourage boldness, intentional self-leadership, and purpose-driven living.
- Equip members with cognitive tools to shift from “doing” to “becoming.”

## Daily Highlights

### Motivational Monday

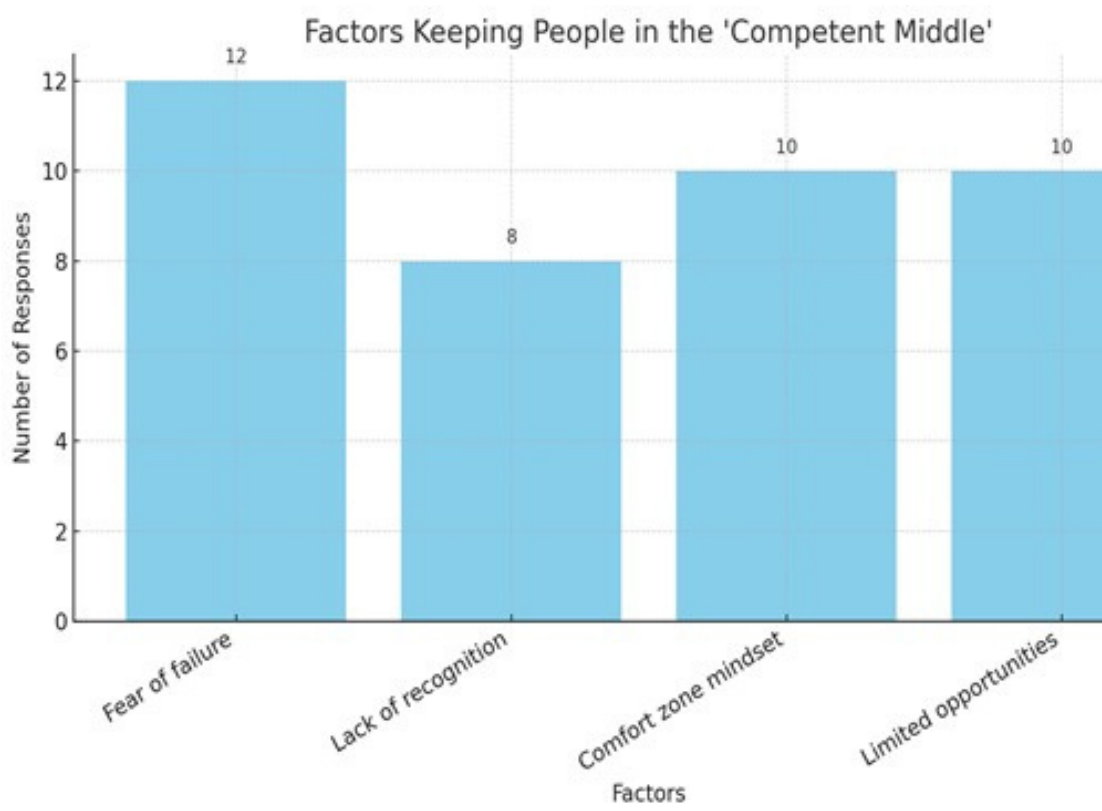
#### Breaking the Cycle

Participants were introduced to the concept of the “competent middle.” A call to action was issued: to rise beyond competence and aim for leadership, creativity, and influence. Practical steps to break free were discussed.

#### Participant Reflections:

- Uzo: “I’m ready and willing.”
- Ese: “This concept is often unfair to dependable workers. Rotational practices may help.”
- Hafsat: “Yes! I’m breaking free ready to rise, lead, and create boldly this week!”

**Talk-It-Out Tuesday** Going Deeper Through guided questions and group reflection, participants explored what keeps people stuck and what bold steps could help one rise. A survey link was also shared to gather insights for future improvements. Members responded and came back typing DONE after answering the survey



Data: ICTMH July 2025 Event Log and compiled by Elizabeth Idowu

Wellness Wednesday

Reclaiming Personal Wholeness  
Participants were encouraged to redefine wellness as emotional peace, mental clarity, and spiritual purpose not just physical health. The group discussed practical ways to escape the competent comfort zone. Voices from the Community:

- Victor: “Growth is in the quiet, intentional steps.”
- Idris: “You always touch our minds. May God give you strength.”
- Uzo:“Take a break,pause, refresh, and restart.”

Thankful Thursday

Grateful but Not Settled  
This session centered around gratitude without complacency. Participants identified what they’re thankful for and what new growth they are trusting God for. Community Responses:

- Mfon: “Thankful for challenges that expand my thinking.”
- Michael: “Grateful for unexpected growth; trusting God for leadership.”
- Vicky: “Grateful for life and the people who keep me going.”

Fun Friday

Laughter & Bold Moves  
The day featured a game "Break Out or Stay Stuck?" where members rated scenarios based on whether individuals stepped out of the competent middle or not. Top Moments:

- Hafsat: “Closed mouths don’t get promoted! Fear met courage.”
- Uzo: “Credit alerts... because they soothe the soul!”
- Joke of the Day by Barrister Dave: MP Mental Problem (highlighted for comic relief and stress relief).

**Self-Care Saturday** Resting While Rising Participants were urged to pause and reflect on their own needs. The message: You don’t need to earn rest. You are already enough. Member Insights:

- Ese: “Self-care is essential it shouldn’t be optional.”
- Uzo: “I MUST be self-care selfish today”

Reflection & Q&A Sunday

Weekly Reset The week concluded with a moment of personal reflection. Participants were guided to ask themselves: 1.Am I just managing, or am I growing? 2.What’s holding me back? 3.Am I truly taking care of myself? The responses were heartfelt, introspective, and hopeful.

Conclusion

Mental Health Wellness Week 2025 was a deeply impactful experience. It brought to light the often-ignored emotional space many occupy the space between average and excellence. Through shared stories, faith-centered guidance, and actionable insights, participants were challenged to break out of stagnation and embrace courageous, purpose-driven growth.

The ICTMH Wellness Team is grateful for the active participation, openness, and engagement from the community. We remain committed to creating safe spaces for mental clarity, healing, and transformation.





## Initiative for Cognitive Therapies and Mental Health Report on Courtesy Visit to the Director General, Cardenas State Bureau for Substance Abuse

**Date of Visit:** 9th July 2025

**Location:** Office of the Director General, Kaduna State Bureau for Substance Abuse

**Prepared by:** Hafisat Ajibade Masud

### Introduction

This report outlines the outcomes of the official visit made by representative of the Initiative for Cognitive Therapies and Mental Health to the Director General (DG) of the Kaduna State Bureau for Substance Abuse. The purpose of the visit was to discuss potential areas of collaboration and seek guidance regarding our upcoming outreach program on substance abuse scheduled for August 5th.

### Meeting Highlights

- Warm Reception and Encouragement: The DG warmly received me and expressed appreciation for the work being done by our initiative. He described our intervention as timely and necessary and stated his willingness to collaborate with us for the betterment of society.
- Feedback on Upcoming Outreach: While acknowledging the importance of the August 5th outreach, the DG advised that such one-time events may not have lasting impact. Instead, he encouraged us to consider a more sustainable model of engagement within the community.
- Proposal for Office Space: The DG recommended that we establish a permanent office and offered his support in this regard. He suggested we explore the Primary Health Care Centre located along Kazaure Road, particularly the one closest to the Kazaure route. He assured us that he would facilitate our access to an office space at that location.
- Redirecting Outreach Resources: He further proposed that the funds allocated for the outreach be redirected towards furnishing the new office space. This, he noted, would enable us to begin attending to clients and have a more lasting impact.
- Client Engagement Strategy: The DG suggested a phased client engagement model, starting with a minimum of four patients per week. Over time, this could amount to approximately 16 patients per month and up to 1,000 individuals annually, significantly benefiting the Kazaure community
- Opportunities for Training and Development: He informed us about upcoming training programs organized by the bureau and encouraged our participation. He emphasized that, once we establish our office and begin attending to clients, our team members would be eligible for such training opportunities.

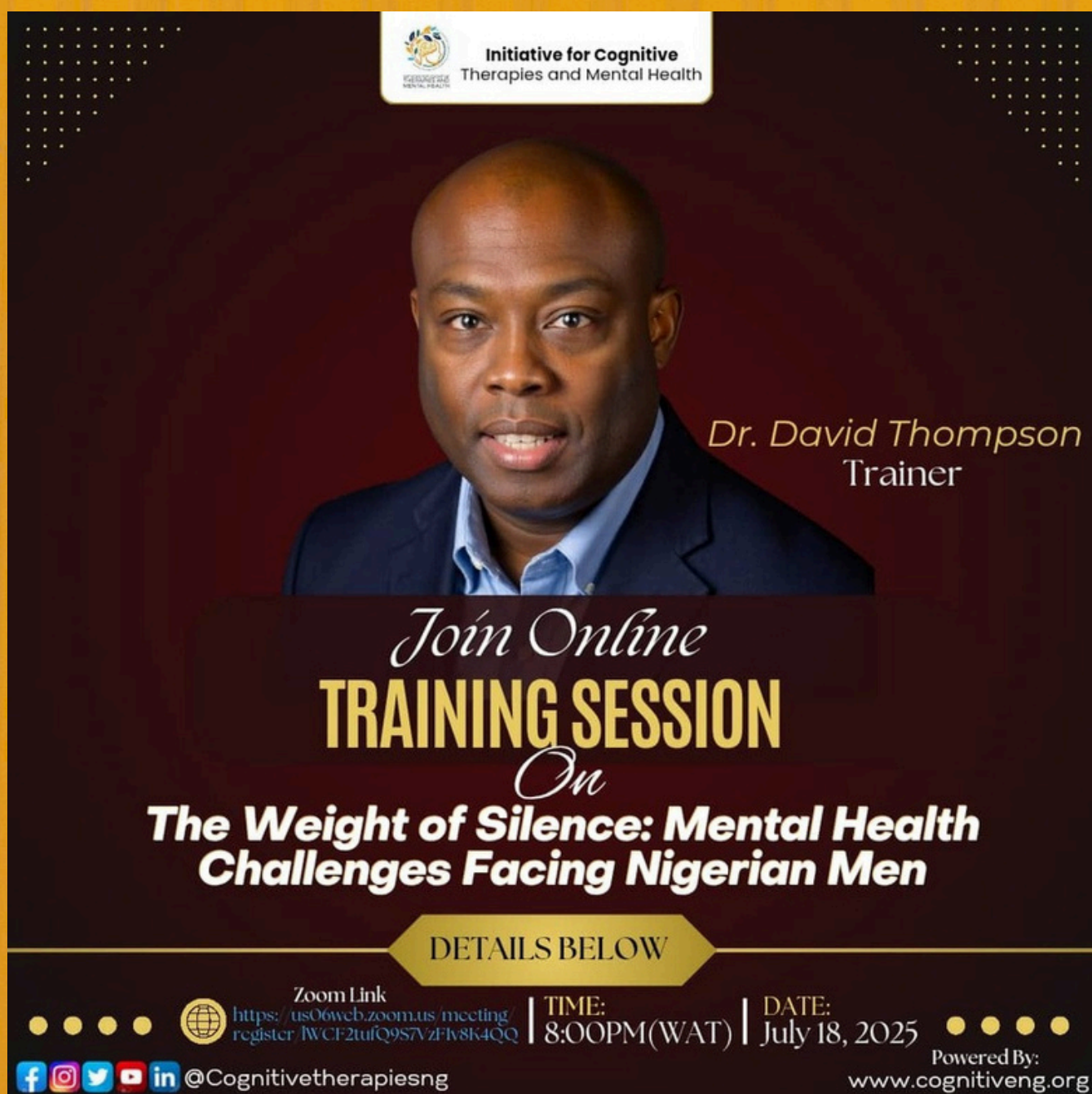
### Conclusion and Next Steps

- The meeting with the DG was highly impactful and promising. His enthusiasm, support, and strategic insights offer a strong foundation for meaningful collaboration. The following action points were identified:
  - Present the DG’s recommendations to the CEO of our initiative.
  - Conduct a site visit to the proposed Primary Health Care Centre at Kazaure Road.
  - Consider reallocating outreach funds to establish and furnish a permanent office.
  - Begin planning for a phased rollout of patient services.
  - Follow up with the DG to confirm our decision and next steps.

The DG awaits our feedback and has assured us of his continued support in this endeavor.



# RESOURCE & ANNOUNCEMENTS



Initiative for Cognitive Therapies and Mental Health

*Dr. David Thompson*  
Trainer

*Join Online*  
**TRAINING SESSION**  
*On*  
**The Weight of Silence: Mental Health Challenges Facing Nigerian Men**

DETAILS BELOW

Zoom Link  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/8068487474>  
register: WCF2tufQ9S7VzFlv8K4QQ

TIME: 8:00PM(WAT) | DATE: July 18, 2025

Powered By:  
[www.cognitiveng.org](http://www.cognitiveng.org)

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## 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](mailto:enquiry@cognitiveng.org)

For volunteering opportunities, join our team via social media

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