ICTMH BI-WEEKLY

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NEWSLETTER

Mental & Wellness Ed. Vol. 37 | 15th - 28th July 2026



Giving Feelings a Voice

Confidence, understanding, and support without shame

Sometimes, the person who looks difficult is actually hurting.

Sometimes, the girl who has become quiet does not need another warning. She needs someone to listen.

This edition is about creating room for emotions to be understood, for young people to believe in themselves, and for mental health challenges to be met with care instead of judgment.

Editorial Note

We often judge what we can see before asking what may be happening underneath.

We call someone dramatic, difficult, weak, or stubborn. Yet behind the behavior may be fear, emotional pain, hormonal changes, low confidence, or a struggle the person does not know how to explain.

Volume 37 invites us to listen differently. Through the HER VOICE Project and our WhatsApp Wellness campaign on Borderline Personality Disorder, we explore what can happen when people receive knowledge, understanding, and a safe place to speak.

Warm regards,
Joseph Abang



When feelings are given a voice, shame begins to lose its power.

HER VOICE Project

Helping Girls Believe They Are More Than Enough



On 15 July 2026, ICTMH brought the HER VOICE Project to Bagoro Government Secondary School. The program created a safe learning space for female students aged 16 to 19 to better understand their mental health, emotions, bodies, confidence, and personal strength.

Students learned about mental health, PMS, PMDD, and emotional well-being through a session led by Ms. Igbudu Blessing. The conversation helped them understand how monthly hormonal changes can affect mood, energy, thoughts, and daily life, while also correcting common misconceptions.

Dr. Elizabeth Idowu then led a session on building self-efficacy and self-confidence. The message was simple but powerful: confidence does not mean knowing everything or never feeling afraid. It means believing that you can learn, grow, speak, and take the next step.

The students participated through questions, discussions, and affirmations. They were encouraged to see themselves as more than their fears, mistakes, appearance, or present circumstances.

FROM AWARENESS TO CONFIDENCE

What the Surveys Suggest

The figures suggest positive movement after the intervention.

BEFORE THE PROGRAMME

55%

Good knowledge and confidence.
About 45% reported lower confidence and self-belief.

AFTER THE PROGRAMME

90%

Improved knowledge, positive self-belief, confidence, and resilience.
About 10% remained uncertain.

55% -> 90%

Knowledge can inform. Support can strengthen. Confidence can grow.

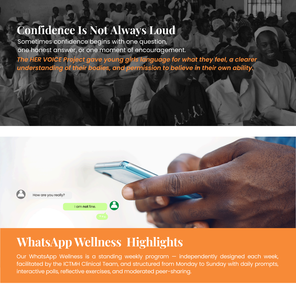
What the Students Explored

PMS
Monthly changes can affect mood, energy, thoughts, and daily life.

Emotional wellbeing
Feelings deserve language, understanding, and safe support.

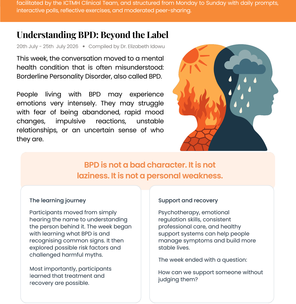
Self-efficacy
I may not know everything yet, but I can learn and improve.

Confidence
Believing you can speak, grow, and take the next step.



Confidence Is Not Always Loud

Sometimes confidence begins with one question.
One honest answer. Or one moment of encouragement.
The HER VOICE Project gave young girls language for what they feel, a clearer understanding of their bodies, and permission to believe in their own ability.



WhatsApp Wellness Highlights

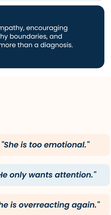
Our WhatsApp Wellness is a standing weekly program — independently designed each week, facilitated by the ICTMH Clinical Team, and structured from Monday to Sunday with daily prompts, interactive polls, reflective exercises, and moderated peer-sharing.

Understanding BPD: Beyond the Label

20th July - 25th July 2026 • Compiled by Dr. Elizabeth Idowu

This week, the conversation moved to a mental health condition that is often misunderstood: Borderline Personality Disorder, also called BPD.

People living with BPD may experience emotions very intensely. They may struggle with fear of being abandoned, rapid mood changes, impulsive reactions, unstable relationships, or an uncertain sense of who they are.



BPD is not a bad character. It is not laziness. It is not a personal weakness.

The learning journey

Participants moved from simply hearing the name to understanding the person behind it. The week began with learning what BPD is and recognising common signs. It then explored possible risk factors and challenged harmful myths.

Most importantly, participants learned that treatment and recovery are possible.

Support and recovery

Psychotherapy, emotional regulation skills, consistent professional care, and healthy support systems can help people manage symptoms and build more stable lives.

The week ended with a question:

How can we support someone without judging them?

The answer included listening with empathy, encouraging professional support, keeping healthy boundaries, and remembering that a person is always more than a diagnosis.

SPECIAL FEATURE

Before You Call It Drama

Understand the pain before judging the reaction.



These words can close the door before a real conversation begins.

What looks like drama may be distress. It may be fear, emotional overload, hormonal changes, trauma, low confidence, or difficulty explaining what is happening inside.

This does not mean every reaction should be accepted without limits. It means we should try to understand before we label.

1. **Before correcting the behaviour,** ask what may be behind it.
2. **Before calling someone weak,** ask what they have been carrying.
3. **Before walking away,** ask whether your response could make it safer for them to speak.

Behavior is often the part we see. Pain may be the part we do not.

CARE CAN BE SIMPLE

How to Respond When Someone Is Struggling

A calm, respectful response can make the next step feel possible.

1 Listen before correcting

Give the person time to explain without interrupting or rushing to advise.

2 Ask gentle questions

Try: "What has been difficult lately?" or "How can I support you?"

3 Do not shame emotions

Avoid labels such as dramatic, weak, attention-seeking, or difficult.

4 Encourage professional support

When distress affects daily life, encourage qualified professional help.

5 Keep healthy boundaries

Support does not mean accepting harmful behaviour. Care and clear limits can exist together.

6 Remind them they are not alone

A calm, sincere presence can make it easier for someone to take the next step.

Listen before you label. Care and clear boundaries can exist together.

Wellness Wednesdays:

Free Health Screenings

Every Wednesday at the ICTMH Kaduna Office, **free blood pressure and blood sugar screenings** are available to all community members at no cost.



WHEN

Every Wednesday
9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

WHERE

ICTMH Office
No. 28 Abuja Road,
Kaduna State

COST

100% free
No appointment required

Reaching out is a sign of strength.
Visit us this Wednesday to
give your body the attention it deserves.

JOURNAL ARTICLE CALL — STILL OPEN

ICTMH invites submissions on mental health and cognitive behavioral therapies, with particular interest in African-contextualized approaches.

- **Submit to:** enquiry@cognitiveng.org
- **Subject:** Journal Submission

Writing guidelines and topic suggestions available on request.

Learn more: ***www.cognitiveng.org/journal/***



Connect with care

ICTMH OFFICE ADDRESS

No. 28 Abuja Road, Kaduna State, Nigeria

OPERATING HOURS

9:00AM - 5:00PM

MONDAYS - FRIDAYS

NEED TO TALK?

Call the ICTMH Hotline:

+234 912 213 0769
+234 706 287 4416

OPERATING HOURS

24 Hours

MONDAYS - SUNDAYS

You can donate to the work we do

Your support helps ICTMH continue community outreaches, mental health education, free screenings, and practical support for individuals and families.

For Naira donations, use:

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SCAN TO DONATE

Every gift helps care move closer to the people who need it.



ICTMH's One Ask

This week, notice the words you use when someone is struggling.

Instead of saying, "You are too dramatic," ask:
"What is happening, and how can I support you?"

One kinder question can open a conversation.

One safe conversation can help someone feel less alone.

Listen before you label.

MEDICAL DISCLAIMER
Content in this newsletter is psychoeducational in nature and is intended for general informational purposes only. It does not constitute clinical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. If you are experiencing a mental health concern or persistent physical symptoms, please seek support from a qualified healthcare professional. In an emergency, contact your nearest hospital or emergency services.