INTEGRATIVE THERAPIES AND MENTAL HEALTH

ICTMH BI-WEEKLY

www.cognitiveng.org

NEWSLETTER

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Both can be true

You can be carrying something difficult and still make room for what gives life meaning.



You can be grateful and tired.
You can miss someone and still laugh.

You can care about your health and still feel worn down by the work of managing it.
You can be going through a difficult season and still have a good moment.

Life does not always ask us to feel only one thing at a time.

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Editorial Note

Life is rarely only one thing.

We often talk about emotions as though they arrive one at a time.

Happy or sad.
Strong or struggling.
Grateful or overwhelmed.

Real life is rarely that tidy.

You can be doing well at work and worrying about money.

You can love your family deeply and still feel exhausted.

You can be grieving and still laugh at something funny.

You can know what is good for your health and still become tired of managing it.

This edition is not asking us to ignore what hurts or search for a bright side to every difficult experience.

It is simply making room for the whole truth.

Warm regards,
Joseph Abang

CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

Making room for the whole truth.

Something can be difficult...

...without becoming the only thing that is true about your life.

You can acknowledge both.

Life does not always ask us to feel only one thing at a time.



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.

Finding Joy in Every Life

21st-27th September 2026
Compiled by Dr. Elizabeth Idowu



Sometimes joy has competition.

Work. Bills. Responsibilities. Thoughts about tomorrow. Things that still need to be solved.

During this week's WhatsApp Wellness conversations, participants explored what can make it difficult to notice and enjoy ordinary moments of comfort, connection and happiness.

34%

Stress and too many responsibilities
The most selected response

TALK-IT-OUT TUESDAY

What has been making it difficult for you to enjoy the little things lately?

Stress/responsibilities	34%
Overthinking / future worries	24%
Financial pressures	18%
Emotional exhaustion	14%
Focusing on what is missing	10%

Estimated responses from approximately 50 participants.

That was the most common response. Perhaps people have not forgotten how to enjoy life. Sometimes their attention is simply crowded.

When there is always something to solve, pay for, finish or prepare for, good moments can pass without us really noticing them.

The week encouraged:

Rest, connection, gratitude and enjoyment.

Joy does not require you to pretend that life is easy.

Make room for simple experiences without pretending your difficulties have disappeared.

Sometimes it simply asks you to notice what you would otherwise have missed.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

An Unquiet Mind

Ms. Mfon Michael Okon

Grief is strange. It does not always announce itself with tears.
Sometimes it sits quietly beside you while you're replying to emails and text messages, paying bills or staring at a bank alert that disappears faster than it arrived.

Since losing my beloved father a couple of months ago, I have carried a kind of silence I cannot easily explain.

As his first child, I carried more than memories. I carried decisions, expectations, and the enormous weight of giving him a farewell worthy of the life he lived.

Anyone familiar with funeral expenses in Akwa Ibom State knows how quickly love becomes receipts, negotiations and impossible calculations.

Then, just when everyone returns home, life expects you to do the same.

Coming back to Abuja after his funeral has felt like stepping onto a moving train that never stopped.

School fees for my kids. Vehicle repairs. Work. Responsibilities.

They were all waiting patiently.

Grief did not pause them, and they did not soften because I was tired.

Some days my mind feels crowded with unfinished conversations with my father and unfinished payments on my phone.



I miss his presence more than I miss hearing his voice. There was comfort in knowing he existed somewhere in the world.

I am learning that strength is not always loud. Sometimes it is simply getting out of bed, answering one call, completing one task and allowing yourself to miss someone without apologising for it.

My mind is still unquiet. It feels like a whirlwind in there sometimes.

But I am still here.
And for today, that is enough.

INTERACTIVE FEATURE

What else is true?

Pause. Name it. Respond.

Think about something that has been difficult lately.

Name it honestly.
Something that feels heavy right now is:

Now pause, without denying what you just wrote:

Something good that is also true in my life is:

One answer does not cancel the other. You are allowed to acknowledge both.

Mind Break

MAKE 24

Four numbers. One target.
Use each tile once. You may use +, -, ×, ÷ and brackets ( ).

8	8	3	3

No calculator • No extra numbers • Make exactly 24
Think you've got it?

Answer on the final page

When Caring for Your Health Starts to Feel Heavy

Knowing what to do does not always make doing it easy.

19 People screened

3 Recorded high blood pressure

2 Recorded high blood sugar

Two people recorded high readings for both.



A health routine never really ends.
The tablet. The reading. The food choices. The next refill. Over time, even something important can begin to feel heavy.

For people living with diabetes, researchers sometimes use the term "diabetes distress" to describe the worry, frustration, and emotional strain that can come with managing the condition day after day.

It is not the same as depression, although the two can sometimes occur together.

You can understand why the routine matters and still feel tired of carrying it.

You can be doing everything right and still feel worn out by the routine of staying well.

That does not mean you have failed. It may mean part of the routine needs support.

ONE SMALL THING BEFORE NEXT WEEK

Think about the part of managing your health that feels heaviest.

Then tell someone you trust.

Ask: "What would make this a little easier?"
Support may not remove the responsibility. Sometimes it simply means you do not have to carry all of it quietly.

ICTMH STAFF VOICE



Finding Joy in Everyday Life

by Blessing Igbudu



There was a time when I thought joy was something I had to wait for.

I imagined it would come when everything finally fell into place. When work became easier, when money was enough, when every responsibility was handled, when the people I loved were safe and when the future finally looked certain.

I kept waiting for that perfect season.

Then life taught me something different.

Life does not always arrive in perfect seasons. Sometimes it comes with unanswered questions, difficult days, responsibilities that seem endless and moments when you wonder whether you are doing enough.

And somehow, in the middle of all of that, there are still reasons to smile.

I have found meaning in my work, especially in being able to listen to someone who is struggling and remind them that their story does not end with their present difficulty.

I have learned that helping someone does not always require having all the answers. Sometimes it is simply saying, "You are not alone."

Then there is motherhood.

There are days when I am tired. Days when responsibilities compete for my attention and I wonder how I will manage everything that needs to be done.

Then I hear my son's voice.

I see his smile.

And something inside me becomes lighter. Some of the greatest joys in life are not loud. A child's laughter. A meal shared together. A quiet morning. A message from someone you care about. The feeling of finishing something you once thought was difficult.

I have faced disappointment, uncertainty and difficult days. I am still learning, growing and becoming.

But I no longer wait for a perfect life before allowing myself to experience joy.

Life does not have to be perfect to be beautiful.

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.

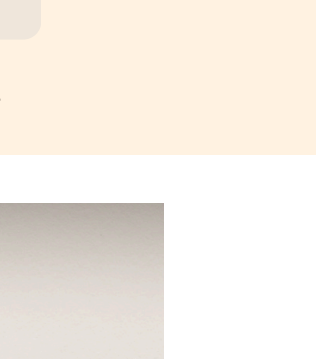
Journal Article Call for Submissions

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

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No. 28 Abuja Road, Kaduna State, Nigeria

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

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



ICTMH's One Ask

Notice one good thing.

Not because everything is fine. Not because gratitude should replace grief, pressure, or disappointment.

Simply because difficult things are not the only things that deserve your attention.

- A conversation you enjoyed.
- Food you liked.
- Someone who checked on you.
- Five quiet minutes.
- A task finally completed.
- Something that made you laugh.

Let the good moment be good.

A difficult day can contain a good moment. And a good moment does not make the difficult part less real.

MIND BREAK ANSWER / DID YOU MAKE 24?

8 ÷ (3 - 8 ÷ 3) = 24

8 ÷ 3 = 2⅔
3 - 2⅔ = ⅓
8 ÷ ⅓ = 24

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.