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NEWSLETTER

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Care that Reaches the Whole Community

Gratitude, Outreach, and the Courage to Care for Men Too

Care does not always begin in a therapy room.

Sometimes it begins with a WhatsApp message that helps someone pause. Sometimes it begins with a blood pressure check at a community outreach. Sometimes it begins when a parent learns to listen differently. Sometimes it begins when one person hears that strength does not have to mean silence.

In this edition, we follow one simple thread.

People are more likely to receive care when care comes close enough to meet them where they are.



It continues with ICTMH's outreach at Jenruwa Community, where over 1,000 people were reached through health support and mental health education. It also pauses for Men's Mental Health Month, with a reminder that men deserve support before the weight becomes too heavy.

This edition is not only asking readers to learn something. It is asking us all to notice someone, listen better, and make care easier to reach.

Warm regards,
Joseph Abang.

Editorial Note

Mental health education works best when people can recognize themselves in it. This is why ICTMH continues to take mental health conversations beyond formal spaces. Through WhatsApp wellness reflections, community outreaches, health screenings, and psychoeducation, we are helping people understand that mental health support is not distant, shameful, or reserved for crisis moments. Volume 35 is about care that comes closer.

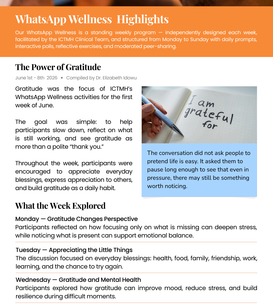
It begins with gratitude—the simple practice of noticing what is still good, even when life is not easy.

Continuing the Conversation

In previous editions, we explored how the body speaks and how communication can either hurt or heal.

This edition takes the next step. Awareness is important, but awareness should lead somewhere. If people now understand that stress can affect the body, then care must be available. If people know that words matter, then families must become safer places to speak. If we know men often carry pressure quietly, then communities must make it easier for them to ask for help.

That is the movement of this volume:
from awareness to access,
from silence to support,
from information to action.



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.

The Power of Gratitude

June 1st - 8th 2026 • Compiled by Dr. Elizabeth Idowu

Gratitude was the focus of ICTMH's WhatsApp Wellness activities for the first week of June.

The goal was simple: to help participants slow down, reflect on what is still working, and see gratitude as more than a polite "thank you."

Throughout the week, participants were encouraged to appreciate everyday blessings, express appreciation to others, and build gratitude as a daily habit.



The conversation did not ask people to pretend life is easy. It asked them to pause long enough to see that even in pressure, there may still be something worth noticing.

What the Week Explored

Monday — Gratitude Changes Perspective
Participants reflected on how focusing only on what is missing can deepen stress, while noticing what is present can support emotional balance.

Tuesday — Appreciating the Little Things
The discussion focused on everyday blessings: health, food, family, friendship, work, learning, and the chance to try again.

Wednesday — Gratitude and Mental Health
Participants explored how gratitude can improve mood, reduce stress, and build resilience during difficult moments.

Thursday — Expressing Appreciation
Members were encouraged to thank someone who had supported, encouraged, helped, or stood by them.

Friday — Building the Habit
The week ended with practical steps: keeping a gratitude journal, celebrating small wins, and taking a few minutes daily to reflect.

Saturday — Reflection
Participants shared lessons from the week and were reminded that gratitude is not occasional. It can become a steady practice for emotional wellbeing.

Gratitude Check-In

Take one quiet minute and answer honestly:



One thing I often overlook:

One person I need to appreciate:

One small victory from this season:

One thing I still have, even now:

Gratitude does not remove pain. It gives the heart another place to stand while healing continues.

WHAT THIS WEEK TELLS US



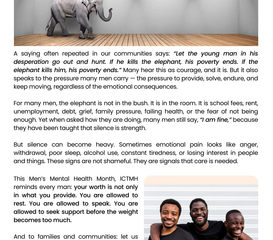
Many people are not ungrateful. They are tired.
When life is demanding, the mind can become trained to notice only the pressure: bills, family responsibilities, health concerns, uncertainty, disappointment, and unfinished plans.
Gratitude interrupts that pattern.
It does not say, *"Your problems are not real."*
It says, *"Your problems are not the whole story."*

That is why gratitude matters. It helps people stay emotionally grounded. It strengthens relationships. It reminds us to notice support before we lose sight of it.

Sometimes, mental wellness begins with this simple question:
What is still good, even here?

ICTMH Reaches Over 1,000 People at Jenruwa Community Outreach

May 20, 2026 • Compiled by Dr. Elizabeth Idowu



Community members receiving health checks and mental health education as ICTMH brings care closer to the people

The initiative for Cognitive Therapies and Mental Health participated in a community outreach programme hosted by House on the Rock Church at Jenruwa Community, Kaduna.

As part of its contribution, ICTMH provided blood pressure checks, blood sugar level tests, and mental health education for community members.

More than 1,000 people were reached during the program, and at least 30 people received blood pressure and blood sugar checks.

But beyond the numbers, the outreach showed something important: when care is brought into familiar community spaces, people are more willing to receive it. Some people may not walk into a mental health office first. But they may come for a health check.

They may sit down for their blood pressure to be checked. They may ask a question. They may listen when mental health is explained in simple, respectful language.

That is where the door opens.

At Jenruwa Community, participants were sensitized on the importance of maintaining good mental health. Parents and caregivers also received practical guidance on supporting the mental wellbeing of their children.

The outreach was impactful and contributed significantly to the success of the wider program. ICTMH remains committed to community-based interventions that support individuals, strengthen families, and make mental health education easier to access.

Supporting Children's Mental Wellbeing

During the outreach, ICTMH also emphasized the importance of supporting children's mental well-being. Children do not always say, "I am stressed" or "I am struggling." Sometimes they show it through behavior.

A child may become quiet, angry, withdrawn, fearful, distracted, tearful, or unusually tired. Some may lose interest in school or become easily irritated. These changes should not be dismissed too quickly.



Here are simple ways adults can support children:

Listen before correcting.
A child who feels heard is more likely to open up.

Watch for changes.
Sudden changes in mood, sleep, appetite, school interest, or behaviour may be signs that something needs attention.

Avoid shame-based words.
Words like "lazy," "useless," or "stubborn" can close a child's heart and make it harder for them to speak.

Create safety at home.
Discipline is important, but children also need a home where they can express fear, confusion, or sadness without being mocked.

Seek help early.
If a child continues to struggle, professional support can help the family understand what is happening and respond better.

Children do better when adults learn to notice, listen, and guide with care.

The Elephant in the Man's Room

When strength becomes silence, care must come closer.



A saying often repeated in our communities says: *"Let the young man in his desperation go out and hunt. If he kills the elephant, his poverty ends. If the elephant kills him, his poverty ends."* Many hear this as courage, and it is. But it also speaks to the pressure many men carry – the pressure to provide, solve, endure, and keep moving, regardless of the emotional consequences.

For many men, the elephant is not in the bush. It is in the room. It is school fees, rent, unemployment, debt, grief, family pressure, failing health, or the fear of not being enough. Yet when asked how they are doing, many men still say, *"I am fine,"* because they have been taught that silence is strength.

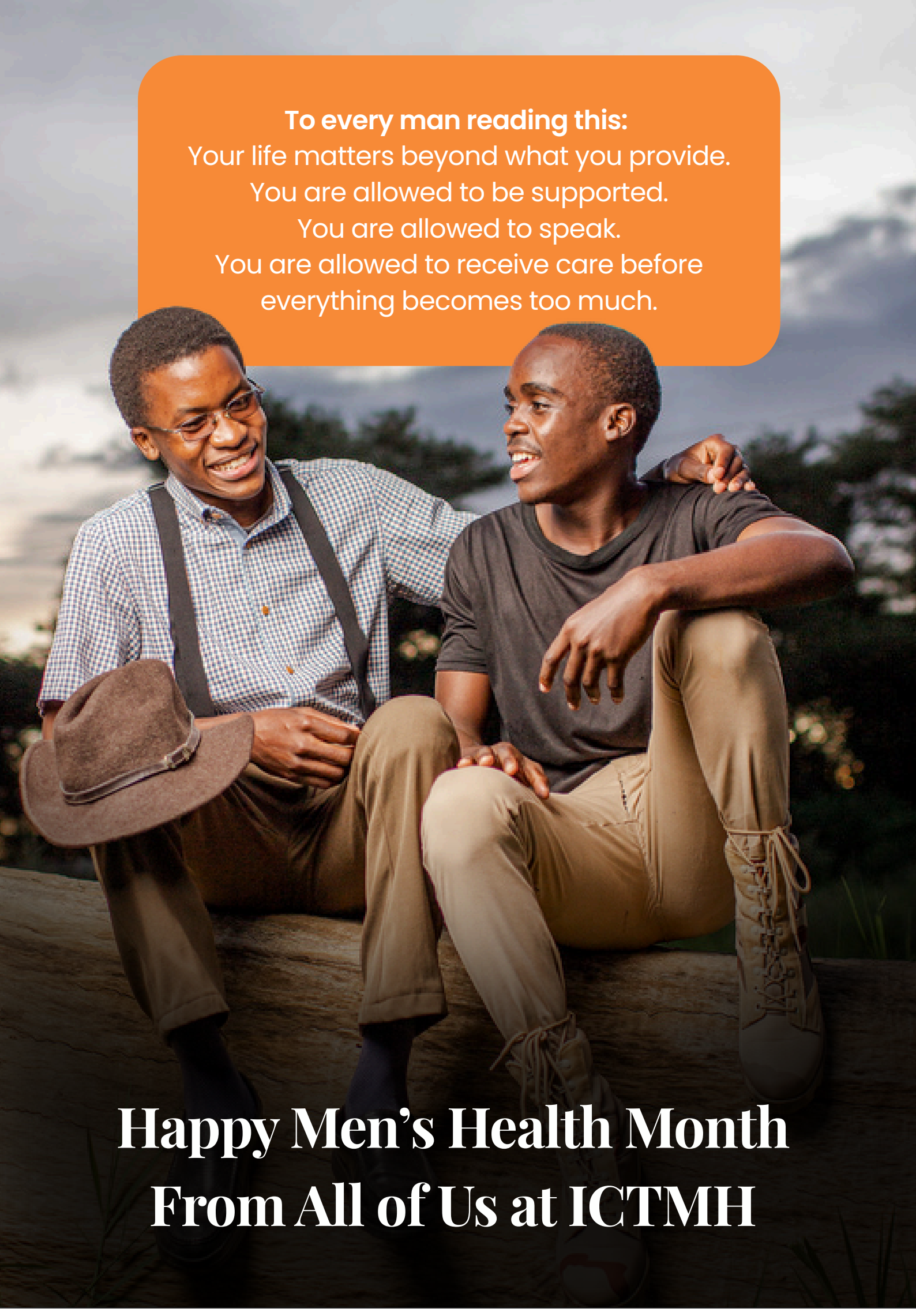
But silence can become heavy. Sometimes emotional pain looks like anger, withdrawal, poor sleep, alcohol use, constant tiredness, or losing interest in people and things. These signs are not shameful. They are signals that care is needed.

This Men's Mental Health Month, ICTMH reminds every man: **your worth is not only in what you provide. You are allowed to rest. You are allowed to speak. You are allowed to seek support before the weight becomes too much.**



And to families and communities: let us stop asking men only what they have done, paid, fixed, or provided. Let us also ask, "How are you really doing?"

Not every elephant must be hunted alone.



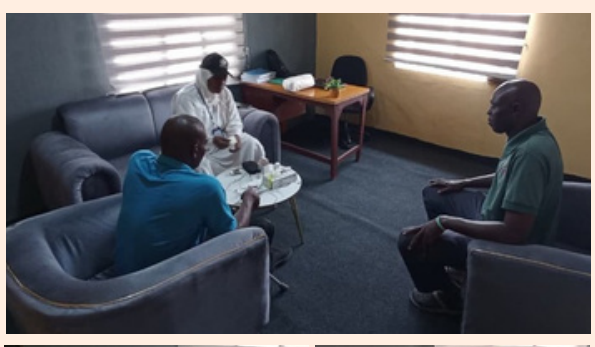
Happy Men's Health Month From All of Us at ICTMH

Wellness Wednesdays: Free Health Screenings

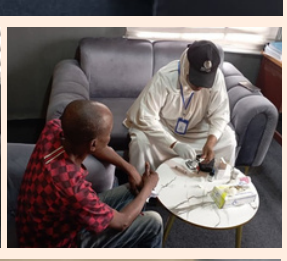
Every Wednesday at the ICTMH Kaduna Office, **free blood pressure and blood sugar screenings** are available to all community members at no cost. No appointment is necessary.

- **When:** Every Wednesday, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM.
- **Where:** ICTMH Office, No 28 Abuja Road, Kaduna State.
- **Cost:** 100% Free

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

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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.

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



ICTMH's One Ask

This week, check on one person who always seems strong.

A father. A brother. A husband. A friend. A colleague. A mother. A young person.

Ask gently:
"How are you really doing?"

Then give them room to answer.
Do not rush to correct.
Do not dismiss.
Do not turn their pain into advice too quickly.
Just listen.
Sometimes care begins with one honest question and one patient listener.
This week, be that listener.

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.