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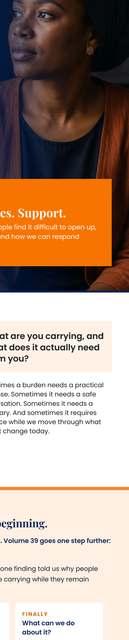
# NEWSLETTER

Mental Health & Wellness Ed. Vol. 39 | 15th - 28th August 2026

MAKING ROOM FOR PEACE

## What are you carrying?

Some pressures need action.
Some need a conversation.
Some need a boundary.
And some need us to stop carrying them alone.



Not everything weighing on you is visible.
That does not make the weight less real.

INSIDE THIS EDITION

**Silence. Pressure. Boundaries. Support.**
Two weeks of real conversations about why people find it difficult to open up, what is weighing most heavily on their peace, and how we can respond without pretending life's pressures are not real.

## Editorial Note

Most of us are carrying something.

A financial worry. A difficult relationship. Family expectations. Work pressure. An unanswered question. Or simply the exhaustion of trying to keep everything together.

Sometimes the burden is difficult enough. Then we add another one:

**The fear of what people might think if we admit that we are struggling.**

This edition is not going to tell you to simply "let go" or "choose peace."

*Warm regards,*
*Joseph Abang.*

**What are you carrying, and what does it actually need from you?**

Sometimes a burden needs a practical response. Sometimes it needs a safe conversation. Sometimes it needs a boundary. And sometimes it requires patience while we move through what cannot change today.

CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

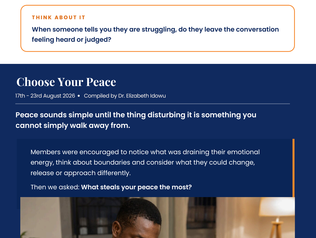
## Knowing what you feel is only the beginning.

**Volume 38 asked us to pay attention to our emotions. Volume 39 goes one step further:**

**What is behind the feeling?**

Across two recent WhatsApp Wellness conversations, one finding told us why people may remain silent. The other told us what they may be carrying while they remain silent. That is where this conversation begins.

| FIRST | THEN | FINALLY |
|---|---|---|
| **Why are we afraid to speak?** | **What is disturbing our peace?** | **What can we do about it?** |



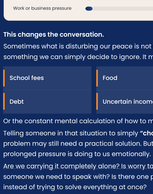

## WhatsApp Wellness Highlights

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.

## Healing Without Hiding

15th – 18th August 2026 • Compiled by Dr. Elizabeth Idowu

**What if the hardest part of opening up is not finding the words, but wondering what will happen after you say them?**



Throughout the week, our WhatsApp community explored emotional openness, vulnerability and the pressure people sometimes feel to appear fine even when they are struggling.

Then we asked, **"What makes it difficult for people to talk about what they are going through?"**

**75%**
**Fear of being judged**
The most selected response among participants who answered the poll.

**What makes it difficult to open up?** POLL RESPONSES

| | |
|---|---|
| Fear of being judged | 75% |
| People won't understand | 10% |
| Feeling like a burden | 7% |
| Being told to "just be strong" | 5% |
| Not knowing how to express what I feel | 3% |

**That answer deserves attention.**

We often encourage people to "open up." But speaking honestly requires more than courage from the person struggling.

It also requires **someone safe enough to listen.**

If people expect criticism, dismissal, ridicule or a change in how they will be seen, silence can begin to feel safer than honesty.

Perhaps the question is not only:
*"Why don't people talk?"*

It is also:
*"What happens when they do?"*

Healing without hiding does not mean telling everybody everything. It means knowing that difficult emotions do not have to be carried in shame, and finding safe places where honesty can be met with care.

THINK ABOUT IT

**When someone tells you they are struggling, do they leave the conversation feeling heard or judged?**

## Choose Your Peace

17th - 23rd August 2026 • Compiled by Dr. Elizabeth Idowu

**Peace sounds simple until the thing disturbing it is something you cannot simply walk away from.**

Members were encouraged to notice what was draining their emotional energy, think about boundaries and consider what they could change, release or approach differently.

Then we asked: **What steals your peace the most?**



**What steals your peace the most?** POLL RESPONSES

| | |
|---|---|
| Money and financial pressure | 65% |
| Family issues and expectations | 10% |
| Overthinking and worrying | 10% |
| Relationship problems | 8% |
| Work or business pressure | 7% |

**65%**
**Money and financial pressure**
The most selected response among participants who answered the poll.

**This changes the conversation.**

Sometimes what is disturbing our peace is not unnecessary drama or something we can simply decide to ignore. It may be:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| School fees | Food | Rent |
| Debt | Uncertain income | Family responsibilities |

Or the constant mental calculation of how to make limited resources stretch far enough.

Telling someone in that situation to simply **"choose peace"** is not enough. The financial problem may still need a practical solution. But we can also pay attention to what prolonged pressure is doing to us emotionally.

Are we carrying it completely alone? Is worry taking over every quiet moment? Is there someone we need to speak with? Is there one part of the situation we can address today instead of trying to solve everything at once?

*Peace is not pretending the problem is gone. Sometimes it is refusing to let one difficult part of life occupy every part of you.*

BEFORE YOU MOVE ON

What has been taking up the most space in your mind lately?
Keep your answer. You will need it in the Peace Audit.

INTERACTIVE FEATURE

## Your Peace Audit

**What has been taking up the most space in your mind lately?**
Write it down in one sentence.

**Pause. Name it. Respond.**

### What does this actually need from me?

**01**
**I can act on this**
There is something practical I can do.
**My next small step is:**

**02**
**I need to talk about this**
I may need support, perspective or simply someone safe to listen.
**Someone I can speak with:**

**03**
**I need a boundary here**
Something about my time, availability, involvement or response needs to change.
**One boundary that may help:**

**04**
**I cannot change this today**
I can still decide how I care for myself while I move through it.
**What would help me carry this more healthily?**

**Before you move on**
Not every burden needs the same response.

| | |
|---|---|
| Some things need solving. | Some need speaking about. |
| Some need a boundary. | Some need patience. |

**One thing I will do differently this week:**

ICTMH STAFF VOICE



# Making Room for Peace

by Amina Shaibu



Yesterday at work, I had an experience that reminded me just how important it is to protect our peace, even in the middle of everyday pressures.

I had a brief interaction with a colleague and made a light-hearted comment. Her response was much harsher than I expected, and I walked away feeling hurt and confused.

Immediately, I started asking myself, **"Did I do something wrong?"** I apologized and returned to my desk, but the moment stayed with me. I became emotional and eventually cried. For a while, I even regretted saying anything at all.

But later, I reminded myself that we cannot always control how people respond to us. I reached out to a friend who encouraged me, and another colleague took time to listen and comfort me. That support helped me see the situation differently.

The experience taught me something simple: ***protecting your peace does not mean pretending that you were not hurt.***

It means acknowledging what happened, allowing yourself to feel it, giving yourself time to process it, and seeking support when you need it. It also means deciding that one difficult interaction does not have to take over the rest of your day.

Workplace well-being is also about kindness and empathy. We never fully know what another person may be dealing with, and the way we speak to one another can make a difference.

Today, I am choosing to let the experience go, not because it did not hurt, but because I do not want to keep carrying it.

Sometimes making room for peace is simply being able to say:
***"It happened. It hurt. I have felt it. Now, I choose to move forward."***

PRACTICAL FEATURE

## When Someone Finally Opens Up

**What you say next matters.**

If fear of judgement is one of the biggest reasons people stay silent, opening up is only half of the conversation. The other half is: **How do we respond when someone trusts us enough to speak?**

**"I've been struggling lately."**

TRY
"I'm listening."

NOT
"Everyone is going through something."

**"I don't know what to do anymore."**

TRY
"Do you want me to listen, or would you like us to think through it together?"

NOT
"Just stop worrying about it."

**"I feel overwhelmed."**

TRY
"That sounds like a lot to carry."

NOT
"You need to be stronger."

**"I haven't told anyone this before."**

TRY
"Thank you for trusting me with it."

NOT
"Why didn't you tell someone earlier?"

### You do not need the perfect answer

Sometimes support is not about fixing the problem. It may simply mean:

- Listening without interrupting.
- Resisting the urge to compare experiences.
- Not making the person feel ashamed for struggling.
- Asking what kind of support would actually help.
- Encouraging appropriate professional help when needed.



PROTECTING PEACE WITH HONESTY

## Boundary or Avoidance?

**Protecting your peace does not mean escaping every uncomfortable situation.**

BOUNDARY

### Protecting wellbeing without abandoning the relationship

Someone regularly calls late at night when you need to rest.

*"I want to be there for you, but I cannot keep taking late-night calls. Can we talk tomorrow?"*

AVOIDANCE

### Temporary quiet without resolution

There is an important conversation you need to have. Because it makes you uncomfortable, you stop responding and hope the problem disappears.

That may feel peaceful temporarily. But avoiding something and resolving it are not always the same thing.

QUICK CHECK

Is this situation disturbing my peace because I need a healthier boundary, or because I am avoiding something that still needs to be addressed?

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 | WHERE | COST |
|---|---|---|
| Every Wednesday<br>9:00 AM to 5:00 PM | ICTMH Office<br>No. 28 Abuja Road,<br>Kaduna State | 100% free<br>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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NEED TO TALK?
Call the ICTMH Hotline:
+234 912 213 0769
+234 706 287 4416

OPERATING HOURS
9:00AM - 5:00PM
MONDAYS - FRIDAYS

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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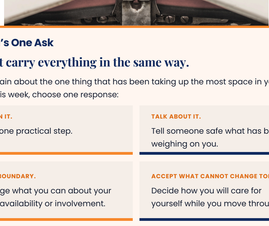
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SCAN TO DONATE

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




ICTMH's One Ask

## Do not carry everything in the same way.

Think again about the one thing that has been taking up the most space in your mind. This week, choose one response:

**ACT ON IT.**
Take one practical step.

**TALK ABOUT IT.**
Tell someone safe what has been weighing on you.

**SET A BOUNDARY.**
Change what you can about your time, availability or involvement.

**ACCEPT WHAT CANNOT CHANGE TODAY.**
Decide how you will care for yourself while you move through it.

**One burden. One healthier response. Start there.**

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.