INITIATIVE FOR COGNITIVE THERAPIES AND MENTAL HEALTH

ICTMH BI-WEEKLY

www.cognitiveng.org

NEWSLETTER

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A healthier mind builds a brighter tomorrow.

On Your Own Side

How you respond to yourself matters, especially when something goes wrong.



Sometimes we keep our feelings to ourselves because we do not want to be misunderstood.

A mistake. A difficult emotion. A moment when you feel overwhelmed. What happens next can depend partly on how you respond to yourself. This edition explores what it means to understand yourself, correct yourself, and still remain on your own side.

When something is difficult, are you helping yourself through it or making it harder?

INSIDE THIS EDITION

Choosing Yourself, One Day at a Time

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Mind Break: Where Did the 1,000 Naira Go?

Editorial Note

Would you speak to someone you love this way?

You forget something important. Lose your temper. Miss a routine. Feel overwhelmed by something you think you should handle. Then comes the second problem: what you say to yourself about it.

"I never get anything right."
"I am too weak."
"I have no discipline."
"What is wrong with me?"

We may never speak to someone we care about this way, yet the words can come easily in our own minds.

Being on your own side does not mean avoiding responsibility or pretending mistakes do not matter.

It means learning to correct yourself without destroying yourself in the process.

Warm regards,
Joseph Abang



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.

Choosing Yourself, One Day at a Time

12th–17th October 2026 *Compiled by Dr. Elizabeth Idowu*

Choosing yourself does not always mean choosing yourself over someone else. Sometimes it simply means refusing to disappear from your own decisions.

During the week's WhatsApp Wellness activities, participants explored self-worth, boundaries, rest, emotional check-ins and everyday choices that make personal wellbeing easier to sustain.

CHECK IN

What am I feeling?
Sometimes we keep moving without noticing how much we are carrying.

SET A LIMIT

What can I no longer keep giving without affecting my wellbeing?
A boundary does not have to be dramatic to be useful.

SPEAK UP

What needs to be said clearly?
People cannot always know we are overwhelmed or in need of support unless we communicate it.

MAKE ROOM

What helps me feel grounded again?
Rest. Quiet. Prayer. Movement. Recreation. Connection. Time alone.

Your turn

PAUSE & CHOOSE

Which part of choosing yourself feels hardest right now?

- ◯ Resting without feeling guilty
- ◯ Saying no
- ◯ Asking for help
- ◯ Making time for yourself
- ◯ Admitting when something is bothering you

Choosing yourself is rarely one dramatic decision. It is often a series of small choices that quietly say:

"I matter here too."

Make space for your wellbeing in your everyday decisions.

INTERACTIVE FEATURE

When an Event Becomes a Verdict

Something happens. Then, almost immediately, we decide what it says about us.

THE EVENT	THE VERDICT
"I forgot something important."	"I am so careless."
"I became overwhelmed."	"I should be stronger than this."
"I missed one day of my routine."	"I have no discipline."

The event may need attention.
But the verdict is not always true.

Try this instead

Pause. Name it. Respond.

1. What actually happened?

2. What did I immediately make it mean about me?

3. Is that a fact, or a judgement?

4. What needs to happen next?

A mistake can need correction without becoming a character assessment.

That distinction matters. Especially when you are trying to begin again.

FROM THE FIELD

Care where people are

Two communities. Two very different settings. One simple idea: support should be easier to reach.

> **Looking after yourself is easier when useful information, practical support and basic health services are within reach.**

During this reporting period, ICTMH took that approach beyond the Kaduna office and into two very different communities: a busy commercial market in Aba and a military cantonment in Akwa Ibom.

ARIARIA INTERNATIONAL MARKET, ABA

Healthy Minds, Healthy Communities

27 October 2026 | Aba, Abia State









Screening, registration and one-to-one conversations brought directly into the market.

78	78	52	3
PEOPLE PARTICIPATED	BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKS	BLOOD SUGAR TESTS	MENTAL-HEALTH COUNSELLING SESSIONS

In the middle of one of Nigeria's busiest commercial environments, ICTMH created space for something traders may not always have time to stop and think about: their health.

The outreach brought mental-health awareness, preventive health screening, brief supportive conversations and referral guidance directly into Ariaria International Market.

Among those screened, **35 recorded high blood-pressure readings** and **28 recorded high blood-sugar readings**. Participants with abnormal readings were encouraged to seek appropriate medical follow-up.

> **Sometimes care begins simply because someone made it easier to stop and check.**

THE MIND BEHIND THE UNIFORM

Protecting Those Who Protect Us

28 October 2026 | 2 Brigade Military Cantonment, Mbiokporo, Akwa Ibom State









Listening, asking questions, learning practical tools and receiving health checks.

195	195	193
REGISTERED PARTICIPANTS	BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKS	BLOOD SUGAR TESTS

A day later, the setting changed.

This time, the conversation was with military personnel, their spouses and other members of the cantonment community.

ICTMH's **Mission Mind & Body** outreach combined mental-health education with Psychological First Aid, practical grounding techniques, open discussion and physical-health screening.

The questions were real.

- How do you recognise when a colleague may be struggling with trauma?
- How do you support someone in distress without making things worse?
- How do families navigate conflict under pressure?
- How do you communicate devastating news with compassion?

The conversations also highlighted the need for continued engagement around PTSD, family relationships, bereavement support and other realities of military life.

Different places. Same principle.

A market trader checking her blood pressure.

A soldier learning how to support a distressed colleague.

A spouse asking a difficult question.

Someone deciding that an unusual screening result deserves another look.

None of these moments is dramatic on its own.

But each is a small act of paying attention before something becomes harder to carry.

Care should not only be available.
It should be close enough for people to use.

See more moments from ICTMH's work in the field → **ICTMH Gallery**

NO GOOGLING

Mind Break

Where did the 1,000 naira go?

Three friends pay 30,000 naira for a hotel room: 10,000 each. Later, the hotel realises the room should have cost only 25,000 naira. A staff member is given 5,000 naira to return to them.

He secretly keeps 2,000 naira and gives each friend 1,000 back. Each friend has now paid 9,000 naira: 27,000 in total.

Add the 2,000 he kept and you get...

27,000 + 2,000 = 29,000?

But they paid 30,000. Where is the missing 1,000 naira?

Don't ask your calculator. It is innocent.

Answer on the final page

PULSE & PSYCHE ICTMH Kaduna Office Weekly Screening

The Monday Trap

One slip does not have to become a lost week.

17 People screened

5 High blood pressure only	**2** High blood sugar only
4 High readings for both	**6** Within normal range



Overall: 9 recorded high blood pressure; 6 recorded high blood sugar. The 4 with both are included in those totals.

Managing a long-term health condition takes consistency. But consistency does not mean never slipping.

You miss a tablet. Skip a walk. Eat more than you planned. Forget part of the routine. Then comes a familiar thought: "I've already spoiled it. I'll start again on Monday."

The original slip may have lasted one moment. The thinking that follows can turn it into several days. That is the trap.

When one mistake becomes proof that we are "careless", "undisciplined" or "bad at this", getting back to the routine can become harder than it needs to be.

Missing one day does not cancel the days you showed up. Talk to yourself like a friend. You deserve a useful question: "That happened. What is the next helpful thing I can do?"

Missed a walk? The next one does not have to wait until Monday.
Missed prescribed medication? Follow your doctor's or pharmacist's advice about what to do next, rather than guessing or changing the dose yourself.
Ate differently from your plan? The next meal is another decision.

A setback can give you information without becoming an identity.

ONE SMALL THING BEFORE NEXT WEEK

The next time something does not go according to plan, notice the first sentence you say to yourself. Then ask: "Would I say this to somebody I care about?"

If not, try: "That happened. What is my next helpful step?"

ICTMH STAFF VOICE

Understanding Your Emotions

PERSONAL REFLECTION ON LEARNING TO LISTEN TO MYSELF

by Fatima Nike Imam





There was a time when I did not fully understand what I was feeling.

I knew when I was unhappy, frustrated, tired or overwhelmed, but I did not always know how to explain those feelings or what they were trying to tell me.

Sometimes I became quiet when I was hurt. At other times, I felt irritated over things that seemed small. There were moments when I wanted to talk but could not find the right words.

So I would keep everything inside and continue with my responsibilities, hoping the feelings would eventually disappear.

From the outside, I might have appeared fine. I could smile, attend to my duties, help others and carry on with the day. But being able to function did not always mean I was emotionally okay.

Over time, I began to notice something. I was not always reacting only to what was happening in that moment. Sometimes there was accumulated stress, an unspoken concern, disappointment or the feeling that I had not been heard.

What appeared to be anger could sometimes be hurt. What looked like silence could be emotional exhaustion. What I called overthinking could be my mind trying to make sense of unresolved worries.

That changed the questions I began asking myself. Instead of immediately judging what I felt, I became curious:

What am I really feeling?
What might have caused this?
What do I need right now?

The questions did not make every difficult emotion disappear. But they gave me a chance to pause.

I also learnt that emotions are not signs of weakness. Feeling angry does not make us bad people. Feeling sad does not mean we are ungrateful. Feeling anxious does not mean we lack faith or courage.

I am learning that I do not have to ignore my feelings to prove that I am strong. I can acknowledge them without allowing them to control every decision I make. I can take responsibility for how I respond while still showing myself compassion.

Your emotions deserve to be understood, not ignored.

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

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:

ACCOUNT NUMBER
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Initiative for Cognitive Therapies and Mental Health

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SCAN **TO DONATE**

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

ICTMH's One Ask

Catch yourself in the act.

The next time you make a mistake, feel overwhelmed or fall short of something you intended to do, listen for the verdict:

INSTEAD OF

"What does this say about me?"

"I always…" "I never…"
"I'm useless at…"
"I should be better than this…"

Pause there. Then change the question.

TRY

"What needs my attention now?"

Maybe something needs correcting. Maybe you need to apologise, rest, ask for help or simply try again. Being on your own side means refusing to turn every difficult moment into evidence against yourself.

Correct what needs correcting. Learn what needs learning. Take the next useful step.

MIND BREAK ANSWER / NOTHING IS MISSING

25,000 + 2,000 = 27,000 naira

Hotel room + money kept by the staff member = the amount the friends actually paid.

The 2,000 naira is already included in the 27,000. Add the 3,000 returned to the friends and you have the original 30,000.

No money disappeared. The puzzle persuaded you to add the wrong numbers together.

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.