

WEEKLY

Newsletter



Editorial Note

Welcome to September edition of ICTMH's newsletter!

Our Mental Health Wellness Week (September 1st – 7th, 2025), was a powerful reminder that life's inevitable transitions often carry unseen emotional weight.

Guided by the theme, "Adjustment Disorders: When Life's Transitions Trigger Mental Health Struggles," the week featured vibrant community engagements on WhatsApp and an impactful virtual training session.

Together, these activities helped normalize conversations around mental health, creating a safe and supportive space for learning and sharing.

A highlight of the week was the inspiring lecture delivered by Dr. Nafisatu Hayatudeen, whose insights into adjustment disorders struck a deep chord with participants. Many are still reflecting on her words, and selected excerpts will be shared to extend the learning even further. Settle in and enjoy the read!

**Warm regards
Ese Ogheneovo
for ICTMH**

Weekly Webinar Training

Topic: Adjustment Disorders: When Life's Transitions Trigger Mental Health Struggles

Date: September 5, 2025

Host: Dr. Nafisatu Hayatudeen

Introduction

Dr. Nafisatu Hayatudeen presented the topic, Adjustment Disorder: When Life Transitions Trigger Mental Health Struggles. Her lecture highlighted how common transitions—such as relocation, retirement, job loss, or illness—can overwhelm individuals, leading to emotional distress and impaired functioning. She emphasized early recognition, supportive interventions, and the importance of culturally sensitive care, particularly in Nigeria where stigma and spiritual interpretations often delay help-seeking.

Key areas on the topic

Definition

Adjustment disorder is a minor but widespread mental health condition that arises when individuals struggle to cope with major life changes such as relocation, retirement, job loss, marriage, illness, or bereavement. Symptoms often include persistent sadness, anxiety, irritability, social withdrawal, and reduced ability to function at work, school, or home. Though less severe than depression or schizophrenia, it can escalate if left unaddressed.

Risk Factors

The condition is more common among adolescents, elderly people, and women. Triggers include unemployment, conflict, displacement, low education, poor social support systems, and certain personality traits such as excessive worry (neuroticism) or low openness to new experiences.

Coping Strategies

Effective coping involves self-care practices like regular exercise, healthy eating, mindfulness, prayer, and meditation. Individuals may also benefit from planning ahead, reconnecting with hobbies, building strong family bonds, and maintaining social networks that provide stability and encouragement.

Support Systems

Families play a central role in detecting early signs such as mood swings or withdrawal. Workplaces can reduce risks by training HR and managers to recognize productivity decline, absenteeism, or irritability as possible red flags. Communities, through counseling centers, safe spaces, and awareness programs, help normalize conversations and reduce stigma.

Barriers and Interventions

In Nigeria, stigma, cultural expectations, and spiritual explanations often delay seeking help. Treatment may involve counseling, psychotherapy, social support, and, where necessary, short-term medication. With early recognition and culturally sensitive interventions, the subject is highly treatable, preventing progression into major depression or anxiety.

Weekly Webinar Training



Breakout Discussions

Group 1: Personal Coping Strategies

Participants highlighted the importance of self-directed resilience practices, including:

- Self-care routines (rest, healthy lifestyle, balanced routines)
- Planning ahead to reduce stress from life transitions
- Prayer and spirituality for inner strength
- Mindfulness practices to stay grounded
- Reconnecting with hobbies and enjoyable activities

Special Quotes by Dr. Nafisatu Hayatudeen

On Passion and Purpose

· *"It's one of my passions, you know, educating as much as I can, let people know and understand more mental health conditions, in the hopes that this would help in identification, early identification and treatment."*

On Life Transitions and Stress

·“Life transitions are just part of daily life... marriage, childbirth, graduation, relocation, illnesses, getting a job, retiring. With optimal mental health, we expect someone to cope, but for some, these changes trigger emotional struggles.”

On Defining Adjustment Disorder

·“Adjustment disorder is among the minor mental illnesses... kind of like in between normal stress and major mental illness such as depression or schizophrenia.”

·“Firstly, there must be a clear stressor—a life change that is distressing. Then, we look for preoccupation with this stressor, and whether it impairs the person’s ability to function.”

On Symptoms and Risks

- “The key thing here is that symptoms are not as intense or persistent as in depression or anxiety disorders, but they still impair functioning.”
- “It is more common in adolescents, elderly, and women.”

On Cultural Context

“In our context, everything is easily attributable to spiritual attacks... bewitching, magic, or spirits. So interventions must be culturally sensitive.”

On Intervention

- “Not everybody transits through life easily. It’s a bit more difficult for some to adjust, so we need to normalize the stress they’re going through.”
- “Support during transitions actually protects our mental health.”

On Early Detection and Hope

- “Adjustment disorders are very common, many people don’t know it’s a mental health condition, but they are easily treatable with the right support.”
- “Early detection can really go a long way to prevent the condition from getting worse.”



Group 2: Supportive Systems (Family, Workplace, Community)

This group emphasized the role of external structures in promoting well-being:

- Early detection of adjustment challenges within families and communities
- Flexible workplace policies that accommodate mental health needs
- Provision of accessible counseling services and peer support systems

Group 3: Barriers and Solutions

The final group identified obstacles to effective support and offered recommendations:

- Cultural expectations that discourage openness about struggles
- Religious beliefs that sometimes stigmatize psychological care
- Trust issues that prevent seeking professional help
- Recommendations: Sensitization campaigns, collaboration with faith leaders, and initiatives to normalize mental health conversations.

Weekly WhatsApp Interactive Session

ICTMH Mental Health Week Report

Theme: : Adjustment Disorders: When Life’s Transitions Trigger Mental Health Struggles

Date: September 1st– 7th, 2025

Overview

The Initiative for Cognitive Therapies and Mental Health (ICTMH) successfully hosted its Mental Health Wellness Week from September 1st – 7th, 2025, under the theme: Adjustment Disorders: When Life’s Transitions Trigger Mental Health Struggles. Conducted virtually via WhatsApp, the program provided a safe and interactive platform for participants to explore how life’s changes whether joyful, painful, or unexpected impact mental health. Each day of the week presented a unique focus, ranging from motivation and gratitude to self-care and reflection. Through discussions, polls, storytelling, and wellness challenges, the program emphasized the importance of resilience, community support, and self-care as protective factors during transitional seasons of life.

Daily Highlights

Motivational Monday

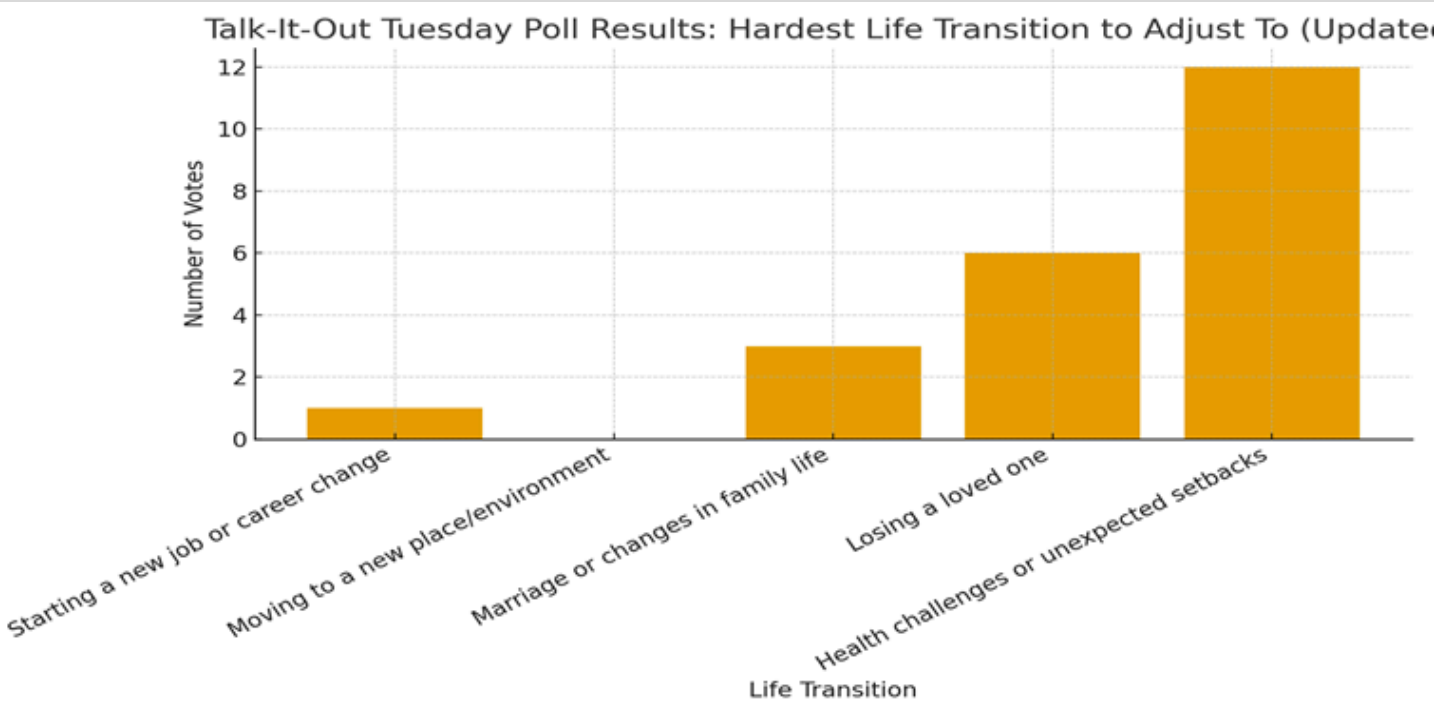
The week began with encouragement for participants to embrace September with courage and hope. The message emphasized that while change may shake us, it cannot break us. Community responses reflected gratitude, faith, and the reminder that growth often comes through change.

Talk-It-Out Tuesday

A community poll was conducted on which life transition is hardest to adjust to. The options included career changes, relocation, family transitions, bereavement, and health challenges. Responses highlighted that losing a loved one and facing health challenges were particularly difficult, with participants sharing deeply personal testimonies of resilience and healing.

Key Insight:

The results show that health challenges or unexpected setbacks (12 votes) are considered the most difficult life transition, followed by losing a loved one (6 votes). Marriage or family changes (3 votes) were seen as moderately challenging, while starting a new job or career change (1 vote) attracted little concern. Moving to a new place (0 votes) was not viewed as a major difficulty. Overall, participants see health struggles and loss as the most impactful transitions compared to career or relocation.



Wellness Wednesday

The focus shifted to building sustainable wellness habits. Participants were encouraged to adopt simple practices such as drinking more water, taking walks, practicing gratitude, and setting boundaries. Contributions showed enthusiasm for small, practical steps to strengthen mental and physical health.



Thankful Thursday

Gratitude was the central theme. Participants shared heartfelt reflections, ranging from overcoming academic and personal losses to celebrating ICTMH's role in their healing journey. The practice of thanksgiving was reaffirmed as a powerful antidote to stress and despair.

Fun Friday

Friday was dedicated to lighthearted activities, riddles, and wordplay. Participants responded with creativity and humor, reminding the group that joy is medicine and laughter strengthens mental health.



Self-Care Saturday

Saturday emphasized the importance of self-care as a necessity, not a luxury. Participants shared diverse self-care practices such as resting, grounding, listening to music, and mindful reflection.

Reflections & Q&A Sunday

The week concluded with reflections on personal growth and collective learning. Many highlighted the value of community, storytelling, and consistent small steps in building resilience.

Conclusion

ICTMH's Mental Health Wellness Week 2025 was a resounding success. The program not only deepened participants' understanding of adjustment disorders but also strengthened community bonds by normalizing open dialogue around mental health struggles. By combining faith, resilience, gratitude, humor, and self-care, ICTMH demonstrated how communities can navigate life's transitions together with compassion and strength. Participants left the week empowered, reminded that while change is inevitable, healing and growth are always possible with the right support system.



Join the Campus Wellness Hub!

Hosted by the Initiative for Cognitive Therapies and Mental Health (ICTMH), the Campus Wellness Hub is a space where student voices meet wellness advocacy.

At ICTMH, our mission is simple:

- To promote mental health awareness on campus and beyond.
- To train and empower students with tools for resilience, creativity, and self-growth.
- To build a community of advocates who will champion wellness in everyday life.

As a member of the Wellness Hub, you'll have the opportunity to:

- Write insightful articles and journal reflections on mental health, resilience, creativity, and campus experiences.
- Receive expert feedback and mentorship from a Professor Emeritus to grow your confidence and sharpen your writing.
- Get your work published for free, reaching peers who can learn from and be inspired by your words.
- Connect with like-minded students who are passionate about mental health advocacy and personal growth.

Why join?

Your voice matters! By sharing your perspectives, you become part of a larger movement that reduces stigma, strengthens resilience, and builds a healthier, more supportive campus community.

Spaces are limited—sign up today! Kindly click this link to join:
[https://chat.whatsapp.com/FK9fr1XpE4L9wb5Ub3OrH2?
mode=ems_copy_c](https://chat.whatsapp.com/FK9fr1XpE4L9wb5Ub3OrH2?mode=ems_copy_c)

For more about our vision and programs, kindly visit:
www.cognitiveng.org

RESOURCE & ANNOUNCEMENTS

INITIATIVE FOR COGNITIVE THERAPIES AND MENTAL HEALTH



Join our Online Mental Health Training session

THEME:
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): From Trauma to Recovery

WHO CAN ATTEND?
ANYONE WHO INTEND TO LEAVE THE WORST PAST OF THEIR LIVES BEHIND

Date: Friday, 12th Sept. 2025
Time: 8:00pm WAT

 [HTTPS://US06WEB.ZOOM.US/MEETING/REGISTER/NJUM8DOQHMNJEX6AEBNSA](https://us06web.zoom.us/join/zoom/register/njum8doqhmnejex6aebnsa)

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Call for Journal Articles - ICTMH

CTMH invites submissions of journal articles focused on mental health and cognitive behavioral therapies, especially those offering African-based solutions. A list of suggested topics is available, but you're welcome to propose your own. Writing guidelines, including word counts and tips, are also provided. Interested? Contact Ese (07068487474) or Michael(08143296589) on WhatsApp. We're happy to support you through the process. Thank you!



To get feedback or stories? Email us at enquiry@cognitiveng.org

For volunteering opportunities, join our team via social media

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