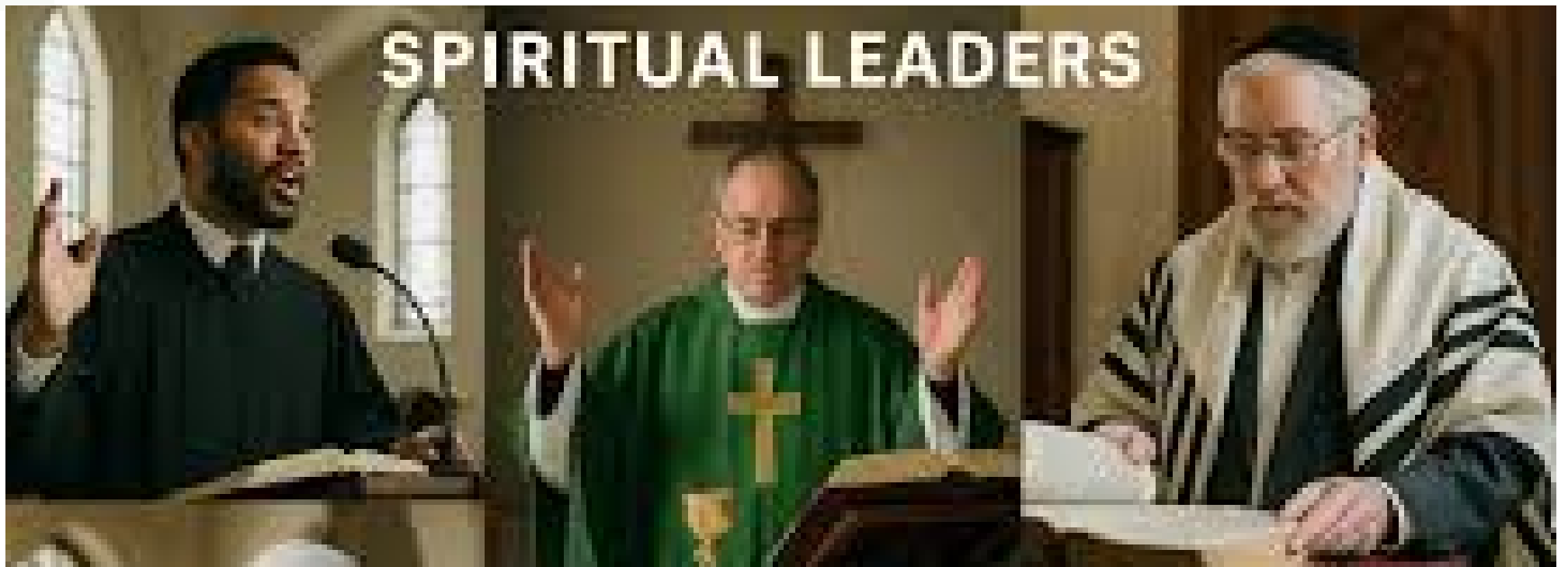




WEEKLY

Newsletter



Editorial Note

At ICTMH, this week marked another powerful stride in our mission to nurture emotional resilience and mental health literacy across faith and educational communities. This week's theme, "Mental Health First Aid for Nigerian Pastors, Imams, and Teachers," highlighted a deeply needed conversation, equipping those who lead, teach, and guide others with the tools to identify distress, listen compassionately, and respond effectively.

From Dr. Muhammad Gidado Ibrahim's enlightening session on Mental Health First Aid for Nigerian Pastors, Imams, and Teachers, to the lively daily engagements on hope, gratitude, laughter, and rest, the week successfully blended faith, science, and community wisdom. It reminded us that healing begins with understanding, empathy, and collaboration, and that support is indeed strength, not weakness.

Equally inspiring was the Campus Hub Wellness Week, which mirrored ICTMH's commitment to youth mental health. Through engaging discussions on peer pressure, resilience, and exam anxiety, young people were empowered to prioritize self-care, embrace authenticity, and practice gratitude amid life's pressures.

Across all platforms, one message resonates: mental wellness is a shared responsibility! Whether in pulpits, classrooms, or campuses, each conversation, act of kindness, and open dialogue moves Nigeria a step closer to a mentally healthy society.

As ICTMH continues to champion accessible and inclusive mental health education, we celebrate every participant, facilitator, and volunteer who made this week impactful.

Warm regards

Ese Ogheneovo
for ICTMH

Weekly Webinar Training

Topic: Mental Health First Aid for Nigerian Pastors, Imams, and Teachers

Date: October 3, 2025

Guest Speaker: Dr. Muhammad Gidado Ibrahim, Consultant Psychiatrist, Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, Kaduna

Key Highlights

Understanding Mental Health:

- Dr. Ibrahim emphasized that “there is no health without mental health,” describing it as a state of well-being where one can cope with life’s stress, work productively, and contribute to society.
- Mental wellness and illness exist on a spectrum — from mental well-being to distress, mental health problems, and illness.

Global & Local Perspective:

- Every 40 seconds, someone dies by suicide , about 2,160 people daily.
- Over 70% of suicides occur in low- and middle-income countries, including Nigeria.
- 1 in 4 people will experience mental illness at some point in their lives.
- 75% of adult mental illnesses begin before age 14 , underscoring the role of teachers in early identification.

Why Clergy and Teachers Matter:

- 25% of people with mental health challenges in Nigeria first seek help from religious leaders, not medical professionals.
- The session encouraged collaboration between faith leaders, teachers, and mental health professionals.

Mental Health



Core Model: ALGEE Mental Health First Aid

A Approach the person respectfully

Practical Solution

Start conversations privately and empathetically. Say: “I’ve noticed you haven’t seemed yourself lately — can I support you?”

L

Listen without judgment

Give full attention, avoid phones, and use phrases like “I understand” or “That must be hard.”

G

Give reassurance and information

Affirm that mental health challenges are real and treatable. Provide hotline or clinic contacts.

E

Encourage professional help

Suggest seeing a counsellor, psychologist, or psychiatrist, and offer to help connect them.

E

Encourage self-help

Promote rest, exercise, prayer, journaling, and supportive relationships



Weekly Webinar Training



Breakout Discussions

Insights & Solutions

Room 1 – Cultural and Religious Barriers

Key Barriers: Stigma, shame, misconceptions, and overreliance on faith alone.

Solutions Discussed:

- Normalize mental health talks in sermons and classrooms.
- Use relatable scriptural stories (e.g., prophets showing sadness or fear).
- Frame mental illness as a human experience, not a spiritual failure.
- Encourage dual healing, faith-based comfort and professional care.



Room 2 – Understanding the Mental Health Spectrum

Insight: Mental wellness is not a “sane vs insane” divide but a continuum affecting everyone.

Solution: Promote early recognition, compassionate conversation, and community education to reduce stigma.

Actionable point from the topic:

- Build mental health awareness into sermons, school programs, and youth clubs.
- Develop partnerships between faith groups, teachers, and local clinics.
- Display helpline contacts (e.g., Lagos Lifeline, MANI, or Mentally Aware Nigeria).
- Host community awareness days to promote open dialogue about mental well-being.

Special Quotes by Dr. Ibrahim Gidado

“Every 40 seconds, someone dies by suicide. If three airplanes crashed daily, the world would panic—but this tragedy happens silently.”

“Support is strength, not weakness.”

“Your calm listening presence can be life-changing.”

About 25% of Nigerians with mental health challenges first seek help from religious leaders rather than medical professionals.”

“This means our pastors, imams, and teachers are the true front liners in identifying and supporting people in mental distress.”

“Collaborations between faith institutions, schools, and healthcare providers to bridge the spiritual–psychological gap in mental health care.”

Weekly WhatsApp Interactive Session

ICTMH Mental Health Week Report

Theme: : Peer Pressure and Social Media Anxiety

Date: September 22nd – 28th, 2025
compiled by: Dr. Elizabeth Idowu

Overview

The Initiative for Cognitive Therapies and Mental Health (ICTMH) successfully hosted its Mental Health Wellness Week under the theme “Mental Health First Aid for Nigerian Pastors, Imams, and Teachers”, from September 29th to October 5th, 2025.

Conducted virtually via WhatsApp, the week-long program provided a safe, engaging, and interactive space for faith leaders, teachers, and mental health advocates to explore the vital role they play in supporting emotional and psychological well-being in their communities.

Through storytelling, polls, reflective discussions, and wellness challenges, the sessions emphasized the importance of resilience, gratitude, self-care, and community support as essential pillars for emotional health. The week further reinforced ICTMH’s ongoing mission to normalize mental health conversations and to equip community leaders with the tools to recognize and respond compassionately to mental distress

Daily Highlights & Community Engagement

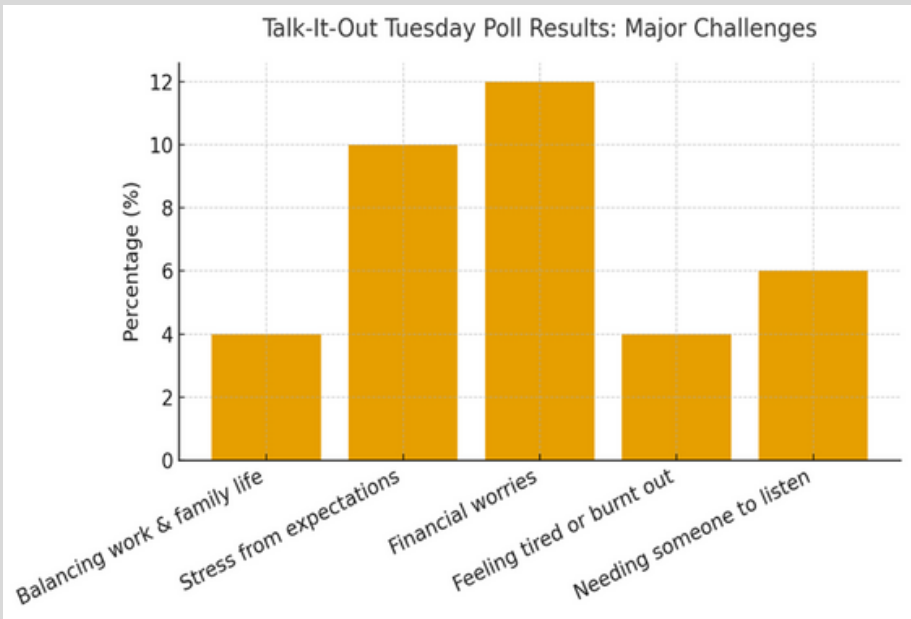
Motivational Monday – “Planting New Seeds of Hope”

The week began with a reflective story about a farmer whose crops were destroyed by a storm yet chose to start afresh. Participants were reminded that, like the farmer, pastors, imams, and teachers must also find the courage to “plant again” each new day through rest, prayer, and connection.

Community Reflection:

- Community Reflections:
- Hafsat: “What a beautiful reminder to start the week with hope and fresh energy. Each new day truly is a seed.”
- Uzo: “May we water the right seeds that will germinate fruitfully in us and those we meet.”
- Amina: “Definitely will encourage someone today.”
- Khalid: “Every new day really is a chance to plant fresh seeds of hope and strength.”

Talk-it-out Tuesday



Interpretation

During Talk-It-Out Tuesday on the theme “Silent Struggles, Shared Strengths,” participants emphasized the power of vulnerability and emotional openness in improving mental well-being. Poll results showed that financial worries (12%) and stress from expectations (10%) were the top challenges, followed by needing someone to truly listen (6%), feeling burnt out (4%), and balancing work and family life (4%). The session revealed that while individual struggles vary, shared empathy and openness create collective strength.

Community Reflections

Amina: “You need that one person physically to talk to.”
Uzo: “We navigate daily challenges, but hope keeps us going.”
Hafsat: “Hope is a powerful tool that helps me cope.”
Mary: “Prayer gives me peace knowing Someone above listens.”
Mfon: “Hope and unwavering faith God always comes through.”

Wellness Wednesday – “Intentional Acts of Renewal”

Participants explored small but powerful practices for self-renewal. The message encouraged everyone to pause, breathe, and refocus on their well-being.

Community Reflections

Uzo: *“Silence and time away from distractions help me cope.”*
Khalid: *“Wellness is about intentional small acts.”*
Mary: *“After prayers, I feel strong with God and family support.”*
Amina: *“The rosary gives me calmness, then I dance my worries away.”*
Micheal: *“A quiet walk refreshes my mind.”*

Thankful Thursday – “The Light of Gratitude”

Participants were invited to share one thing they were grateful for, reminding everyone that gratitude magnifies blessings and shifts perspective.

Community Reflections

Amina: *“I’m grateful for my friends and family.”*
Bassey: *“Even failures are worth thanking God for.”*
Uzo: *“I’m grateful for restored health and ICTMH.”*
Hafsat: *“A friend’s check-in message reminded me I’m not alone.”*
Mfon: *“I’m grateful for healing and God’s free oxygen!”*
Mary: *“Grateful for the air we breathe we overlook small miracles.”*
Henshaw: *“Grateful for life, favor, protection, and real friends.”*
Khalid: *“Gratitude helps us see blessings we often overlook.”*
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Fun Friday – “Laughter is Medicine”

Friday’s theme brought humor and joy. Participants completed the sentence “You know I need a break when...” a fun reminder that laughter relieves stress and recharges the mind.

Community Reflections

Mary: *“I try to unlock my house with my car key remote.”*
Uzo: *“I’m eating akara with a straw.”*
Micheal: *“I clap for NEPA when they take light like they scored a goal.”*
Hafsat: *“My brain starts buffering like bad Wi-Fi.”*
Amina: *“I pour vegetable oil into the kerosene gallon.”*
Effiong: *“I argue with my alarm clock about its commitment issues.”*
Mfon: *“I call my sister to ask where my phone is — while holding it*

Self-Care Saturday – “Rest is Wisdom”

Saturday emphasized that self-care is not selfish but necessary. Real-life examples from teachers, pastors, and mothers highlighted the importance of rest and replenishment.

Reflection Sunday – “Gratitude and Lessons Learned”

Sunday closed the week with quiet reflection. Participants shared what they were grateful for, their hardest moments, and lessons learned.

Conclusion

The Mental Health First Aid for Nigerian Pastors, Imams, and Teachers program was a transformative experience that blended faith, reflection, and practical mental health awareness. Participants learned to

Campus Wellness Hub!



Initiative for Cognitive Therapies and Mental Health (ICTMH)

Campus Wellness Hub Weekly Report

Date: September 29 – October 5, 2025

Platform: WhatsApp (Virtual)

Compiled by: Khalid Musa

Overview

This week’s activities under the Campus Wellness Hub continued in line with the three-month engagement plan aimed at boosting participation, awareness, and community involvement within the Hub. The posts were designed to foster reflection, promote mental health awareness, and encourage interaction among students.

Daily Highlights

Monday – Motivational Monday

Theme: “Navigating Peer Pressure and Social Media Anxiety”

The week began with a reminder for students to focus on self-worth and confidence rather than online validation. The post emphasized creating safe spaces, celebrating uniqueness, and choosing purpose over pressure.

Tuesday – Take-Charge Tuesday

Theme: “Resilience and Responsibility”
Students were encouraged to take small, intentional steps towards self-improvement, reflecting on Maya Angelou’s quote: “You may not control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them.”

Wednesday – Work-Smart Wednesday

Wednesday – Wellness Wednesday
Theme: “Building Balance Through Self-Care”
Focused on simple habits that nurture well-being — sleep, exercise, and prayer/reflection. The post emphasized that wellness doesn’t always require big steps; it starts with consistent, mindful routines.
Goal: Inspire practical daily actions for balance and mental clarity.

Thursday – Testimony Thursday

Theme: “Overcoming Exam Anxiety”
This post featured a reflective narrative on facing exam panic and finding confidence again. It encouraged others to share their experiences and offered a sense of community support.

Friday – Focus Friday

Theme: “Biggest Stress Poll”
A poll-style post was designed to engage students by asking: “What’s your biggest stress right now: Exams, Money, Relationships, or Lecturers?” This encouraged reflection on common student stressors and opened room for discussion.

Saturday – Self-Care Saturday

Theme: “Exam Struggles Edition”
The post emphasized humor as a form of self-care, encouraging students to take moments to laugh at their exam experiences and reminding them that “laughter, too, is therapy.”

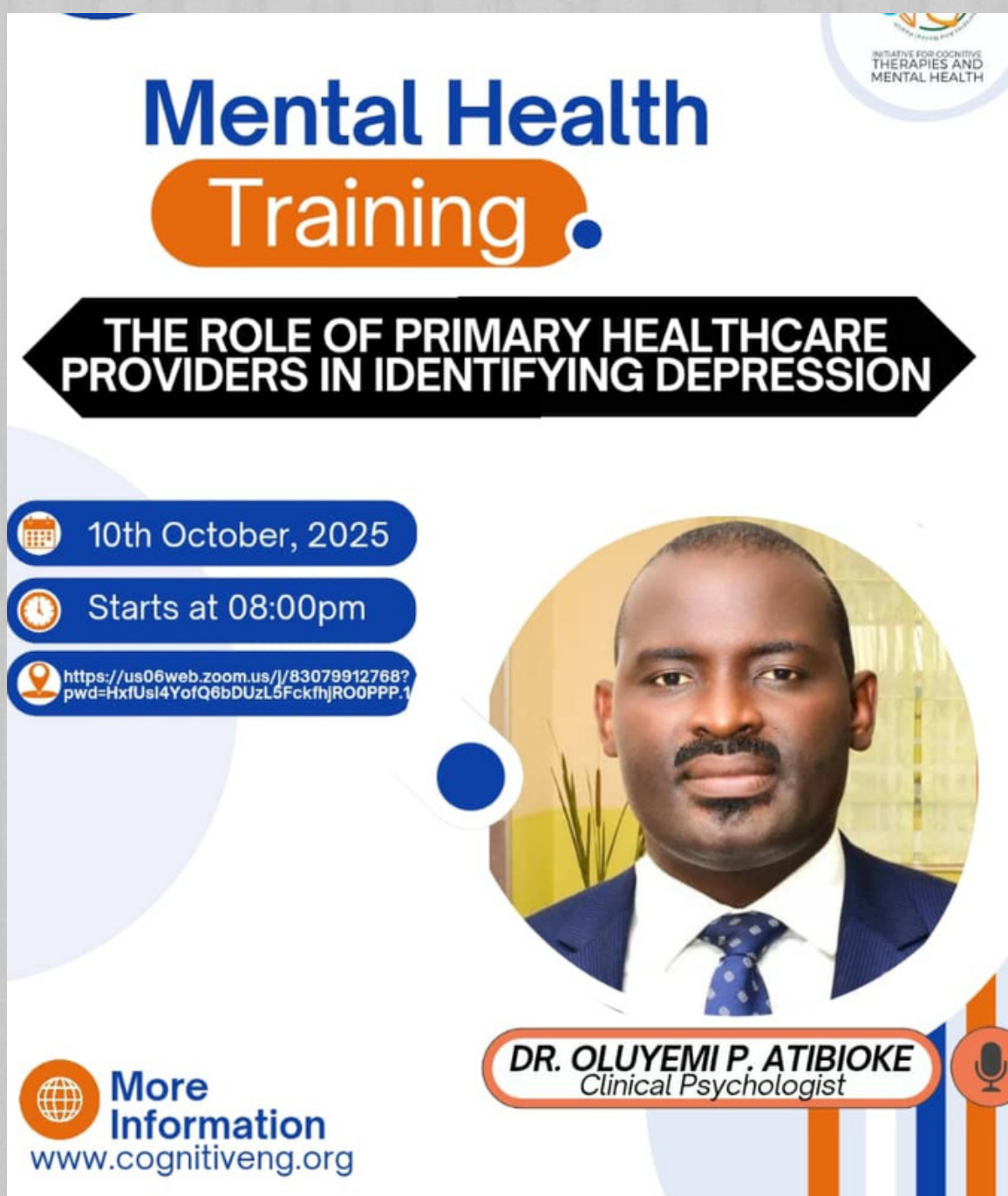
Sunday – Reflection Sunday

Theme: “Gratitude and Growth”
The week closed with a peaceful and reflective note, encouraging members to express gratitude for progress made and lessons learned, reinforcing positivity and mindfulness.

Progress Summary

All daily posts and flyers were successfully prepared and published according to the weekly plan.
Engagement improved slightly, with several students interacting through comments and feedback on posts.
Visual consistency and design quality were maintained across all days, in line with ICTMH’s professional image.

RESOURCE & ANNOUNCEMENTS



Mental Health Training

THE ROLE OF PRIMARY HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS IN IDENTIFYING DEPRESSION

10th October, 2025

Starts at 08:00pm

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83079912768?pwd=HxflUsl4YofQ6bDUzL5FckfhjRO0PPP.1>

DR. OLUYEMI P. ATIBIOKE
Clinical Psychologist

More Information
www.cognitiveng.org

INSTITUTE FOR COGNITIVE THERAPIES AND MENTAL HEALTH

Call for Journal Articles - ICTMH

ICTMH 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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