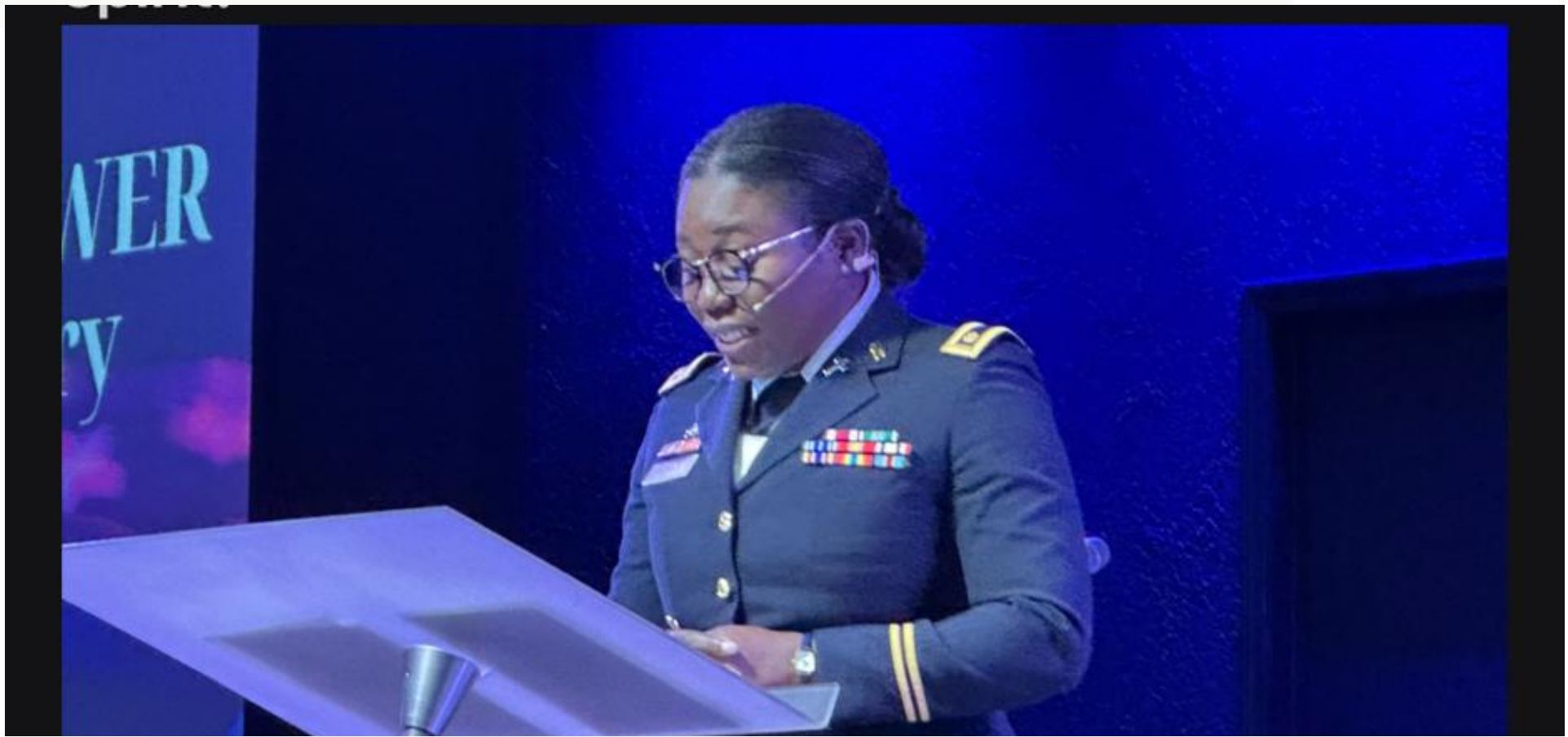




WEEKLY

Newsletter



Editorial Note

Welcome to this edition of our newsletter, where we reflect on resilience, hope, and the power of support, both spiritual and emotional. This issue celebrates Veterans Day at Solid Rock Family Church, Jefferson City, Missouri, with a sermon by Dr. Stephanie Okolo, Chaplain with the US Army and President of ICTMH, centered on the theme: **Renewal, Strength, and Hope Beyond the Battle**. Drawing from Romans 8:11, Dr. Okolo reminded us that life's battles, spiritual, emotional, or physical, need not leave us defeated.

Beyond spiritual reflection, this week's newsletter shines a light on ICTMH's recent initiatives in mental health and wellness. Both *Our Mental Health Wellness* and *Friday's Weekly Intensive Training on Mental Health* 'Mata' explored **The Role of Family Support in Recovery**. Additionally, the Campus Hub Wellness Week emphasized balance, rest, and mindfulness.

Through these programs, ICTMH continues to provide safe spaces for reflection, personal growth, and meaningful connection. Participants engaged in practical exercises, shared personal stories, and explored culturally relevant strategies for emotional resilience, reminding us that recovery and wellness are ongoing, communal journeys.

We are grateful to all supporters, especially Bishop David & Hope Reynolds, and the Solid Rock Family, whose contributions enable ICTMH to continue promoting mental health awareness, healing, and hope.

As you read through this issue, may you find encouragement, insight, and inspiration to embrace life's battles with courage, faith, and renewed strength.

Ese Ogheneovo
for ICTMH

Weekly Webinar Training

Date: November, 7th, 2025

Venue: Virtual

A Summary of **Rev. Fr. Dr Okoli Paul's** (Clinical Psychologist) Session on: The Role of Family Support in Recovery

Introduction

This week's *Friday Training on 'Mental Mata'* brought together participants from diverse backgrounds to explore mental health in practical and interactive ways. The focus was on understanding mental wellness holistically, sharing experiences, and learning actionable strategies. Both plenary sessions and breakouts created a vibrant space for discussion, skill-building, and reflection.

Understanding Mental Health Holistically:

- Mental health is not just the absence of illness; it encompasses emotional, psychological, and social well-being.
- Participants explored how lifestyle, relationships, and community influence mental wellness.
- Emphasis was placed on proactive self-care and preventive strategies.

Stress Management Techniques:

- Practical tools included breathing exercises, guided meditation, and journaling.
- Participants practiced mindfulness exercises to improve focus and reduce anxiety.
- Tips for integrating daily stress management routines at home, school, and work were shared.



Effective Communication & Peer Support:

- Active listening, empathy, and non-judgmental support were highlighted as core skills.
- Role-playing exercises allowed participants to practice responding to stress, conflict, or emotional challenges in others.
- Discussion on building supportive networks that encourage openness and trust.



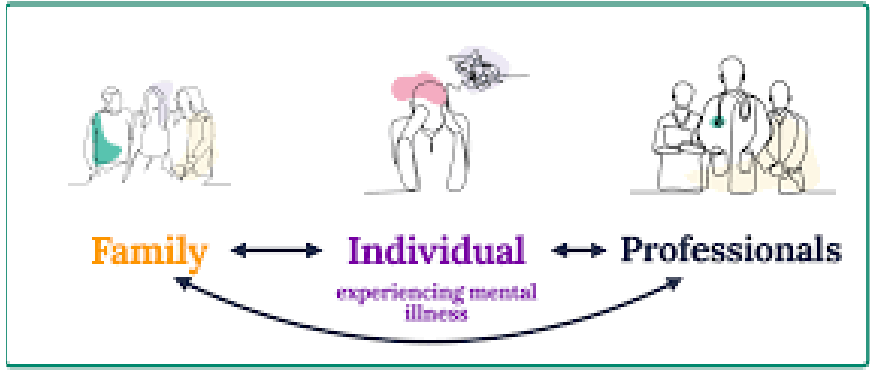
Cultural Relevance in Mental Health Interventions:

- Dr. Chukwu (2023) emphasized that interventions are most effective when adapted to cultural and social contexts.
- Strategies included understanding local beliefs about mental health and tailoring communication approaches.
- Participants explored ways to engage communities respectfully while promoting mental wellness.

Overcoming Stigma & Promoting Inclusion:

- Focus on identifying common misconceptions about mental health and how to address them.
- Group discussions on creating safe spaces in schools, workplaces, and homes.
- Sharing experiences of overcoming stigma to inspire collective action.

Care team



Key Takeaways:

- Mental wellness is an ongoing journey; even small steps make a difference.
- Hands-on exercises help make concepts stick and improve practical application.
- Peer learning fosters understanding, connection, and community support.
- Interventions work best when culturally adapted.
- Mental health practices can be integrated into daily routines, schools, and workplaces.



Key Quotes

1. *“Mental health is more than just surviving; it’s about thriving.”* – Participant
2. *“I loved how we could try exercises in real time—it made the concepts stick.”* – Participant
3. *“Hearing how others navigate similar challenges was eye-opening.”* – Participant
4. *“Contextual relevance is key to effective mental health strategies.”* – Dr. Chukwu (2023)
5. *“Listening is sometimes the best therapy we can offer.”* –unanimous



Breakout sessions highlighted practical ways families can aid mental health recovery:

- Manage Stress: Practice relaxation techniques to model calm and create a safe home environment.
- Communicate Empathetically: Listen without judgment and validate emotions to build trust.
- Reduce Stigma: Show acceptance and compassion to combat shame and isolation.
- Embed Wellness in Daily Life: Encourage healthy routines and participation in supportive community or faith activities.

Closing Note:

The session left participants motivated, reflective, and equipped to apply these strategies in their personal and professional lives. The combination of practical exercises, peer learning, & evidence-based insights made this truly valuable.

Renewal, Strength, and Hope Beyond the Battle



Dr. Stephanie Okolo’s Veterans Day Message at Solid Rock Family Church, Jefferson City, Missouri

Theme: Renewal, Strength, and Hope Beyond the Battle

Date: November 11, 2025

Delivered by: Dr. Stephanie Okolo, Chaplain with the US Army and President, Initiative for Cognitive and Mental Health (ICTMH)

Host: Bishop David & Hope Reynolds

Scripture Reflection

“And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of His Spirit who lives in you.” – Romans 8:11

Overview

Dr. Stephanie Okolo’s Veterans Day sermon was a heartfelt reminder that life’s battles, spiritual, emotional, or physical, can leave us feeling exhausted and overwhelmed. Drawing from Romans 8:11, she encouraged the congregation to embrace God’s resurrection power, which revitalizes the weary and brings hope beyond life’s challenges. The sermon honored veterans’ sacrifices while also prompting reflection on the battles we face daily.

Reflection Questions

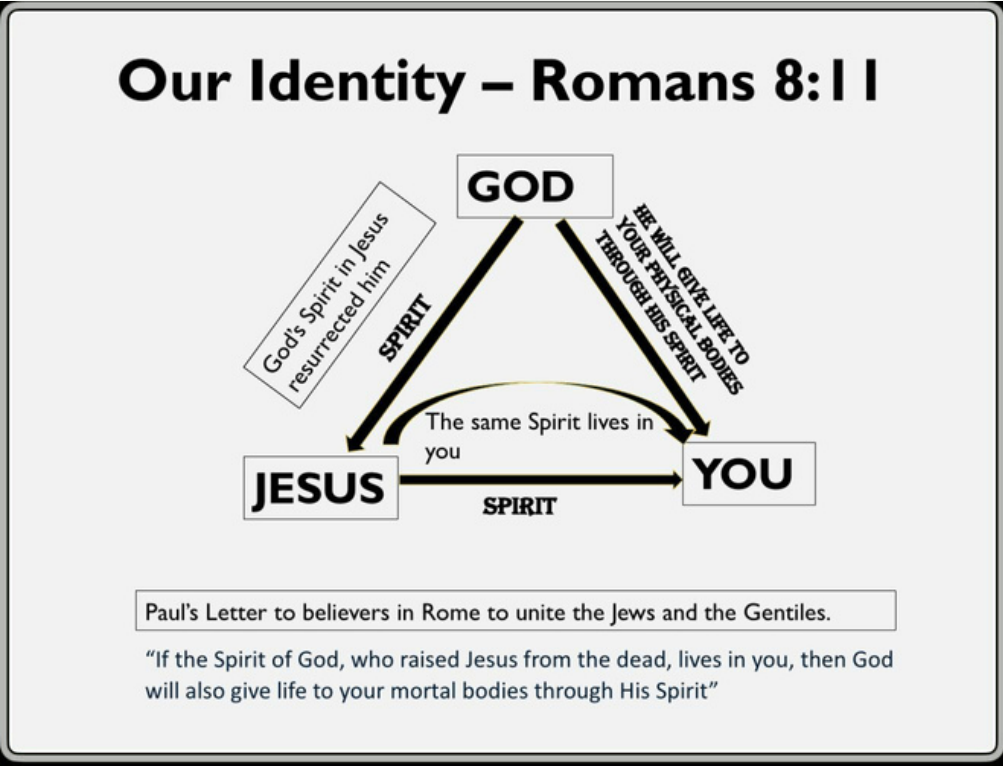
- *What if the same power that revives nature each morning can also restore your hope?*
- *What if renewal is not an event but a daily experience waiting to unfold within you?*
- *What if your scars are not signs of defeat but testimonies of endurance and growth?*

Honoring the Veterans

- Veterans serve as a symbol of courage, dedication, and resilience.
- Dr. Okolo highlighted the importance of gratitude and recognition for their sacrifices.
- She drew parallels between the discipline and commitment of veterans and the spiritual perseverance required in life.

Spiritual Renewal and Strength

- Life’s struggles can leave believers feeling drained, but God’s Spirit provides renewal.
- Through faith and prayer, believers can experience emotional, mental, and spiritual restoration.
- Emphasis was placed on daily reliance on God’s power to overcome discouragement and fatigue.



Spiritual Renewal and Strength

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Hope Beyond the Battle

Dr. Okolo encouraged attendees to focus on hope, even when circumstances seem overwhelming. True hope stems from trusting God’s promises and the resurrection power available to all believers. The message was clear: every trial is an opportunity for God’s power to manifest.

Key Quotes from Dr. Stephanie Okolo

- “True strength is not in never falling, but in rising each time with God’s Spirit.”
- “Veterans remind us that sacrifice and courage pave the way for freedom and hope.”
- “God’s resurrection power is the ultimate renewal for our battle-weary souls.”
- “Faith gives life when circumstances try to steal it.”
- “Even in exhaustion, God’s Spirit empowers us to stand firm and move forward.”

Donations and Acknowledgment

We are grateful to everyone who has generously contributed to **ICTMH**. Your support enables us to continue our mission and make a meaningful impact on mental health initiatives. Special thanks to Bishop David & Hope Reynolds for their generous donation. ICTMH is grateful to the Solid Rock Family, Jefferson City, Missouri, for their kind contribution. We similarly wish to thank to Dr. Maureen, Chaplain Akeruwe, and Dr. David Thompson, every gift, no matter the size, is a blessing.



Reflection and Closing Note

Veterans Day at Solid Rock Family Church was more than a commemoration, it was a spiritual experience connecting faith, resilience, and gratitude. As we honor veterans and their sacrifices, we are reminded of the spiritual battles we face and the hope available through God’s resurrection power. “Dr. Okolo’s message inspires us to rise, persevere, and live empowered lives, a message that should resonate beyond the church walls, reaching our homes, workplaces, and communities.”



Weekly WhatsApp Interactive Session

ICTMH Mental Health Week Report

Theme: *‘The Role of Family Support in Recovery’*

Date: 3rd – 9th November 2025

compiled by: Dr. Elizabeth Idowu

Overview

The Initiative for Cognitive Therapies and Mental Health (ICTMH) hosted its Mental Health Wellness Week from November 3rd to 9th, exploring “The Role of Family Support in Recovery.” The week-long virtual engagement created a safe, supportive, and emotionally uplifting space for participants to reflect on how family, both biological and chosen, contributes to healing and resilience.

Through storytelling, motivational prompts, polls, gratitude reflections, and interactive discussions, the program emphasized the power of empathy, listening, and connection in mental health recovery. Participants shared personal stories that celebrated family bonds, highlighted the importance of emotional presence, and encouraged balance between caring for others and self-care.

Daily Highlights

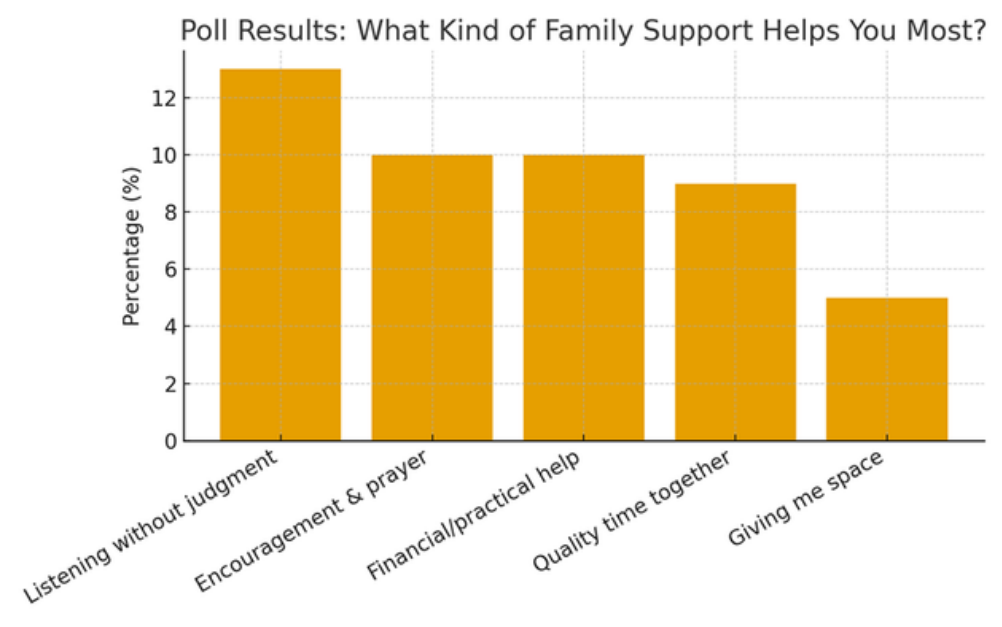
Motivational Monday – “One Step at a Time”

The week opened with a reflection on how family support can serve as the backbone of emotional recovery. Through Ada’s story, participants explored how consistent, gentle presence from loved ones can rekindle hope and self-worth during life’s darkest moments.

Prompt: *Who has been your greatest support in tough times, and how did it help your recovery?*

Talk-It-Out Tuesday – “Your Voice Matters”

The community engaged in a heartfelt poll discussing what type of family support means most during recovery. The poll results are represented in the chart below:



INTERPRETATION

- Listening without judgment (13%) – This is the most valued form of family support. It shows that being heard empathetically, without criticism or blame, is what most people find most helpful.*
- Encouragement & prayer (10%) and Financial/practical help (10%) – These two are equally important to respondents. They indicate that emotional and spiritual support, as well as tangible help, play significant roles in coping and wellness.*
- Quality time together (9%) – Spending time with loved ones also matters, but slightly less than direct listening or encouragement.*
- Giving me space (5%) – This is the least preferred form of support. It suggests that while some appreciate independence, most people prefer active presence and engagement from their families during challenging times.*

Wellness Wednesday – “Nurturing the Inner Child”

Participants reflected on the power of empathy and nonjudgmental listening. The discussion emphasized that true wellness begins when individuals feel seen, heard, and accepted the foundation of all healing relationships.



Thankful Thursday – “Gratitude Calms the Mind”

The focus was on expressing gratitude to loved ones who have shown unwavering support. Stories like Bassey and his sister Eka illustrated how consistent love and presence nurture recovery more than grand gestures. Participants shared heartfelt thank-you messages to their own “Ekas.”



Fun Friday – “Laughter as Therapy”

Members shared humorous family memories and uplifting moments that brought smiles during difficult times. The day underscored that joy and laughter are essential components of emotional healing and family resilience.

Self-Care Saturday – “Rest Before You Break”

Participants explored the delicate balance between caring for others and self-care. Nkechi’s story illustrated how caregivers, too, need rest and renewal. The message: You can’t pour from an empty cup.

Key reminders included:

- *Rest without guilt.*
- *Say “no” when you need space.*
- *Prioritize activities that restore peace and calm.*

Reflection Sunday – “Faith and Wisdom Work Together”

The week concluded with Uche’s inspiring story—a reminder that faith, family love, and persistence can reignite the will to live. Reflection Sunday blended gratitude with faith-based encouragement, reinforcing the message that healing happens when love is consistent.

Key Themes Across the Week

- *The healing power of presence and empathy*
- *Gratitude as a mental wellness tool*
- *The balance between family support and self-care*
- *The role of laughter and faith in emotional recovery*

Conclusion

Mental Health Wellness Week fostered reflection, gratitude, and awareness, strengthening family-based recovery. ICTMH continues promoting emotional wellness and resilient, compassionate communities.

Campus Wellness Hub!



Initiative for Cognitive Therapies and Mental Health (ICTMH)

Campus Wellness Hub Weekly Report

Date: 3rd October – 9th of October, 2025

Platform: WhatsApp (Virtual)

Compiled by: Khalid Musa

Overview

This week’s focus at the Campus Wellness Hub was centered on balance, rest, and gratitude. Each day’s post encouraged mindfulness, healthy habits, and personal reflection, while also maintaining active engagement within the Hub community. Participation remained consistent, with members sharing thoughts, experiences, and reflections that built connection and support across the group. Weekly Highlights

Weekly Highlights

Monday – Mindful Monday

Theme: Routine Reduces Anxiety

The week began with a calm reminder on the power of routines in creating stability. Members shared habits that help them stay grounded when life feels overwhelming.

Engagement: Active discussion as several members mentioned journaling, prayer, and daily planning as ways they maintain calm.

Tuesday – Take Charge Tuesday

Theme: Finding Calm Through Structure

Tuesday’s post offered practical tips on building a daily routine for balance – planning, starting small, and staying consistent.

Engagement: Members identified small personal habits they plan to strengthen.

Incentive Update:

The October Incentive Program winner was finalized, and the most engaging member was given their prize.

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Wednesday – Wellness Wednesday

Theme: Sleep Hygiene for Students

This post highlighted how proper rest improves focus and emotional balance. Members responded positively, sharing their sleep challenges and steps they plan to take to improve rest habits.

Engagement: High; relatable topic with useful practical tips

Thursday – Thrive Thursday

Theme: Balancing Study and Rest

The post encouraged students to view rest as an essential part of growth, not laziness. It reminded members that a balanced mind sustains long-term success.

Engagement: Moderate; members reflected on how they schedule downtime and study breaks.

Friday – Feel-Good Friday

Theme: Celebrate Small Wins

The group was encouraged to acknowledge small moments of success or gratitude from the week.

Engagement: Steady; members shared wins ranging from completing tasks to resting intentionally.

Saturday – Self-Care Saturday

Theme: Rest Matters

This post focused on unwinding after a long week and prioritizing peace and quiet moments.

Engagement: Members shared ways they recharge – prayer, solitude, and journaling were most common.

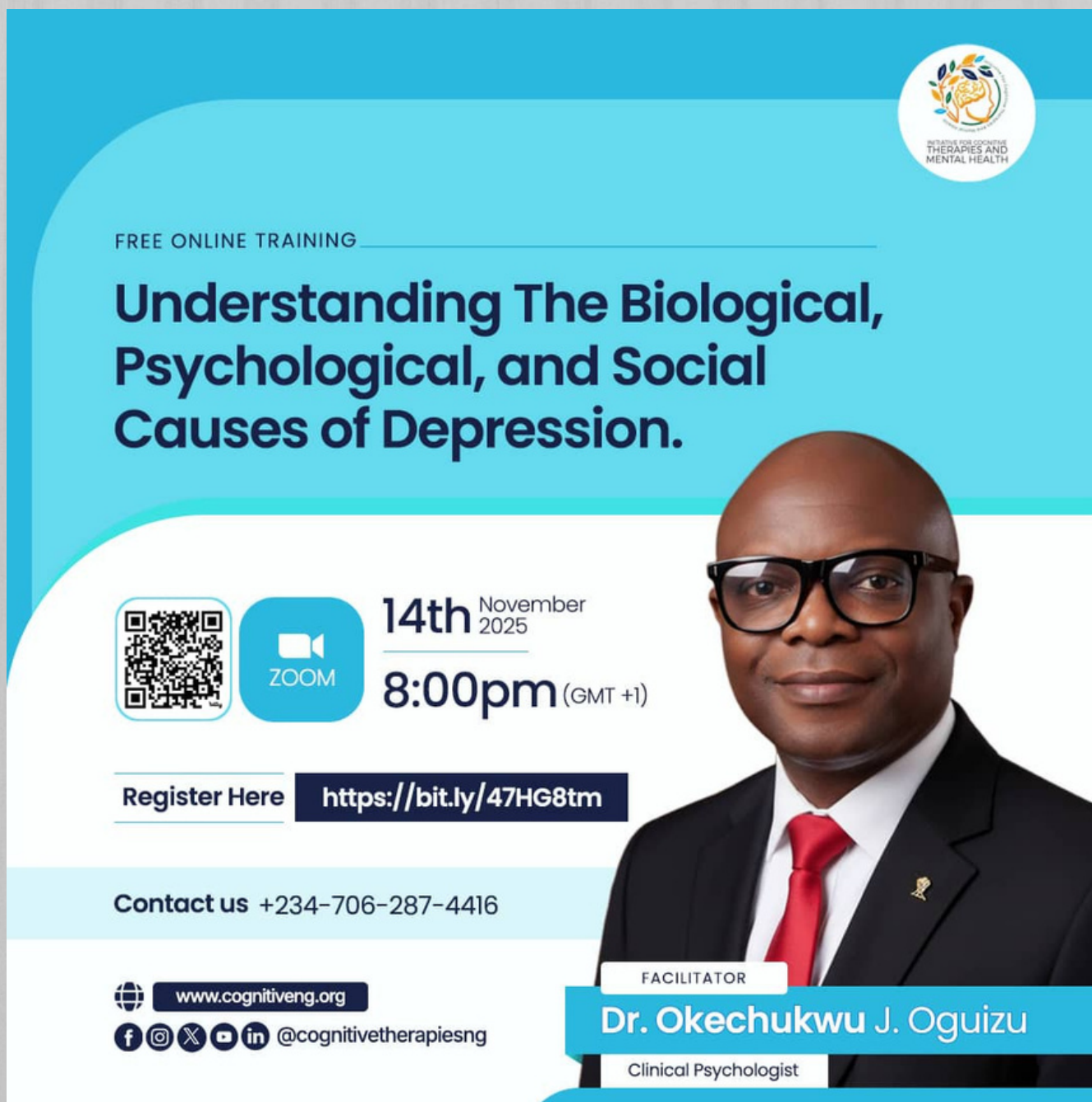
Sunday – Reflection Sunday

Theme: Grateful for the Journey

The week ended with reflection and gratitude, reminding members that growth comes even through challenges.

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RESOURCE & ANNOUNCEMENTS



FREE ONLINE TRAINING

Understanding The Biological, Psychological, and Social Causes of Depression.

  **14th** November 2025
8:00pm (GMT +1)

[Register Here](#) <https://bit.ly/47HG8tm>

Contact us +234-706-287-4416

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FACILITATOR
Dr. Okechukwu J. Oguizu
Clinical Psychologist

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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