



April 2025



# KMA PHYSICIAN WELLBEING COMMITTEE

Mental Health Webinar Series

Inaugural Newsletter

[www.kma.co.ke](http://www.kma.co.ke)



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# Prioritizing Physician's Mental Health



**Dr. Ayda L Wanjiku**

KMA Physician Wellbeing Convener

It is with profound purpose, unwavering commitment and hearts brimming with joy that we present to you our inaugural newsletter on the Mental Health Webinar Series, spanning from October to December 2024. This initiative aligned seamlessly with the World Health Organization's 2024 theme: Prioritizing Mental Health at the Workplace.

In the demanding realm of healthcare, where the sanctity of life is our daily charge, the mental well-being of our physicians is paramount. Yet, the silent burdens borne by our colleagues often remain unspoken, leading to burnout, diminished morale, and, tragically, the erosion of the very essence that drives our noble profession.

Our committee's vision is clear: To cultivate a healthcare environment in Kenya where mental health is not a peripheral concern but a central pillar. We aspire to foster a culture where seeking psychological support is a testament to strength and not a stigma.



The mission of the concluded Mental Health Webinar Series was to illuminate the challenges, share evidence-based strategies, and build a resilient community that prioritizes mental well-being through collaborative dialogue, expert insights, and shared experiences. We aimed to equip our physicians with the necessary tools to navigate the complexities of their roles while maintaining their mental health.

Our goals in executing these series of webinars were threefold:

- 1. Awareness:** To elevate the discourse on mental health within the medical fraternity, breaking down barriers of silence and bursting myths and misconceptions around Mental Health.
- 2. Education:** To provide actionable knowledge and resources that empower physicians to recognize, address, and manage mental health challenges.
- 3. Advocacy:** To influence policy and institutional practices that support mental well-being, ensuring that our healthcare systems are as compassionate towards their caregivers as they are towards patients.

Let this series be a clarion call to action – A commitment that the Kenya Medical Association stands resolute in championing the welfare of its members. Together, let us forge a future where our physicians thrive, not just in their professional capacities but in their holistic well-being.

Thank you.

***Dr Ayda L. Wanjiku***  
***Convener, Physician Well-being Committee***  
***Kenya Medical Association***

# Introduction

The **Kenya Medical Association** is proud to announce the successful conclusion of its **Physician Well-being Committee Mental Health Webinar Series**, held in the months of October, November and December 2024, a vital initiative aimed at addressing the mental health challenges that healthcare professionals face.

This series was designed as a continuation of our observance of **World Mental Health Day** marked on 10th October 2024, highlighting the crucial need for open conversations and proactive interventions in the realm of mental health, particularly within the medical community.

With the pressures and demands of the healthcare profession, physicians often put their own well-being on the back burner, leading to significant mental and emotional strain.

The Physician Well-being Committee recognizes that prioritizing the mental health of our doctors is not just a necessity, but a vital component in ensuring the quality of care provided to patients. This series was created with the vision of breaking the stigma surrounding mental health, offering support, providing evidence-based strategies for managing stress, and building a culture of resilience and support among healthcare workers.

Through these webinars, we brought together expert speakers, mental health professionals, and healthcare leaders who shared valuable insights, coping mechanisms, and resources for improving mental health. This initiative is not just a one-time event but a step toward fostering a sustainable and empowered healthcare workforce that values both physical and mental health equally. It is a reminder that the well-being of those who care for others is of utmost importance, and we must continue to invest in programs that encourage healing, balance, and growth.

As a committee, we are committed to continuing this important dialogue and to expanding our efforts to promote the well-being of every physician in Kenya, ensuring they are well-equipped to provide the highest level of care to their patients while also taking care of themselves.

The sessions highlighted:



# Curating a Culture of Consistent Mental Health Support



KMA Physician Well-Being Committee Webinar

## CURATING A CULTURE OF A CONSISTENT MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT AT THE WORKPLACE

WED  
02 OCT 2024

FROM 07:00 PM EAT

**speaker**  
DR. FLORENCE JAGUGA  
Consultant Psychiatrist

**moderator**  
DR. JOAN KYALO KAILITI  
Career Lead  
KMA Young Doctors Network

Zoom

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- Mental health in healthcare settings must be institutionalized rather than left to individual responsibility.
- Common workplace stressors, including bullying and burnout, should be addressed through leadership intervention, supportive policies, and cultural shifts.
- Self-care is a personal responsibility that cannot be outsourced—it requires active participation in mental wellness practices

# Addressing Bullying and Toxic Work Environments



KMA Physician Well-Being Committee Webinar

## ADDRESSING BULLYING & TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENTS

WED  
09 OCT 2024

FROM 07:00 PM EAT

**speaker**  
KIMANI GITHONGO  
Chair, Counselors and Psychologists Society of Kenya (CPS-K)

**speaker**  
GATHONI MBUCUA  
Snr. Clinical Psychologist & Digital Manager - Chiromo Hospital group | Psychologist Incharge- AAR Hospital

**moderator**  
DR. AYDA L. WANJIKU  
KMA Physician Well-being Committee Convenor

Zoom

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- Workplace bullying can take subtle forms, such as exclusion, passive-aggressive behavior, and micromanagement, leading to long-term psychological distress.
- Organizations must establish clear reporting mechanisms, anti-bullying policies, and leadership accountability to prevent and address toxic work environments.

# The Nexus of Work Culture and Mental Health



- Achieving a mentally healthy workplace requires a culture that prioritizes support, communication, and recognition.
- A toxic work environment leads to burnout, low productivity, and high staff turnover, while a supportive culture fosters resilience and efficiency.
- Organizations must integrate employee assistance programs and mental health policies to create a sustainable and healthy work environment.

# The Role of Leadership in Promoting Mental Health at the Workplace.



- Leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping workplace mental health culture.
- Encouraging open dialogue, providing mental health resources, and implementing well-being programs can improve employee morale and productivity.
- Healthcare professionals, regardless of rank, can advocate for workplace mental health by initiating conversations and proposing institutional support systems.



# Physician Heal Thyself: Making Mental Health a Priority

KMA Physician Well-Being Committee Webinar

## PHYSICIAN HEAL THYSELF; MAKING MENTAL HEALTH A PRIORITY

WED  
6TH NOV 2024  
FROM 07:00 PM EAT

**speaker**  
DR. CAROLINE VUNDI  
Principal Corporate Psychiatrist  
Chiromo Hospital Group

**moderator**  
DR. RUBY OSWERE  
KMA YDN Pre-Internship  
Conference Chair 2024

zoom

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- Physicians often neglect their own mental well-being due to stigma and the fear of appearing weak.
- Structural changes in medical training and practice are necessary to integrate mental health support for healthcare workers.
- Peer support and creating safe spaces for open discussions can reduce stigma and encourage mental wellness.

# Substance Use Disorders and Workplace Mental Health

KMA Physician Well-Being Committee Webinar

## SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS AND WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH

WED  
13TH NOV 2024  
FROM 07:00 PM EAT

**speaker**  
DR. CATHERINE SYENGO MUTISYA  
Consultant Psychiatrist

**moderator**  
DR. MARIE-CLAIRE WANGARI  
KMA Human Rights  
Committee Member

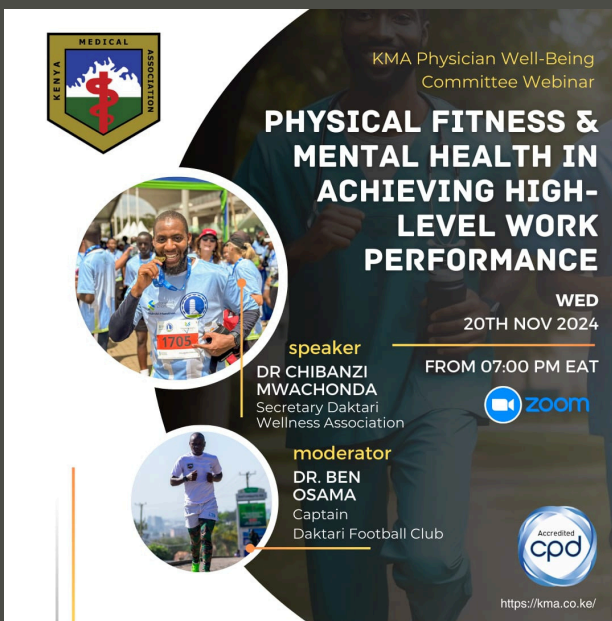
zoom

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- Substance use among healthcare workers is often normalized, leading to delayed intervention and increased risk of addiction.
- Organizations should implement early intervention strategies, workplace education, and confidential support systems to assist professionals dealing with substance use challenges.

# Physical Fitness & Mental Health in Achieving High-Level Work Performance



KMA Physician Well-Being Committee Webinar

**PHYSICAL FITNESS & MENTAL HEALTH IN ACHIEVING HIGH-LEVEL WORK PERFORMANCE**

WED  
20TH NOV 2024

**speaker**  
DR CHIBANZI MWACHONDA  
Secretary Dakitari Wellness Association

**moderator**  
DR. BEN OSAMA  
Captain  
Daktari Football Club

FROM 07:00 PM EAT

zoom

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- Regular exercise contributes to better sleep, stress reduction, and cognitive sharpness, which are crucial for high work performance.
- A minimum of 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week improves energy levels, collaboration, and problem-solving skills.

# Recognizing and Addressing Mental Health Challenges in Healthcare Professionals



KMA Physician Well-Being Committee Webinar

**RECOGNIZING AND ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA AMONGST MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS**

WED  
27TH NOV 2024

**speaker**  
DR. LINDA NYAMUTE  
Consultant Psychiatrist  
Secretary Kenya Psychiatric Association

**moderator**  
DR. CHEPTOO KOGO  
Medical Officer, Physician Well Being and Reproductive Health Committee Member, Mental Health and SRH advocate

FROM 07:00 PM EAT

zoom

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- Mental health stigma remains a significant barrier to healthcare workers seeking help.
- Workplace policies should ensure confidentiality, access to therapy, and structured mental health programs to address burnout and emotional distress.
- Cognitive restructuring, emotional intelligence, and self-awareness help professionals reframe negative thought patterns and build resilience.



# Cognitive Restructuring: Be Kind to your mind



KMA Physician Well-Being Committee Webinar

## COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING; BE KIND TO YOUR MIND

WED  
4TH DEC 2024

**speaker**  
GRACE KARIUKI  
Marriage & Family Therapist

**moderator**  
DR. AYDA L. WANJIKU  
KMA Physician Well-being Committee Convenor

FROM 07:00 PM EAT

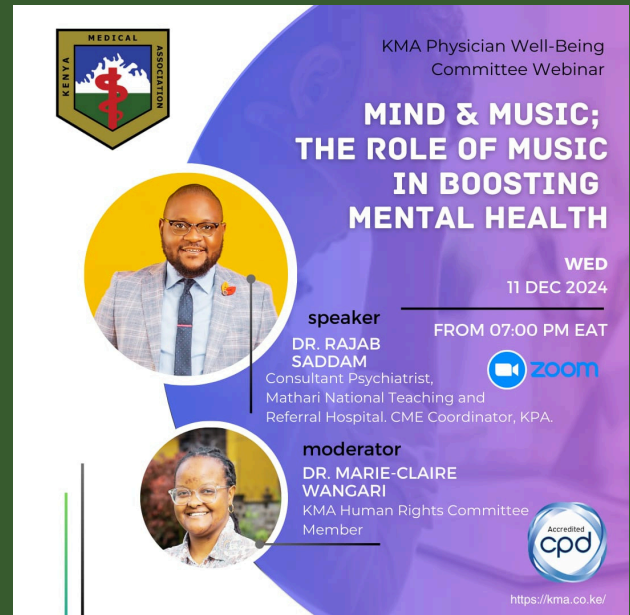
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- Cognitive Restructuring is vital in;- Identifying distressing situations, recognizing emotional responses, challenging negative thoughts, and reframing them objectively.
- Unhealthy thinking contributes to emotional distress, while a growth mindset enhances resilience.
- A growth mindset encourages learning from challenges and failures, whereas a fixed mindset fosters self-limiting beliefs and anxiety.
- Emotional Intelligence & Self-Awareness is essential for mental well-being, fostering better coping mechanisms and relationships.
- Techniques to reshape thought patterns, enhance adaptability, and promote overall mental wellness.

# Mind and Music: The Role of Music in Boosting Mental Health



KMA Physician Well-Being Committee Webinar

## MIND & MUSIC; THE ROLE OF MUSIC IN BOOSTING MENTAL HEALTH

WED  
11 DEC 2024

**speaker**  
DR. RAJAB SADDAM  
Consultant Psychiatrist,  
Mathari National Teaching and Referral Hospital. CME Coordinator, KPA.

**moderator**  
DR. MARIE-CLAIRE WANGARI  
KMA Human Rights Committee Member

FROM 07:00 PM EAT

zoom

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- Music is a powerful tool for reducing stress, enhancing emotional regulation, and improving cognitive function.
- Integrating music into daily routines and therapy can help healthcare workers cope with stress, anxiety, and neurodegenerative conditions.
- Cultural considerations must be factored into music therapy for its effectiveness in different settings.



# Conclusion : A Call to Action.

This transformative Mental Health Webinar Series underscored the urgent and ongoing need for healthcare institutions to elevate mental health as a core organizational priority. The discussions and expert insights revealed that true progress begins with a deliberate shift—one that sees mental well-being not as an optional add-on, but as an essential pillar for sustainable healthcare delivery.

By fostering a culture of compassion, dismantling the deep-rooted stigma around mental illness, and implementing structured physician well-being programs, our medical community can experience improved resilience, enhanced job satisfaction, and a renewed sense of purpose. These outcomes are not only beneficial to individual healthcare practitioners but also to the quality of care we provide to the public.

Through this series, attendees were equipped with curated and credible mental health resources—articles, toolkits, and actionable expert strategies—designed specifically for the medical workforce navigating the unique pressures of the profession.

As we draw this series to a close, we extend a rallying call to action:

- 1. To healthcare employers and healthcare institutions:** Let us invest in safe, inclusive, and mentally nourishing work environments that prioritize the people behind the white coats.
- 2. To Policymakers:** The time is now to shape a policy that supports mental health infrastructure and protects the emotional wellness of those we rely on most—our healthcare providers.
- 3. To Program Implementers:** Translate vision into action by integrating mental wellness strategies across all levels of the healthcare system.
- 4. To our fellow physicians:** Advocate boldly, care deeply—for yourselves and for each other. Be the change you want to see in a system that is only as healthy as its caregivers.

The Kenya Medical Association remains steadfast in its commitment to advancing the conversation and action around physician well-being. Together, we can build a medical ecosystem where mental health is nurtured, supported, and unapologetically prioritized.



# Host



# Partners



**KENYA PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION**  
*No Health without Mental Health*



**Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital**



**KENYA COUNSELLING AND  
PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION**





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