



MLC × CHELD

Mental Health Awareness Outreach Report



Date: Friday, 30th May 2025

Location: University of Ilorin (Unilorin) Main Campus

Theme: Mental Health: A Right Not A Privilege

Organizers: Medical Law Club (MLC), University of Ilorin

Partner Organization: Centre for Health Ethics Law and Development (CHELD)

Executive Summary

On Friday, May 30th, 2025, the Medical Law Club (MLC) in collaboration with CHELD conducted a mental health awareness outreach in celebration of World Mental Health Awareness Month and European Mental Health Week. The outreach, which took place across the University of Ilorin campus, featured an awareness walk, interactive discussions, educational engagements, and direct referrals to the Centre for Health Ethics Law and Development (CHELD) and the Unilorin Counselling and Human Development Centre (UCHDC). Students across various faculties were interviewed and sensitized, with around 30 volunteers spearheading the initiative.

The outreach aimed to humanize conversations around mental health, reduce stigma, raise awareness, and educate students on available mental health support structures. Feedback indicated that the outreach was impactful, unique, and well-received—especially for being peer-led rather than staff-driven. Recommendations for future improvement include stronger collaborations, improved visibility, and expanded participation.

Introduction

Mental health remains a complex and deeply personal issue—one that affects nearly every aspect of student life, from academic performance to social relationships and overall well-being. In many academic environments, however, conversations around mental health are often sidelined or reduced to surface-level awareness. For students in particular, the challenges of navigating young adulthood, academic pressure, and uncertain futures are compounded by cultural stigmas and a lack of safe spaces to speak openly about mental struggles.

Against this backdrop, the Medical Law Club (MLC) sought to create a different kind of space—one where students could talk, listen, and learn without judgment. This outreach was more than a campaign; it was a student-led initiative designed to humanize mental health conversations and bring them directly into the heart of campus life. The goal was not just to spread information, but to spark honest dialogue, challenge misconceptions, and affirm that mental health is just as real and valid as physical health.

Through simple but intentional acts—carrying conversation-starting signs, asking meaningful questions, and offering resources—our team attempted to bridge the gap between silence and

support. And in doing so, we gained a better understanding of how students perceive mental health, what barriers they face, and how we, as a community, can better support one another.

Objectives

- Increase awareness and understanding of mental health among students.
- Identify students' perceptions, experiences, and challenges with mental health.
- Reduce stigma by promoting open conversations.
- Encourage help-seeking behavior through referrals to CHELD and UCHDC.

Methodology and Activities

Team Composition:

30 team members from various faculties (MLC members & Volunteers) .

Key Activities:

- Awareness walk around campus, holding placards with thought-provoking mental health messages.
- Verbal surveys conducted with 59 students across different faculties.
- Distribution of informative flyers on mental health.
- One-on-one sensitization and educational conversations.
- Short informative talks delivered during outreach.
- Referrals to CHELD and the UCHDC for mental health support.



Style of Engagement

The outreach team was intentional about fostering a relaxed, peer-to-peer atmosphere to reduce anxiety around mental health conversations. Engagement began at the Faculty of Law and gradually moved to high-traffic, social areas across the campus, including the Faculty of Arts pavilion, the main walkway, motion ground, and the motor park — all common student gathering points. These locations provided an ideal setting for casual but meaningful interactions.

To ensure comfort, team members avoided interrupting students who appeared busy or were on their way to classes. If in doubt, they politely asked if the student had five minutes to spare. Those who were seated, relaxed, or showed interest in the cardboard messages were naturally more open, and team members were trained to spot these cues.

Conversations followed a thoughtful structure. After a warm greeting, the outreach purpose was clearly stated, followed by brief introductions to the Medical Law Club (MLC) and our partner CHELD. From there, survey questions were posed in a friendly, conversational tone. Responses often led to short educational moments where team members addressed misconceptions and guided students toward healthier mental health perspectives.



Language and tone were intentionally peer-level — simple, engaging, and often laced with humor or slang to make interactions relatable. Rather than presenting information in a formal or lecture-like manner, the team prioritized empathy and authenticity. This made students more receptive and encouraged honest dialogue.

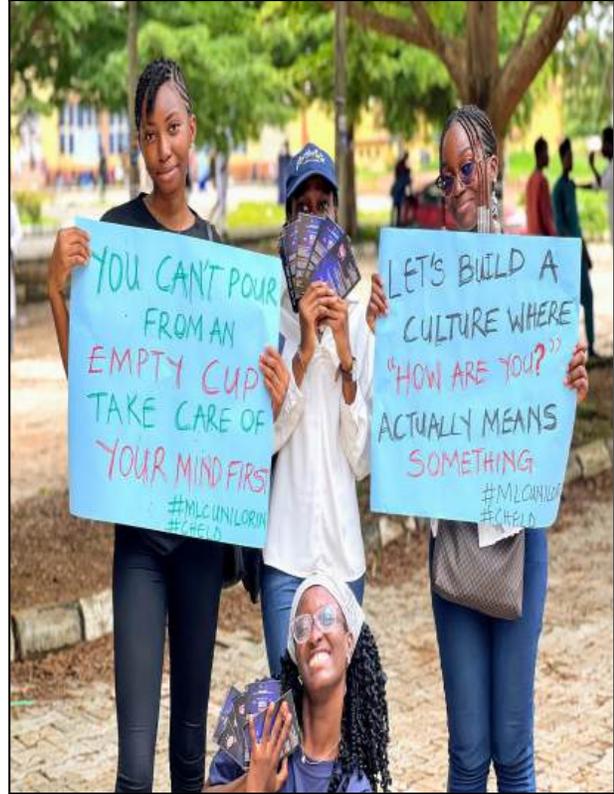
To close each interaction, flyers were distributed with mental health resources, and students were referred to CHELD and UCHDC. The outreach approach was not only informative but affirming — offering support in a way that felt approachable and grounded in shared student experience.

Highlights and Notable Moments

Many students were surprised that such an outreach was taking place on campus, especially from a student club. This made the outreach more relatable and impactful compared to traditional seminars or webinars usually led by lecturers.

A memorable conversation with a group of four students stood out—they suggested that more student-led mental health outreaches and clubs should be encouraged across campus to keep the momentum going.

Several students found the one-on-one conversations deeply meaningful. A volunteer noted: "Spending quality time on something impactful with my friend made the experience even more special."



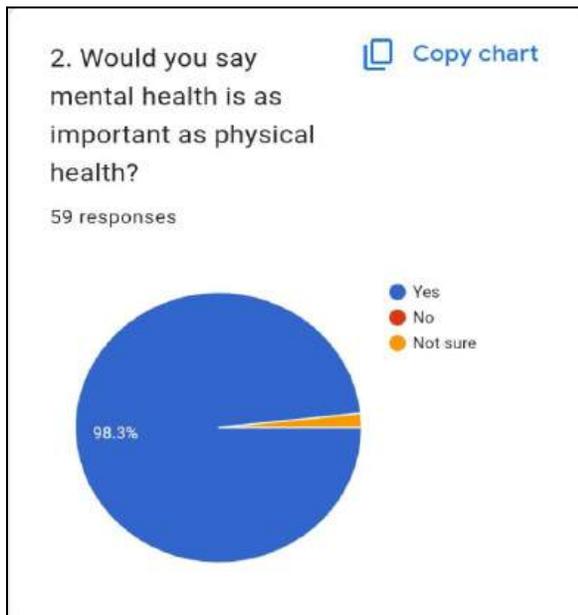
Summary of Survey Findings

Total Respondents: 59 students

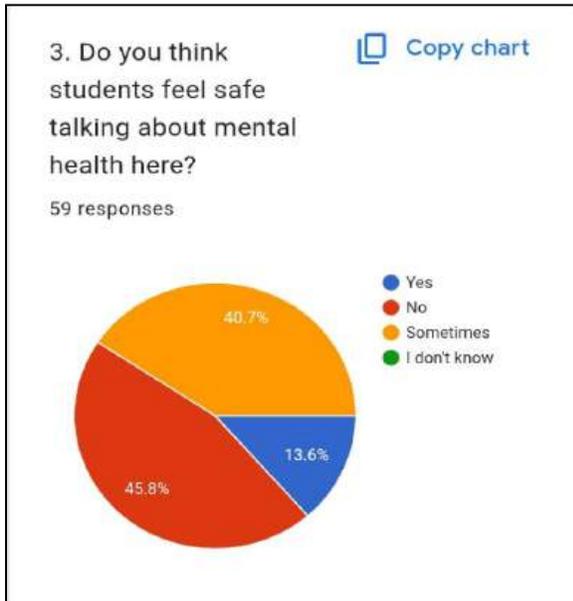
- Awareness & Perception

When asked what comes to mind when they hear mental health, students mentioned mental well-being, state of mind, emotional well-being, psychological problems, depression, and insanity. A few responses reflected humour or uncertainty, including “your babe”, “school is after my life”, and “I don’t know”.

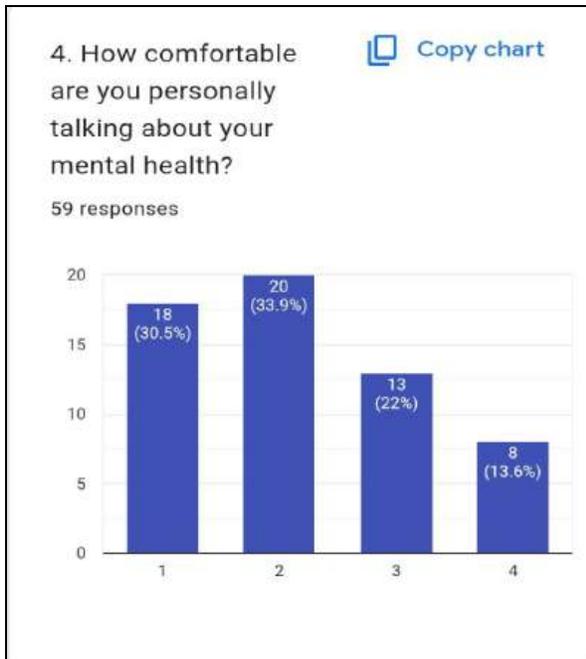
98.3% believe mental health is as important as physical health.



Only 13.6% feel students are safe talking about mental health.

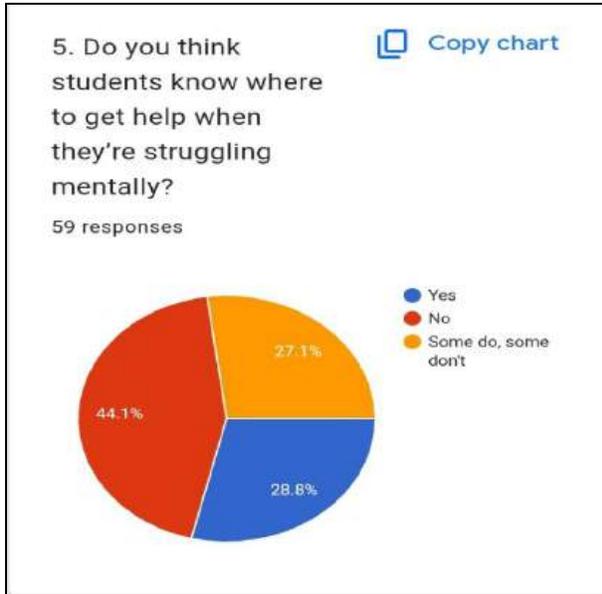


64.4% feel uncomfortable talking about their own mental health.

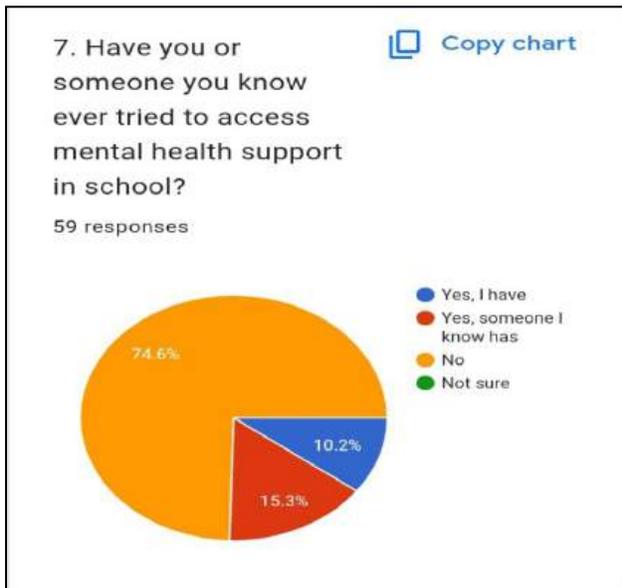


- Stigma and Access

44.1% said students don't know where to seek mental health support.



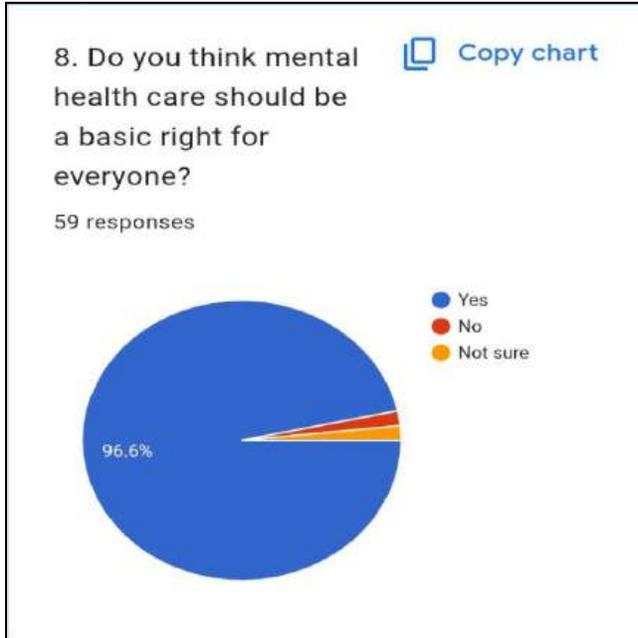
Only 10.2% have personally tried accessing support.



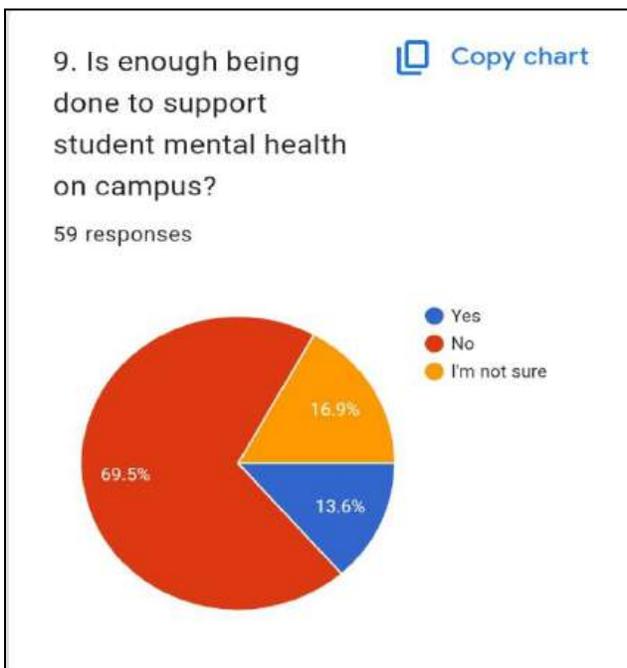
Primary reasons for silence: stigma, fear of judgment, lack of trust, cultural beliefs, and vulnerability.

- Justice and Rights

96.6% believe mental health care should be a basic right.



69.5% believe not enough is being done on campus for student mental health.



Suggested Support:

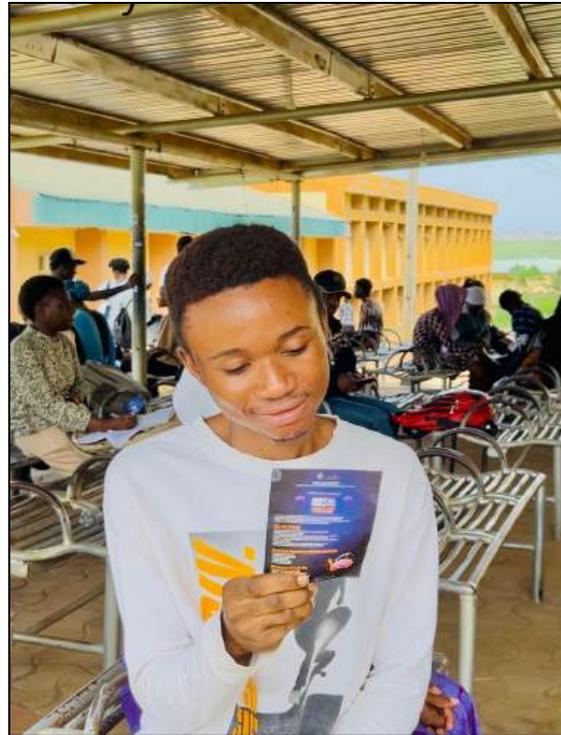
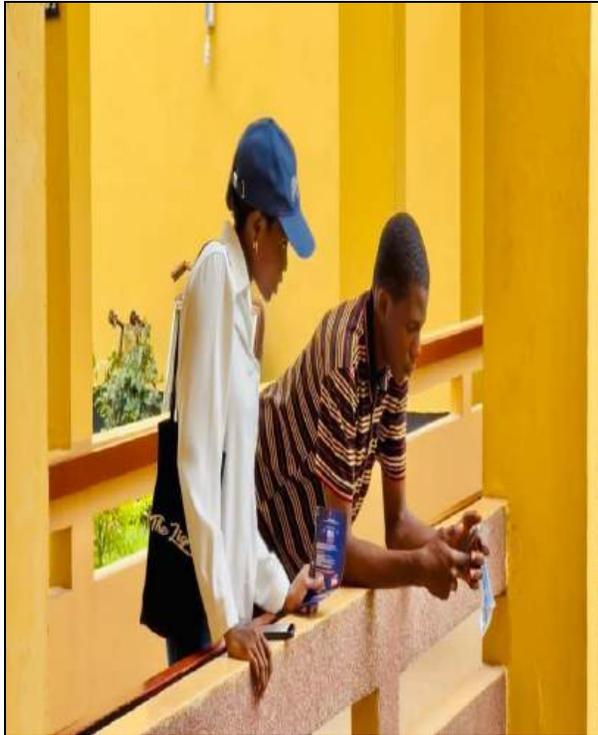
- Increased access to counseling services, financial assistance, and student-friendly therapists.
- Therapeutic activities such as sports, relaxation events, and tree planting.
- More awareness campaigns like this.
- Improved empathy and support from academic staff.

Challenges Faced

- Low Familiarity with MLC and CHELD: Many students had not heard of the Medical Law Club or CHELD prior to the outreach. This was quickly addressed by introducing ourselves at the start of each interaction.
- Student Reluctance: Some students were hesitant or uncomfortable opening up about their mental health. This reflects broader stigma and trust issues within the student community.
- Time Constraints: Engaging deeply with each student required time, which limited the number we could reach within a few hours.

Outcomes and Feedback

- The initiative successfully initiated mental health conversations among students.
- Students responded positively to the personalized and youth-led format.
- Feedback highlighted the need for more interactive and approachable formats like this in mental health awareness efforts.
- The outreach served as a reminder of how critical student voices and peer-led support can be in breaking barriers around mental health.



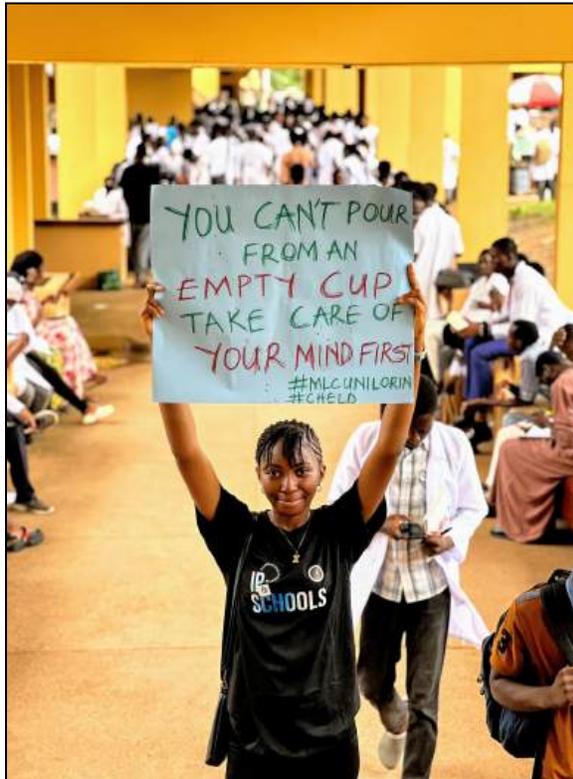
Reflections and Lessons Learned

- Students are willing to engage in conversations when approached with empathy and in familiar spaces.
- Personal engagement creates a safe space for open sharing.
- Introducing MLC and CHELD and clearly stating the purpose upfront helped ease initial hesitations.

Recommendations

- Strengthen Collaboration: Future outreaches should involve other faculty associations, student leaders and mental health support facilities for broader impact.
- Improve Visibility: More pre-event publicity and on-the-spot signage could help increase awareness and legitimacy.

- Peer-led Continuity: The peer-to-peer format was highly effective and should be maintained.
- Sustained Engagement: Regularly scheduled outreaches—not just annual events—could help reduce stigma over time.



Conclusion

The 2025 Mental Health Awareness Outreach by the Medical Law Club (MLC), Unilorin in collaboration with Centre for Health Ethics Law and Development (CHELD) was a meaningful, student-centered initiative that addressed a critical gap in campus wellness. Through collaborative planning, one-on-one conversations, and direct referrals, the outreach created space for vulnerable dialogue and connection.

We look forward to carrying out this outreach again next year with better coordination, wider collaboration, and improved branding. The Medical Law Club remains committed to promoting mental health advocacy and ensuring that student voices remain central to the conversation.

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