

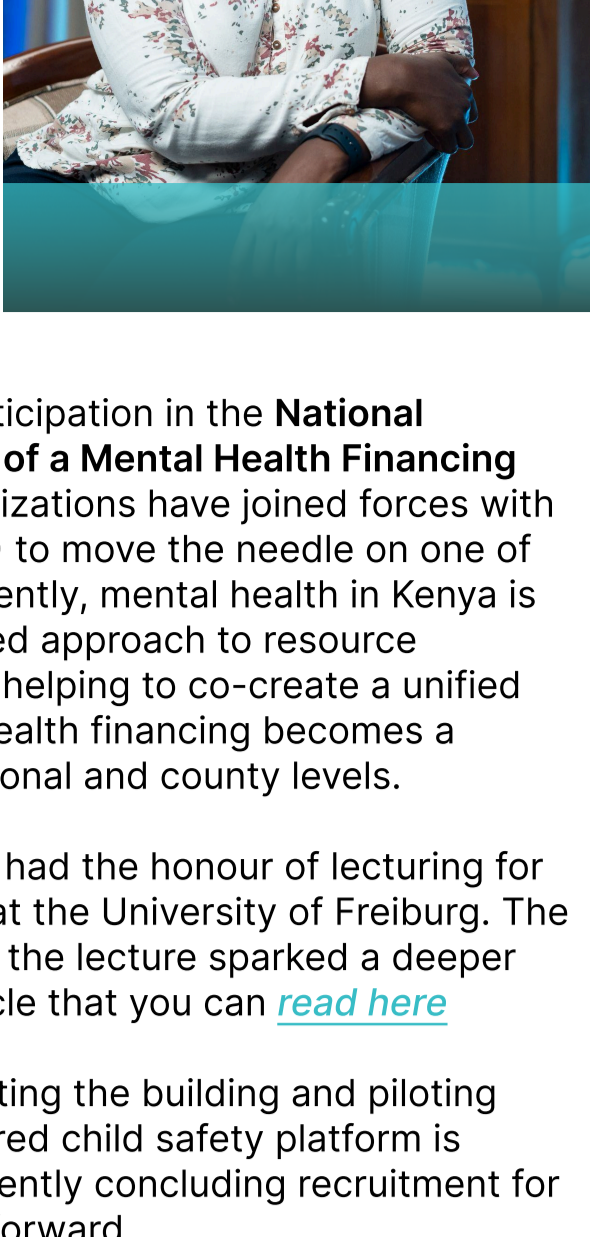
## The cost of the hustle, celebrating Earth Day, and the AI illusion

### Founder's Note:

Hello,

Welcome to the third edition of *Iyashi Pulse*.

This month has been defined by a shift to collective action. As I write this, I am still energized by the momentum we are building through new partnerships and engagements that are redefining how we approach mental health in our practice.



The biggest news this month is Iyashi's participation in the **National Inception Workshop for the Establishment of a Mental Health Financing Advocacy Coalition**. Iyashi and other organizations have joined forces with the Health Rights Advocacy Forum (HERAF) to move the needle on one of our sector's greatest hurdles: funding. Currently, mental health in Kenya is significantly underfunded, with a fragmented approach to resource allocation. By joining this coalition, Iyashi is helping to co-create a unified advocacy roadmap to ensure that mental health financing becomes a dedicated, accountable priority at both national and county levels.

Moving on beyond Kenya, On March 24th, I had the honour of lecturing for the Global Urban Health Master's Program at the University of Freiburg. The session was on mental health in Africa, and the lecture sparked a deeper reflection in me, which I captured in an article that you can [read here](#)

We are happy to announce that we are starting the building and piloting phase of Project RISE in May. This AI-powered child safety platform is moving from concept to reality. We are currently concluding recruitment for the specialist team that will drive this pilot forward.

There is so much more to come, and I invite you to follow our behind-the-scenes updates on our social media pages as we continue to walk with you in the journey of healing.

As you dive into the rest of this issue, I hope you feel the pulse of progress we are building together.

**Emily Mbelenga**

Founder, Iyashi Wellness Centre

### IN THIS ISSUE:

**1 The Cost of Winning** 🏆 Navigating the pressures of building a business. We unpack hustle culture, financial trauma, and why you must define your non-negotiables before a crisis hits.

**2 The Psychological Cost of Climate Change** 🌱 When extreme weather hits, we always talk about crops and livestock losses; but what about the mental health of the farmers? We unpack the invisible trauma of gambling your livelihood on the weather and the emotional burden carried by women in agriculture.

**3 The Myth of Toxic Positivity** 🌸 Are you forcing happiness? We explore why your brain believes everything you tell it, the power of a no, and what it takes to heal.

**4 AI vs. Your Therapist** 🤖 We break down the risks of relying on chatbots for crisis support and why the future of mental health care must be hybrid.

**5 Clinical Services** 🏥 Reading about mental health is a great first step, but true healing requires action. Learn how our expert clinical team can help you navigate burnout, trauma, and the pressures of daily life through therapy.

### 🧠 Practical Psychology

Actionable tips for resilience in a changing world

### 🏠 Founder's Reflection: Navigating the pressures of building

There is a psychological state every founder knows too well: the moment when the vision becomes so consuming that the self disappears. We stop being people who run businesses, and we become the business itself.

Founders end up making dangerous trades such as sacrificing sleep, sanity, and sometimes their lives just to keep the lights on. In this article, we unpack financial trauma, the dangers of hustle culture, and why defining your non-negotiables before a crisis hit is important for your survival.

Remember: You are the asset. If you break, the vision breaks.

[Read here](#)

### 👥 Join the Founders' Wellness Circle

Building a business can be a very lonely place. Because of the unique pressures of leadership, Iyashi Wellness Centre is planning an exclusive Founders' Wellness Circle. This will be a safe space designed to help you navigate burnout, learn to establish boundaries, and protect your peace of mind. You will do all this alongside peers who understand the journey.

📧 [Are you a founder or entrepreneur? Email us at info@iyashiwellness.org](mailto:info@iyashiwellness.org) for more details on joining.

### The Clinical Corner

Insights from the therapy room

### The invisible trauma of a changing climate

This April, as the world marked Earth Day under the global theme "Our Power, Our Planet," the conversation focused heavily on renewable energy and sustainability. In our own Iyashi room and across communities in Kenya; we are seeing a different, quieter crisis: the psychological cost of climate change.

For communities that rely on agriculture and pastoralism, gambling your livelihood on the weather every season creates a constant state of hyper-vigilance and uncertainty. When unpredictable rains, droughts, or devastating floods hit, the news almost always focuses on the economic impact of lost crops and livestock.

What we don't talk about is the chronic anxiety, the trauma of displaced families, and the heavy emotional burden placed on women who must suddenly figure out how to feed their households when a harvest fails.

We cannot achieve food security without prioritizing the mental health of the people growing it. To unpack this reality, we dedicated a special Earth Day release of the Iyashi Conversations podcast to the intersection of agriculture, climate change, and mental health. Joined by researcher and food systems champion [Tabitha Nekesa](#), we explore the silent weight carried by our farmers and what it takes to build climate resilience.

👉 Listen to Episode 2 of Iyashi Conversations here:

 [Listen here](#)

### 🤖 Innovation Watch

Navigating the future of mental health

### Why AI cannot replace your therapist

Last month, we shared our groundbreaking industry research revealing that 74% of surveyed Kenyans are using AI tools like ChatGPT for emotional support. We concluded that while the adoption is very high, respondents still want a human therapist for their more complex challenges.

In November 2025, the American Psychological Association (APA) released a major health advisory that echoes our findings and concerns.

As the digital landscape evolves faster than regulatory frameworks, the APA issued a warning: we cannot let the convenience of AI distract us from the urgent need to fix the foundations of our mental health care systems.

The APA warns that generative AI lacks the clinical protocols to safely guide someone in crisis. In our own Iyashi report, 17% of respondents had already experienced AI advice that felt dismissive or unsafe to them.

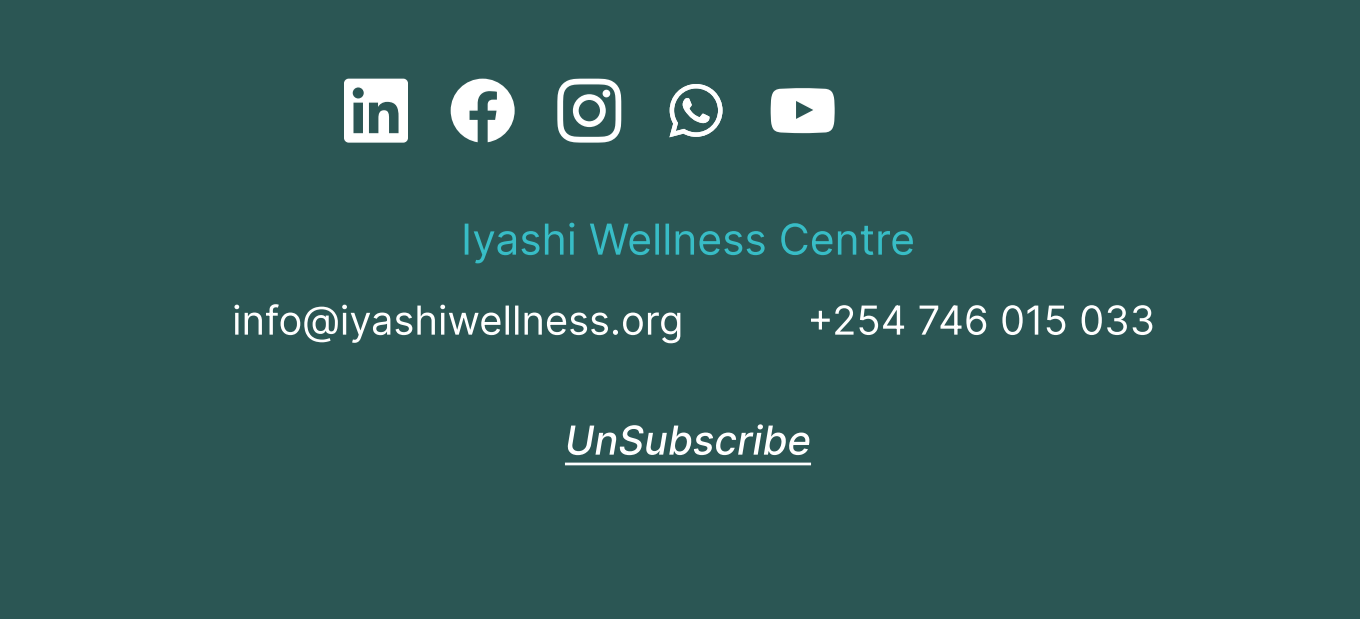
Chatbots are engineered for conversational fluency, not clinical triage. They mimic empathy but cannot provide the relational care required for true healing.

Relying on unregulated apps is a technological stopgap. We must push for systemic reform to make care more affordable and accessible.

Our verdict remains: The future of mental health in Africa is AI-augmented, not AI-substituted.

👉 Download our full Status of AI and Mental Health in Kenya report here to explore the data: [Download here](#)

### 👤 Expert Spotlight: Easter Olwanda



We are privileged to feature Easter Olwanda as our guest expert for this month. While childhood may look simple and fun to an outsider, beneath these ordinary scenes lies an invisible landscape shaped by experiences many Kenyan children never speak about. In this issue, Easter joins us to provide a look into how early adversity embeds itself into our physical and emotional blueprints.

In her exclusive piece, "Adverse Childhood Experiences in Kenya," she explores the high prevalence of violence against children and challenges the societal norms that dismiss this trauma as "normal" or "just discipline".

Easter argues that underestimate children's emotional timelines, assuming they simply "bounce back". "If a young person is struggling today because of something that happened years ago, they are not 'weak, dramatic,' or 'overreacting'. They are living through the long neurobiological restructuring that trauma demands. Healing from adverse childhood experiences is not a matter of 'toughening up.' It is a reconstruction of safety."

Discover why children do not outgrow adversity and why investing in trauma-informed care is essential for our communities.

[Read here](#)

### 🌟 Service Spotlight: Our virtual and in person therapy service



If you are carrying the weight of unspoken pain, at Iyashi Wellness Centre, our mission is to provide the care that you need. Our individual therapy sessions are confidential and empathetic. We offer you a safe space to navigate burnout, financial stress, relationship challenges, trauma and much, much more.

Whether you are seeking support for yourself, or looking for resources for a partner, colleague, or friend, our clinical team is ready to help you rebuild your resilience.

[Click here](#) to book a therapy session with our clinical team today.

### A Final Thought for April

If there is one thread tying this month's newsletter together it is this: courage. Courage to look below the surface. Courage to redefine your boundaries to survive the pressures of building, to unpack childhood adversity, or learning the power of no. Healing requires intentionality.

We live in a world that pushes for quick fixes, asking us to smile through the chaos, to toughen up or to outsource our emotional support to algorithms and chatbots. But as we have explored throughout this issue, there are no shortcuts to resilience. Healing is not a forced smile or a quick tech solution; it is the deliberate, daily practice of reconstruction.

If you find yourself carrying a heavy emotional load this month, give yourself the grace to acknowledge the weight, and the courage to seek human connection.

You are your greatest asset. Treat yourself accordingly.

Here is to a month of clear boundaries, honest conversations, and healing.

**Team Iyashi Wellness Centre**

### 🌟 Coming in May

#### Gearing Up for Mental Health Awareness Month

May is globally recognized as Mental Health Awareness Month, and our team has been working hard behind the scenes to prepare something special. Next month, we are launching a digital awareness campaign across our platforms to bring mental health discussions out of the shadows.

We have a great lineup of exciting, unfiltered conversations prepared for you. Featuring expert insights and real-life stories, this campaign is designed to break the stigma, answer your toughest questions, and provide actionable tools for building resilience in our communities.

Keep an eye on your inbox and our social media channels next week as we officially kick things off. Healing happens when we talk about it, and we want you at the forefront of this conversation.

**See you next month.**

**Iyashi Wellness Centre**

Healing Body, Mind and Spirit



Iyashi Wellness Centre

info@iyashiwellness.org

+254 746 015 033

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