

How YOU DEY ?

Where Art
Meets Mental
Wellness

2025

NELLY ATING

ABIKE

CHEB ARTS

ISSUE 1



HOW YOU DEY?

By Fadhili Maghiya

In Nigerian Pidgin; “How You Dey?”, means; “How are You”. This creative mental health project was run by the Sub-Sahara Advisory Panel (SSAP) with the support from the Arts Council of Wales. SSAP worked with young and older Black people to serve as a safe peer-led space to check in on their wellbeing.

In Black communities, mental health still carries a stigma that is compounded by the fact that specialized services for Black people are few and far between. Black people experience many mental health challenges that stem from racism, cultural background and lived experiences.

Many mental health provisions do not offer tailored support for Black people, and most can struggle to share experiences when speaking with support workers who do not share their lived experience.

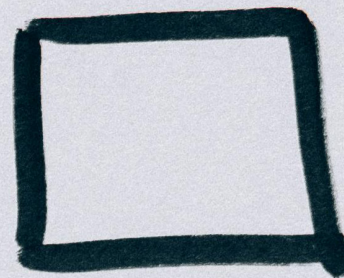
Young people from SSAP’s youth network expressed the desire to create safe spaces where Black youth can openly and creatively share with their peers and take action for their mental health and wellbeing.

This project was led by creatives from the community (Abike Ogunlokun, Nelly Ating and Paskaline Jebet Maiyo) supported by Star Moyo, a qualified NHS mental health nurse. Members of the community came together to share, be creative, and take positive action for their mental health. This culminated into a showcase and workshops for the wider community to tackle the challenge of speaking about mental health together.

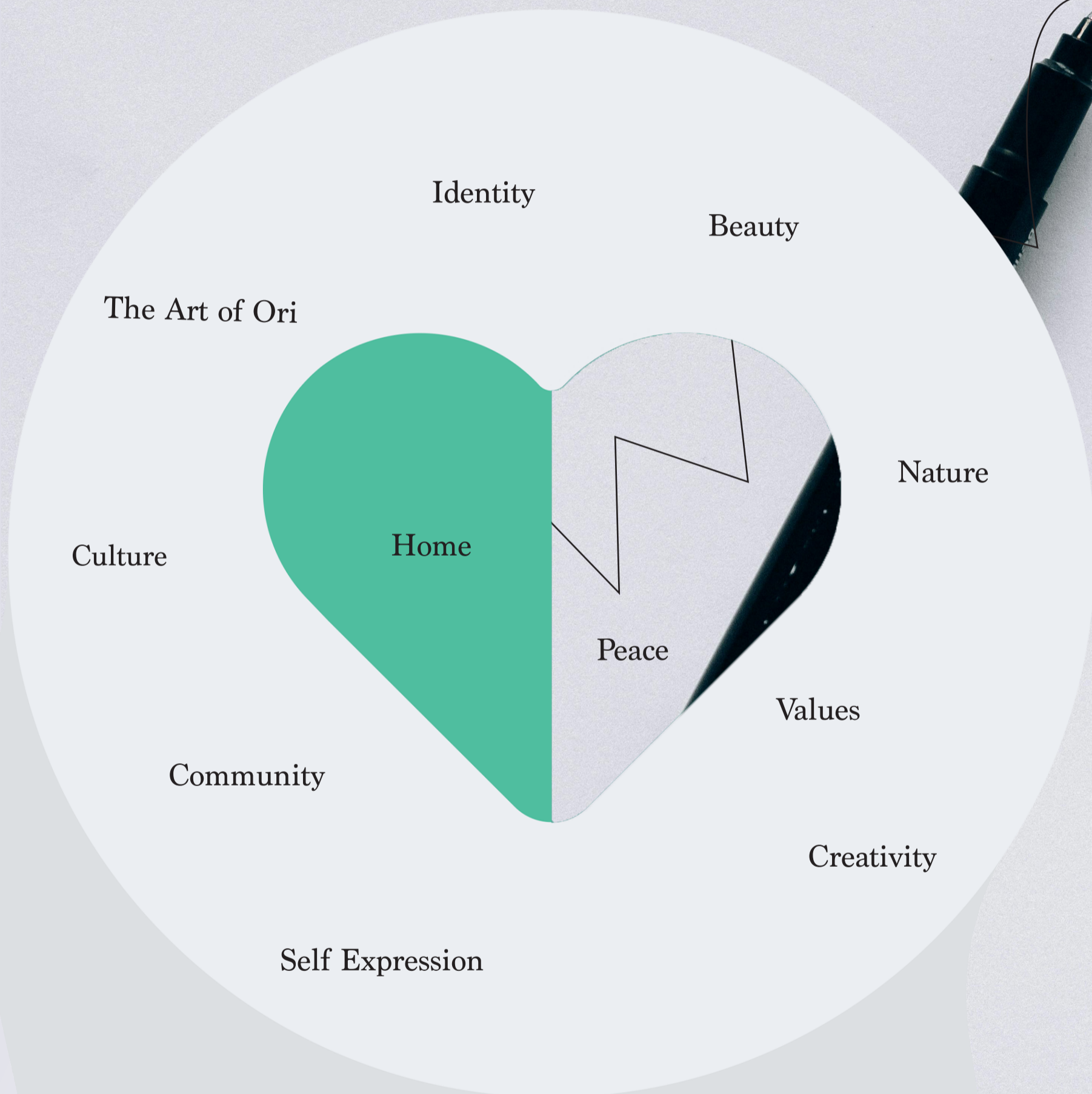
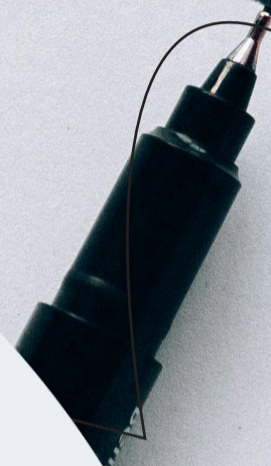
We thank Donna Ali and Radio Cardiff for their support.



BALANCE



BURNOUT






“Mindfulness Photography”

By Nelly Ating





What began as a simple gathering around a shared love for photography soon transformed into something much deeper. At first, we met to take photos—curious, eager, and passionate. But as time passed, we began to ask ourselves bigger questions: What makes an image? Why do certain photographs move us? What do they say about who we are?

This body of work may appear untethered at first glance, but it reflects our collective evolution. As we explored photography further, we uncovered layers of meaning beyond composition and lighting. We discovered that each image could tell a story, stir emotions, and offer a glimpse into another person's truth. Our journey shifted from simply capturing visuals to exploring photography as a powerful art form capable of connecting people and provoking thought.

In that process, we also turned inward. We recognised the need to care for our minds and question the mental frameworks through which we viewed both our work and ourselves. We realised that when our understanding of images is filtered through mindsets rooted in distorted beliefs, our realities are shaped by those same distortions. Many of us had, at some point, internalised the way society expects minorities to be seen—our stories often told for us, but rarely by us.

This project became a space to reclaim our narratives. We are mothers, fathers, sisters, and friends. We are humans with passion—no different from any other race or group. Through photography, we found healing. We came to understand it not just as a creative outlet, but as a source of restoration and connection.

“How You Dey” began with the intention of promoting well-being through art, but it grew into something larger—a celebration of beauty, passion, resilience, and joy. It also held space for our inner critics, who we slowly learned to quiet, allowing our creativity to take centre stage. Each second, minute, and day spent embracing the process has led to the images you now see. They are reflections of life—of being present and vulnerable, of finding purpose in storytelling.

Reclaiming Stories, Healing Through the Lens...

In this collection, Aisha Jenkins's work evokes the warmth of intimate circles, the serenity of nature, the strength of friendship, and the subtle presence of onlookers. Her images invite viewers into quiet, meaningful spaces that feel deeply familiar.

Dionne Zhao captures the nostalgia of longing for home, reminding us that home isn't always a place—it's a feeling, a memory, a choice of the heart. Her work offers comfort to those who carry the immigrant's journey within them.

Praptee Ghimire's photographs, captured mostly on film, reimagine Welsh historical spaces through a contemporary lens. Her work traces the flow of people through these spaces, bridging the past with the present.

To Gary Devonish, who brings us into the culture of community and the colours that seem banal to us but mostly saturate the pewter-grey Welsh sky. Nelly Ating's work contributes to a narrative that reminds us that we are here to stay, and so do the memories of this shared work, and Farah Egeh connects us to the defiance of nature.

Finally, Nelly Ating's work roots the collection in a declaration: we are here to stay. Her images carry a quiet strength, insisting on the importance of memory and presence.

“How You Dey” is both a greeting and a grounding. It's a question of care, of being seen and heard. And this project responds with images that don't just show—they feel. This is more than a photography project. It's a portrait of healing, of storytelling, and of reclaiming space through art.



“Protest and Dance”

by Nelly Ating





Farah Egeh: *"These tiny insects"*

Images captured on camera in the heart of Cardiff represent resilience in a rapidly changing world. These pictures, which depict modern buildings, greenery, and water in central Cardiff, highlight how much humans rely on the natural world.

Aisha Jenkins: “For family and friends”



Gary Devonish: “City life”



Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) */ Worries Unspoken.*

Uniting Anxieties Through Art and Conversation...

My project, , stems from my personal experience with anxiety. Each winter, as the days grow darker, familiar anxieties resurface—often unspoken but deeply felt. This series is both a self-healing journey and an exploration of how individual emotions can transform through shared experiences, reflecting the profound potential of unity.

Through photography and conversation, I invite participants to explore emotions they may find difficult to articulate. Our journey begins with a simple yet meaningful question: “Where do you feel most at ease?” Together, we walk through their chosen space—a physical reflection of their inner sanctuary—discussing their worries, memories, and recent experiences. I then encourage them to translate their emotions into abstract drawings, giving form to what words cannot capture.

Each participant’s story culminates in two layered composite images. These combine three elements: a portrait of the participant in their chosen space, their emotional drawing, and a moment captured during creation. The first composite reflects the weight of their initial worries; the second portrays the transformation brought about by an hour of walking, talking, and creating together. At its core, this project is about the interplay between individual and collective experience. By sharing vulnerability, participants and I form a temporary but powerful unit—a shared space where isolation gives way to connection.

These images are not just about individual struggles but also about how human emotions can unify us, revealing the shared threads of our existence.

Through Worries Unspoken, I aim to celebrate the raw, honest beauty of humanity, highlighting the healing power of art and conversation. Together, we transform unspoken anxieties into visual narratives, bridging the divide between individual solitude and collective understanding.

In doing so, we create a moment of unity through shared vulnerability.

by Dionne Zho





“In every image, a story unfolds—not just of the subject, but of a shared humanity waiting to be seen and heard.”



Praptee Ghimire: “The Great Welsh Gift”



Dionne Zhao "Hometown and Unspoken Worries"



Model: Kene Udeze
Body art: Cheb Arts
Photography: Ndotenyin Godwin Akang

"Turning Towards The Light"



What Sunflowers Teach Us About Mental Health

In many cultures and across generations, sunflowers have symbolized more than just beauty, they represent strength, hope, and the ability to endure. What makes the sunflower unique is its instinct to follow the direction of the sun, a process called **heliotropism**. This natural act of turning toward light, even when skies are grey, serves as a powerful metaphor for the mental health journey.

In this section, we explore the sunflower as a symbol of mental wellness and personal resilience through the lens of art and creative expression. The vibrant yellows, deep browns, and bold greens of the sunflower have appeared across our body painting sessions, in photographic portraits, and through community contributions, each telling a different story of growth and healing.

For many of the participants, the sunflower became a reflection of their own emotional path whether that was about emerging from depression, finding small joys in anxiety recovery, or simply choosing to keep going during uncertain times. Some painted sunflowers onto their skin as acts of affirmation. Others wove them into poems or drawings as a way to reconnect with something

hopeful and grounding. In each instance, the sunflower was more than just an image it became a visual anchor, a quiet reminder to look for light even in the midst of heaviness.

Creativity plays a critical role in supporting mental health. When words feel difficult to express, art allows us to externalize what we're feeling inside. The sunflower, with its upright posture and unwavering pursuit of light, mirrors what so many people hope for when navigating emotional challenges: the chance to feel rooted, the ability to grow, and the courage to face each new day.

This section invites readers to see art not just as decoration, but as a vital mental health tool. It reminds us that healing often begins in the smallest acts of expression—through paint, through colour, through movement, or through metaphor. Just like sunflowers don't grow overnight, neither does recovery. But with each intentional act of creativity, we turn slowly but surely toward the light.

My project centered around five themes, encouraging participants to create art that resonated personally, leading to the sharing of inspiring stories. This process highlighted art's power to transport individuals to unexpected places, facilitating discussions on challenges, successes, and future aspirations. Art emerged as a medium for revisiting memories, transforming them into expressions of beauty, resilience, inspiration, and healing.



1.

The Art of Ori

In Yoruba culture, “Ori” signifies the head and embodies a person’s spirit and destiny. It encompasses the brain (knowledge), eyes (guidance), nose (breath), and mouth (nourishment). Painting one’s Ori fosters a connection between the spiritual and physical self, symbolizing the divine essence within.

2.

Peace and Tranquility

Achieving inner peace amidst life’s storms is a superpower that enables individuals to confront fears. Embracing calming elements during turbulent times allows one to reflect and say, “I conquered that.” Like the sea, which has both serene and stormy days, challenges are transient. Finding tranquility helps prevent fears from overwhelming us.

3.

Home

Beyond physical structures, home represents a feeling of safety, love, value, and respect. In Swahili, “Naenda nyumbani” translates to “I am going home,” signifying a retreat to a place of comfort. Visualizing what embodies ‘home’ reconnects individuals to their essence, offering self-acceptance and a sanctuary amidst life’s demands.

4.

Beauty

Beauty is subjective and varies across perspectives. Self-acceptance involves recognizing and appreciating one’s unique attributes. Encouraging individuals, regardless of age, to look in the mirror and value themselves fosters confidence. Focusing on aspects that build self-esteem helps navigate daily life with grace and appreciation for one’s inherent beauty.

5.

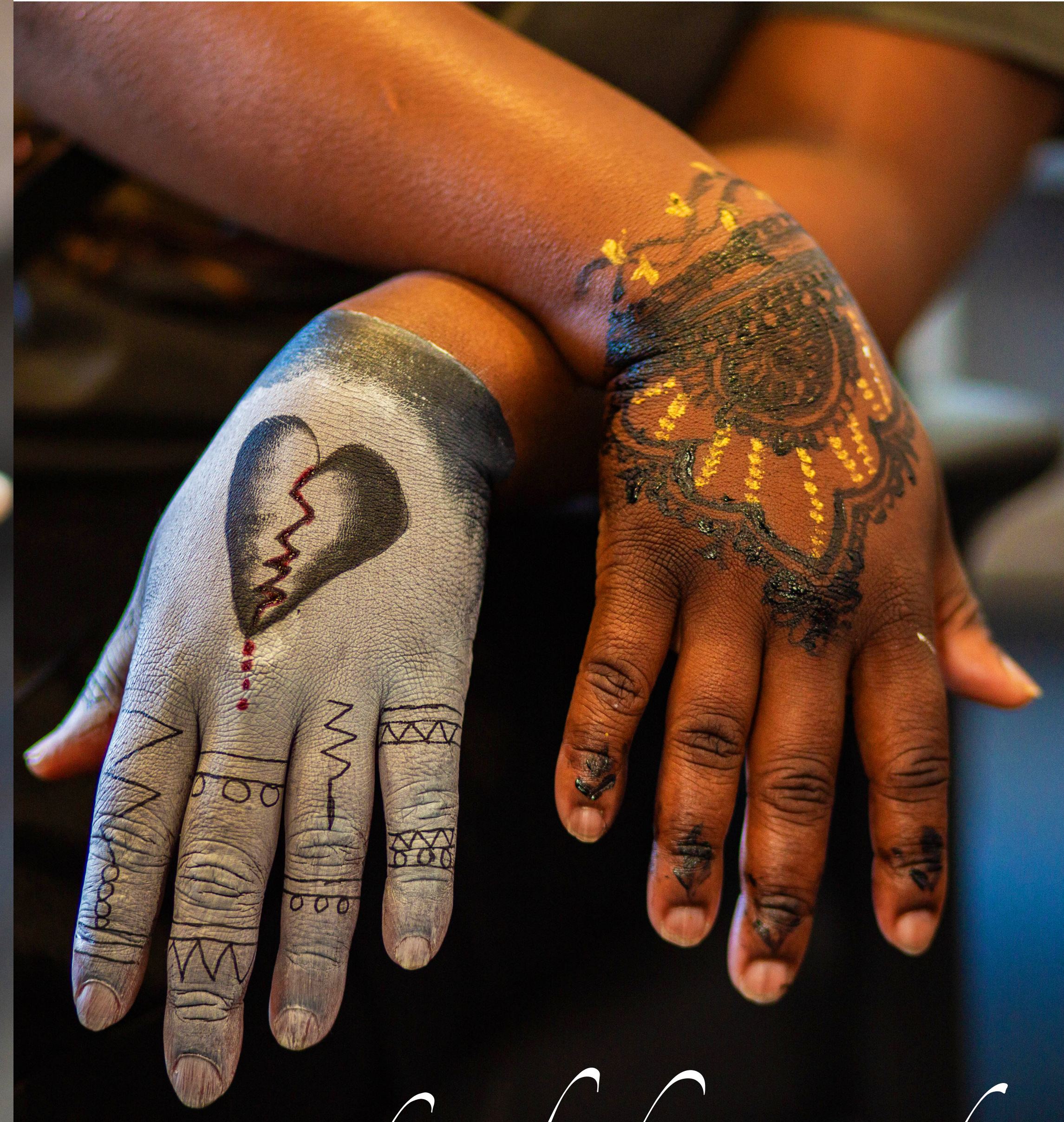
‘How You Dey’

The common response “I dey fine” ,We never go beyond that and be vulnerable enough to actually say, today I am not okay, or today I had a really tough day. We silent those words so we don’t have to explain further than, “I dey fine”. Most times it is easier to hide, long run, it all comes at once and we are left with a thousand pieces to pick up, so how about we add something else to “how you dey,” “I dey fine”. “Omo” today I actually faced my fears and called my Mum after so long, today I Told her how she is acting is not working out, today I really need some help, today I hopped on the train for the first time” the simple words of actually speaking up, changes how we will respond to our challenges and trying to wire our minds to actually be at peace when things aren’t working out, or to celebrate the small wins as we go. “I dey Fine” I am grateful for life today.”

Art as a Journey to Self—
Speaking Truths, Finding
Peace, and Coming Home.

By Cheb Arts





“Marks of the Mind”

These hand-painted prints blend mosaic colors, henna motifs, sunbursts, and the fragile outline of a broken heart—each symbol a story. They reflect the invisible marks mental health leaves behind, transformed into visible art. In every line, a memory; in every color, a step toward healing.

“In many homes, mental health was never mentioned. Instead, we were taught that silence meant strength, and pain meant punishment. These myths didn’t protect us—they silenced us.”



“We’re reclaiming our mental health. By painting our truths onto our bodies, we say: this story is ours to rewrite. Culture evolves—and so do we.”

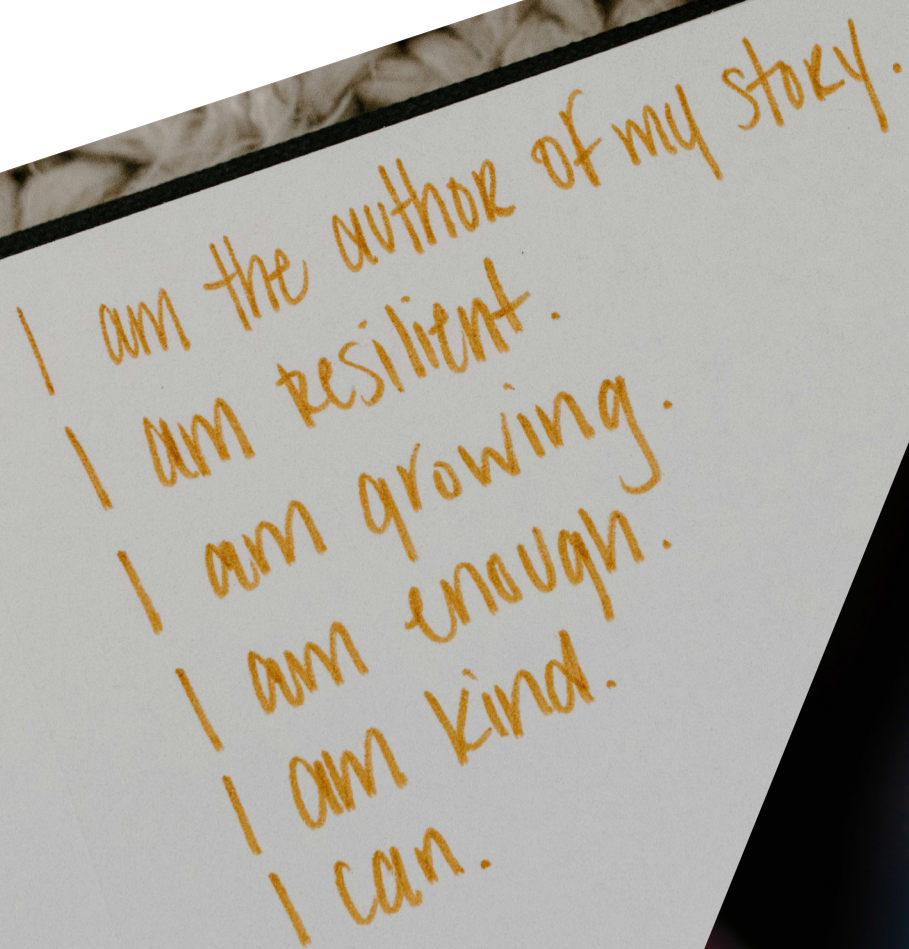


Write one myth you were told and transform it into your own truth.

“

”





I am the author of my story.
I am resilient.
I am growing.
I am enough.
I am kind.
I can.



“I’ve been through a dark time in my life when my mental health struggled. For three months, I was trapped in a dark place, unable to do anything. I lost my job, and it felt like I was just going through the motions physically but was empty inside. Sharing my struggles with others felt like a burden, and I didn’t know who to turn to.

But I found a way to heal and come out stronger. I learned the importance of self-care and prioritized my mental health. Exercise became a crucial part of my recovery - it really helped me cope and find my footing again. I also discovered the value of seeking support from loved ones and professionals.

The road to recovery was tough, and there were times when I thought this was my new reality - being mentally unwell. It felt like I was dying inside. But I’m proud of myself for persevering.

Looking back, I’m grateful for the lessons I’ve learned and the growth I’ve experienced. If you’re going through a similar struggle, know that you’re not alone, and there is hope for recovery. I wouldn’t wish that experience on anyone, but I’m grateful for the strength it gave me. Let’s keep pushing forward and supporting each other - we got this! Let’s Go champ!

”

by Miamay Ngozi





Why Mental Wellbeing Matters Especially for Ethnic Minority Communities in South Wales

In recent years, society has become more open about mental health. Conversations that were once hidden behind closed doors are now happening in classrooms, workplaces, and homes. Yet, despite this progress, one truth remains clear: mental wellbeing is not equally understood, prioritized, or supported across all communities—especially for those from ethnic minority backgrounds.

From my perspective, mental health for people of colour, immigrants, and marginalized groups isn't just about managing stress or treating illness. It's about healing deep-rooted wounds, navigating systems not designed for us, and reclaiming the right to feel safe, seen, and whole.

In South Wales, where diverse communities are growing across urban and rural areas alike, these conversations are more urgent than ever. That's where organisations like, Wenpower are crucial in ensuring that we provide culturally responsive mental health support, community coaching, and trauma-informed services that speak directly to the lived experiences of ethnic minority individuals.

Mental Health Isn't a Luxury, It's a Lifeline

"It's no measure of health to be well-adjusted to a profoundly sick society." — Jiddu Krishnamurti

Wenpower works with individuals and families in these situations, offering safe, culturally sensitive spaces to process trauma and build resilience through tailored coaching and well-being support. Wenpower runs culturally competent workshops and peer support groups, helping local people find strength in speaking out and supporting one another.

Wenpower is a community organization in South Wales working to empower ethnic minority individuals and families through trauma-informed mental health services, coaching, advocacy, and training.

By Star Moyo

Resilience Shouldn't Be the Only Option

"To be a person of color in this country and to be relatively conscious is to be in a rage almost all the time." — James Baldwin

Wenpower helps bridge this gap by providing, trauma therapies, trauma-informed coaching and well-being programmes tailored to the challenges faced by ethnic minority communities.

We Need More Culturally Safe Spaces

"Therapy was never meant for people like us—so we have to build our own healing spaces." — Yolo Akili

Wenpower has taken the initiative by providing community-based healing, coaching, advocacy, and training for organizations wanting to be more inclusive in how they support mental health

Mental Wealth is a Community Project

"When we heal ourselves, we heal our ancestors and future generations." — Dr. Thema Bryant

Wenpower works with families, schools, and organizations to embed healing and resilience into the everyday fabric of our communities

Healing is Power

For ethnic minority communities, mental health is more than self-care—it's self-liberation. It's about unlearning internalized shame, protecting our peace, and refusing to let systemic oppression define our mental landscapes.

To speak about our mental health is to say:

"I am human."

"I am worthy."

"I will not suffer in silence."



www.wenpower.org
star@wenpower.org | benson@wenpower.org

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feelings

be kind

be the

peace

are you ok?

calm Your mind

mental health

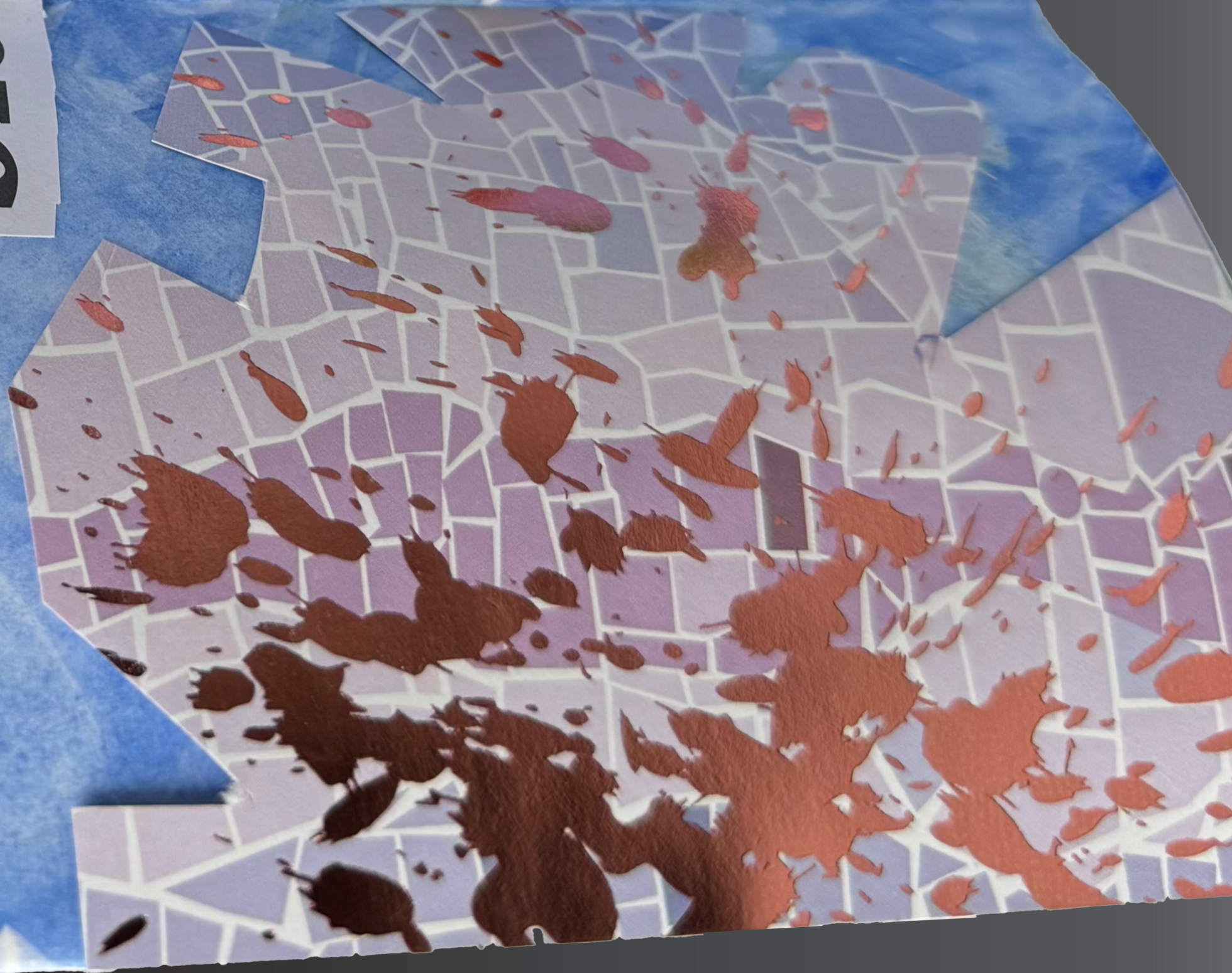
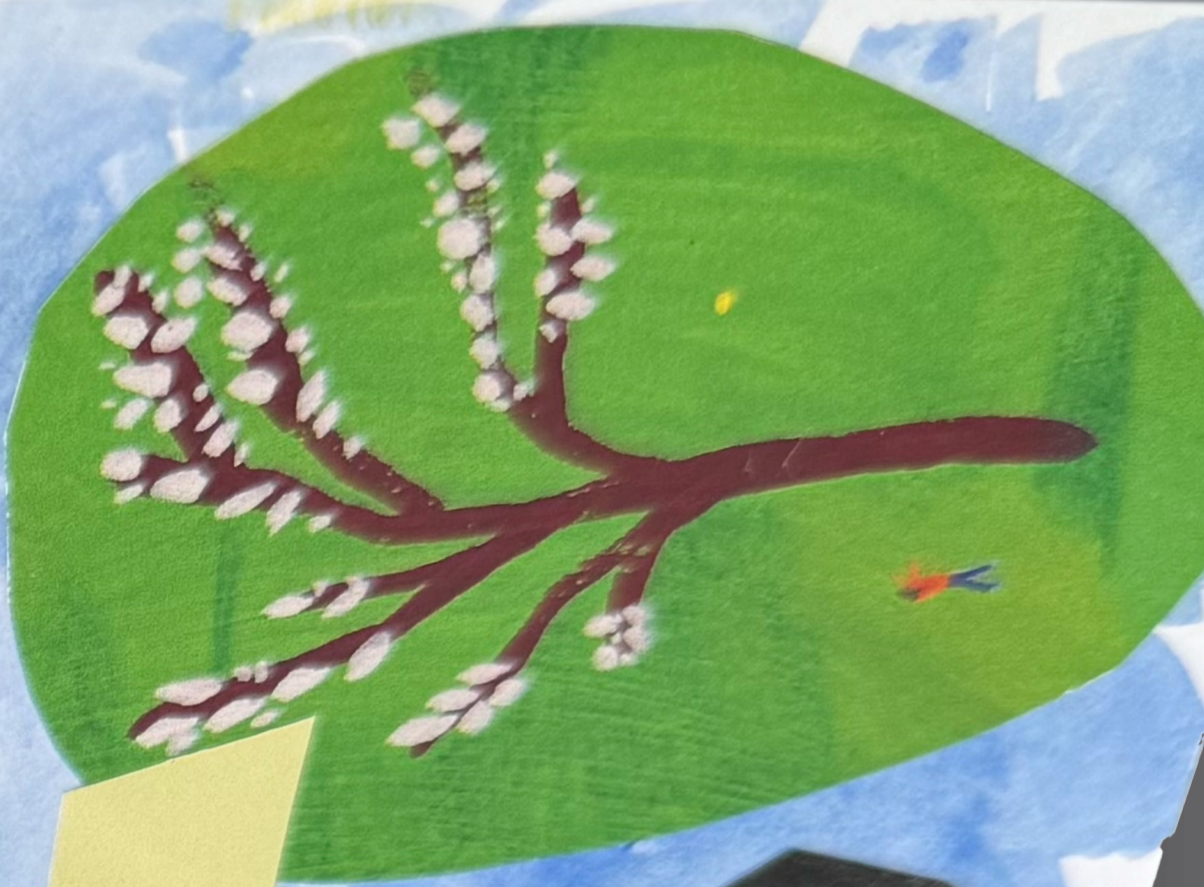
awareness

consciousness

ness

blessed

eyes



Where art meets identity, and conversation becomes connection.

In a cosy and welcoming space, Creative Wellbeing Sessions invited participants to slow down, get hands-on, and explore their inner worlds through zine-making. Led by artist Abike and guest therapist Star Moyo, the sessions blended creativity and conversation to powerful effect.

Some participants arrived unsure, hesitant about their artistic ability. But as scissors snipped and glue sticks rolled, the pressure faded. What emerged was a sense of ease and playful exploration—an opportunity to express, not impress.

Each session became a gentle space for reflection, where people could tap into their values, identity, and creativity. No artistic background was needed—just a willingness to show up. With zine-making as the central activity, conversations flowed organically. The act of creating together took the edge off small talk, offering a natural way to connect without pressure.

Discussions touched on themes close to the heart: what it means to live in Wales, our sense of belonging, mental and physical wellbeing, and how we care for ourselves and each other in community.

The result? A vibrant collection of handmade zines, each as unique as the person who made it—personal, honest, and full of insight. These little booklets became windows into lived experiences, stitched together by art, dialogue, and shared humanity.

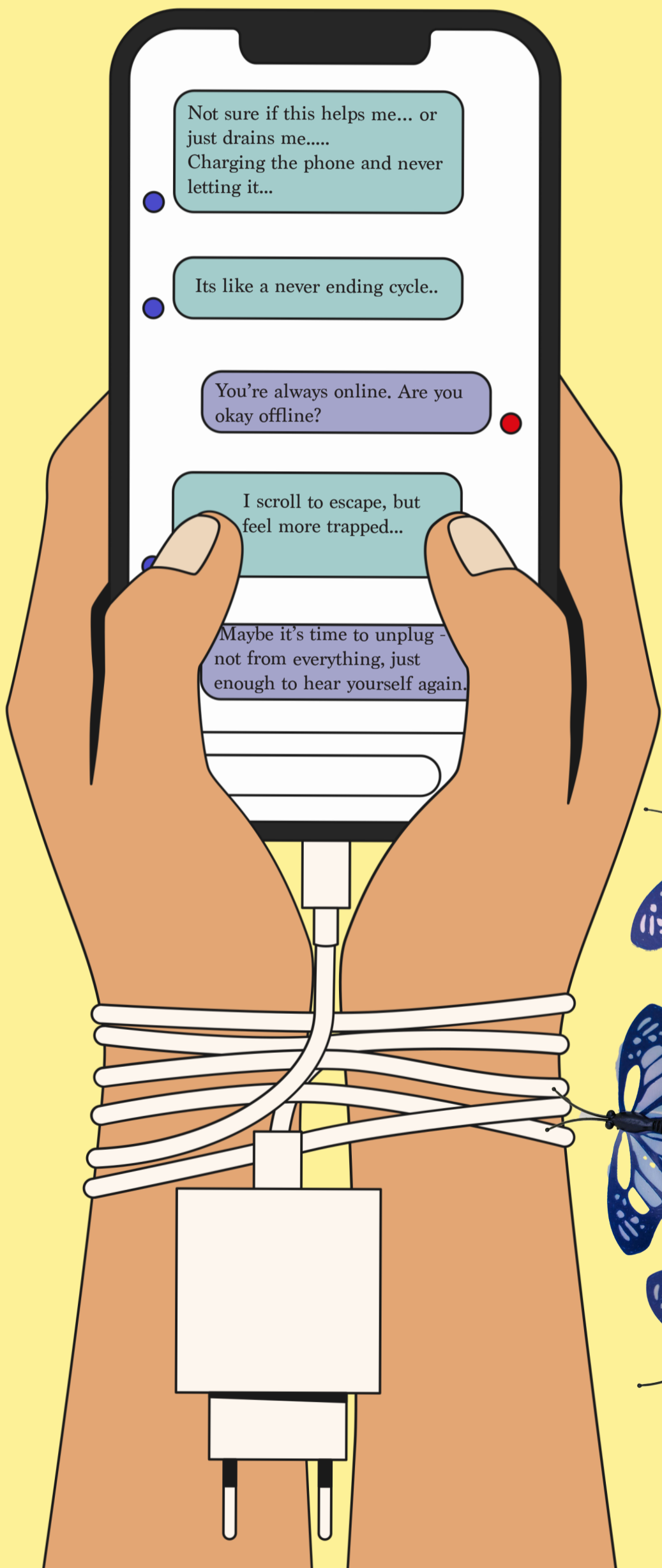
by Abike

Zine
+
Unwinding





M E N T A L
H E A L T H



Not sure if this helps me... or just drains me.....
Charging the phone and never letting it...

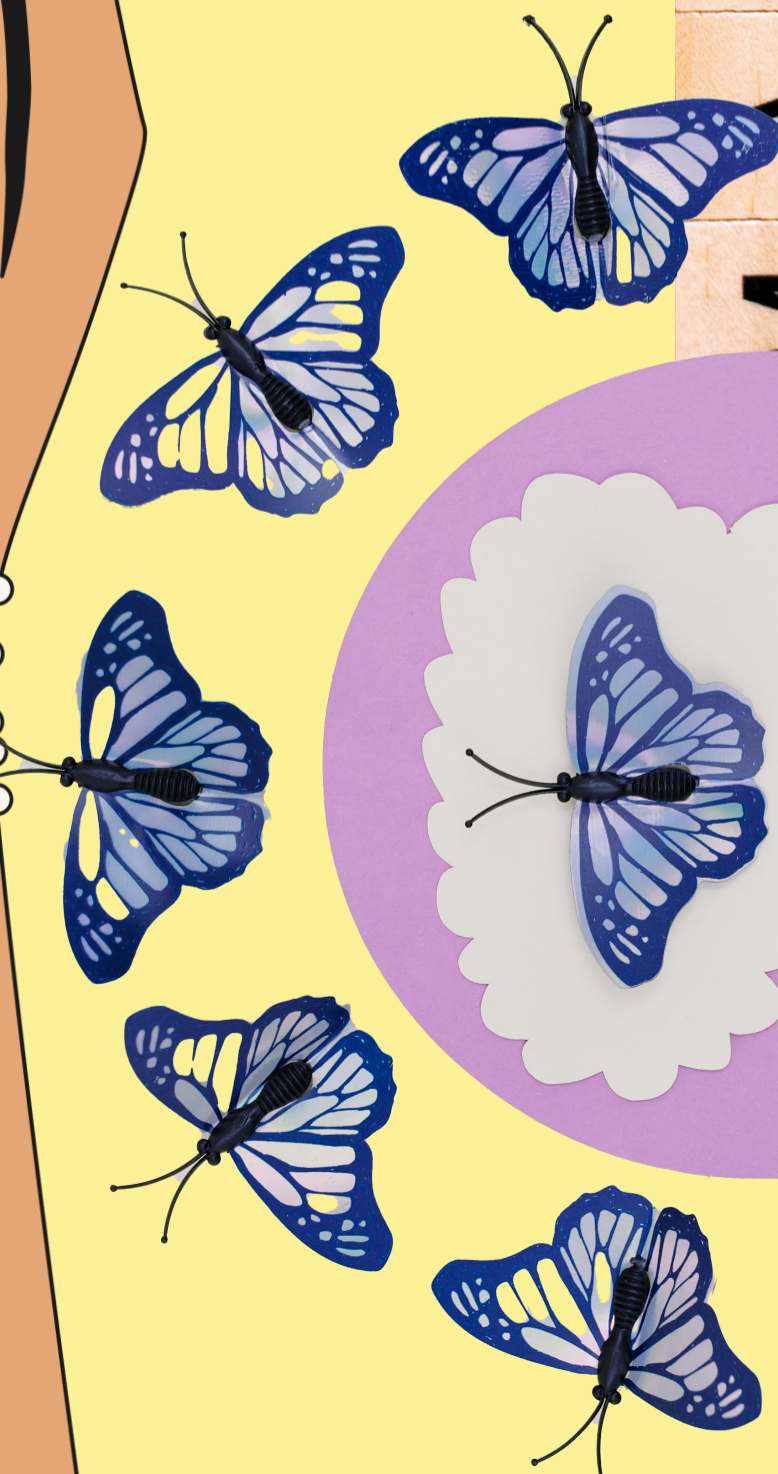
Its like a never ending cycle..

You're always online. Are you okay offline?

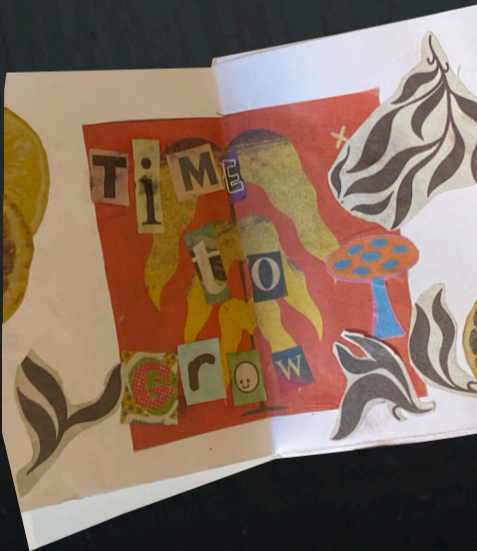
I scroll to escape, but feel more trapped...

Maybe it's time to unplug - not from everything, just enough to hear yourself again.

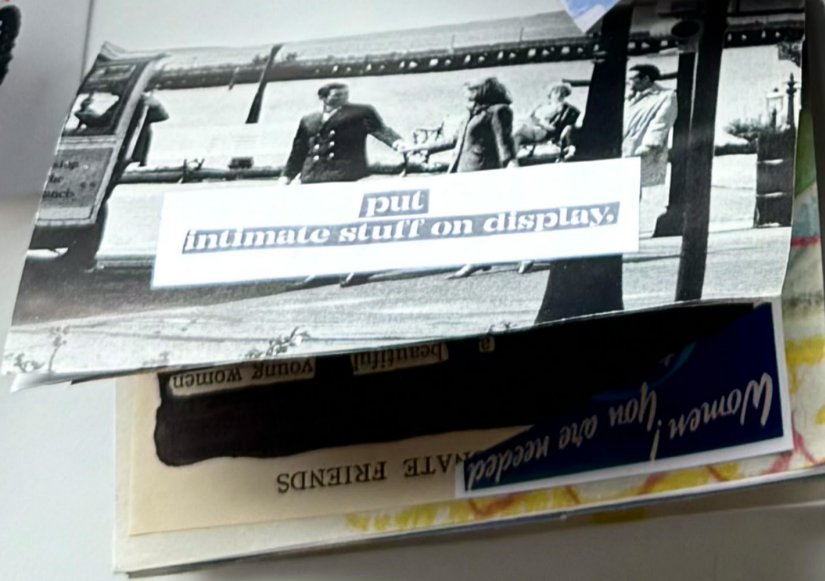
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I do not think that we even had the real happiness and beauty and delight of one another. Because, I tell you, there is no light upon kiss or embrace that is not done with pride. I do not know why it should be so, but people of our race and quality are a little ashamed of mere gratification in love. Always we seem in my memory to have been whispering with flushed cheeks, and discussing interminably—*situation*. Had something betrayed us, might something betray, was this or that sufficiently cunning? Had we perhaps left a footmark or failed to burn a note? Was the second footman, who was detailed as my valet, even now pausing astonished in the brushing of my clothes with our



'He threw his arms
around him and





Growing up, many of us found comfort in cutting out words, images, and colours from magazines collecting pieces that felt like they belonged to us. Whether it was a mood board for our future or a collage of how we felt inside, these creative practices helped us say things we didn't always have words for.

This zine continues that tradition. It's made up of pages that speak directly and indirectly to our lives, our mental health, and our identities. Through personal expression, storytelling, and visual language, we reclaim space to be seen, heard, and understood on our own terms.



Pages That Speak to Us



A Silent Struggle on Mental Health within the Black Community in Wales and the Harsh Realities of Migration.....



For dis strong foto, we dey see one African man wey dey wear him traditional clothes wey show correct pride and better culture. Him come sidon for fine chair like strong king wey get money well well, and around am na different versions of himself wey dey wear different uniform like kitchen porter, healthcare worker, security man, and construction worker.

Dis image dey tell very deep story wey many people no dey gree talk about. E dey show how many African people dey suffer mental wahala for this oyibo land, even when dem dey pretend say everything dey okay.

That Grass No Green Like You Think...



Plenty Africans people for dis world believe say once you japa (travel abroad) like dis, na di way to beta life, say plenty money go dey flow steady for your account, wahala and stress go reduce, and dem go get freedom from all di problem wey dey dia country. Because of dis dream, people dey sell everything wey den get (property), leave dia family, then risk everything make them fit japa. But wen dem finally reach oyibo land (abroad), na different story.

Dem go face wahala like language barrier, culture shock, racism, and some of them no go fit use the better certificate wey dem get back home take find work for here. Doctor go turn cleaner, accountant go dey count how many plate e wash as kitchen porter, engineer go turn security guard. Person wey people dey respect back home go come oyibo land come dey do petty job make e fit survive. Omo! E NO FUNNY OO. Na serious matter like this, and e dey worry person for mind.

Mental Wahala...



The truth for this matter be say, African people no dey talk about mental health wahala. People go tell you say; “Which one be Mental Health? Na small pikin you be?” If you dare open mouth talk say you dey tired or depressed, na sign of weakness. But Omo, japa no easy oo. Pressure choke! The stress, no rest—na so depression, anxiety and burnout dey start.

Many people dey work 12 to 16 hour shift everyday, no break, no chance to rest or think. Dem just dey survival mode. Many no dey go therapy or even open up to their close padi for help. Dem go just dey hide their pain and struggle with fake smile, keep am to themself, dey form hard-to-get. Honestly, e no easy, make we no lie.

Make We Support Ourselves...



Dis picture no be just fine foto, na reminder say we need change the way we dey think as black people. We need support systems wey understand Black and African people. Make Government, organisations, community leaders, churches, and social groups suppose help provide correct mental health resources wey go make sense to black people. Make we create safe environment so person go fit talk, person fit cry, person fit find help.

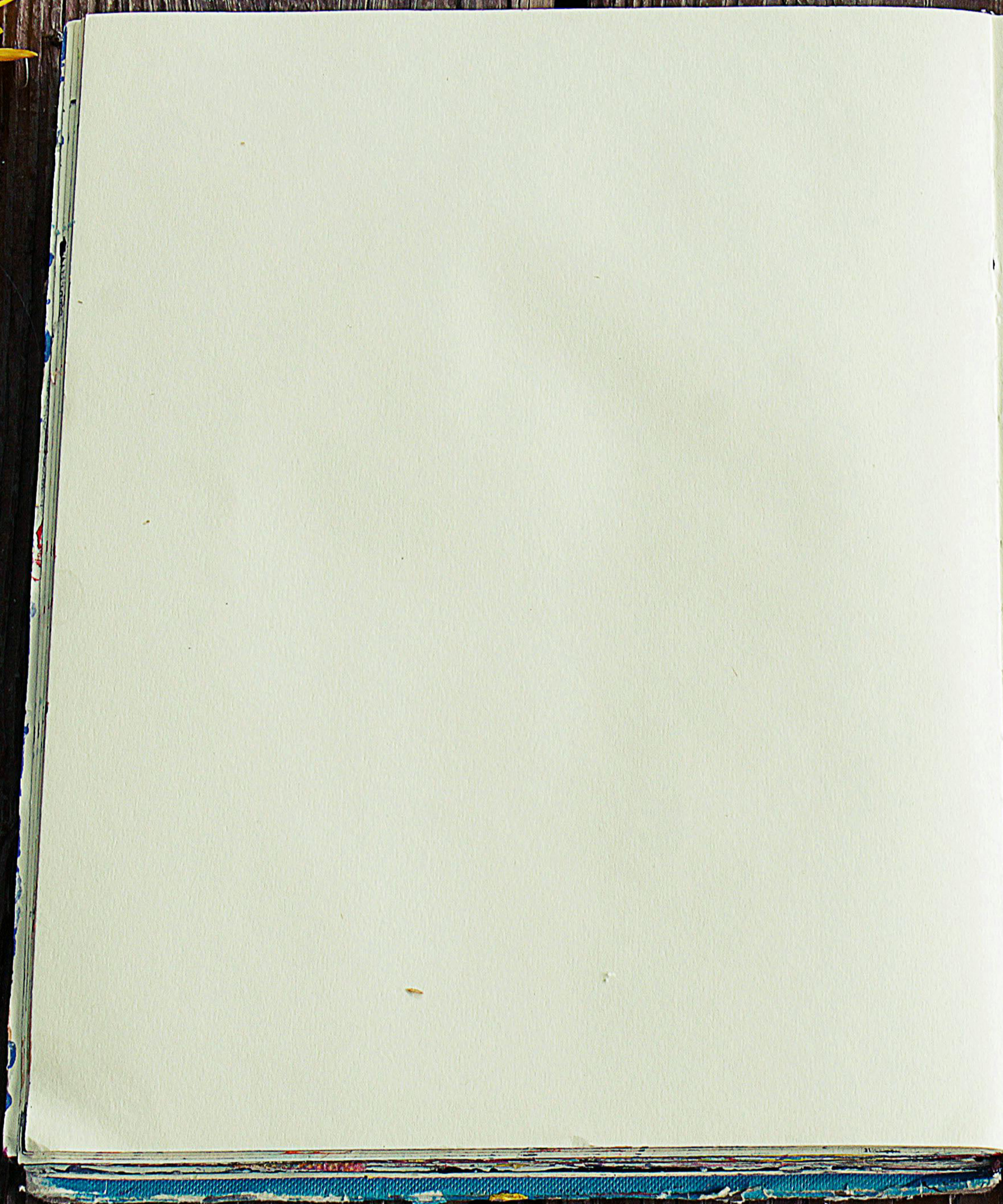
To japa no suppose mean say person go dey suffer silently. We gats recognise say di whole journey dey affect people for mind, and we gats build better system wey go heal, support, and uplift people wey don make dis sacrifice, so everybody fir learn say to ask for help no be shame. As dem dey talk, **HEALTH NA WEALTH**. Una weh done!

by Ndotenyin Godwin Akang

Model: Promise Godwin Enwongo

Photographer and Creative Director: Ndotenyin Godwin Akang

Design Your Emotional Armor.





Mental Health





Chief Editor:
Paskaline Maiyo

Project Lead:
Fadhili Maghiya

Artists:

Nelly Ating

Abike

Cheb Arts

Contributed by:

Ndotenyin Godwin Akang
Star Moyo

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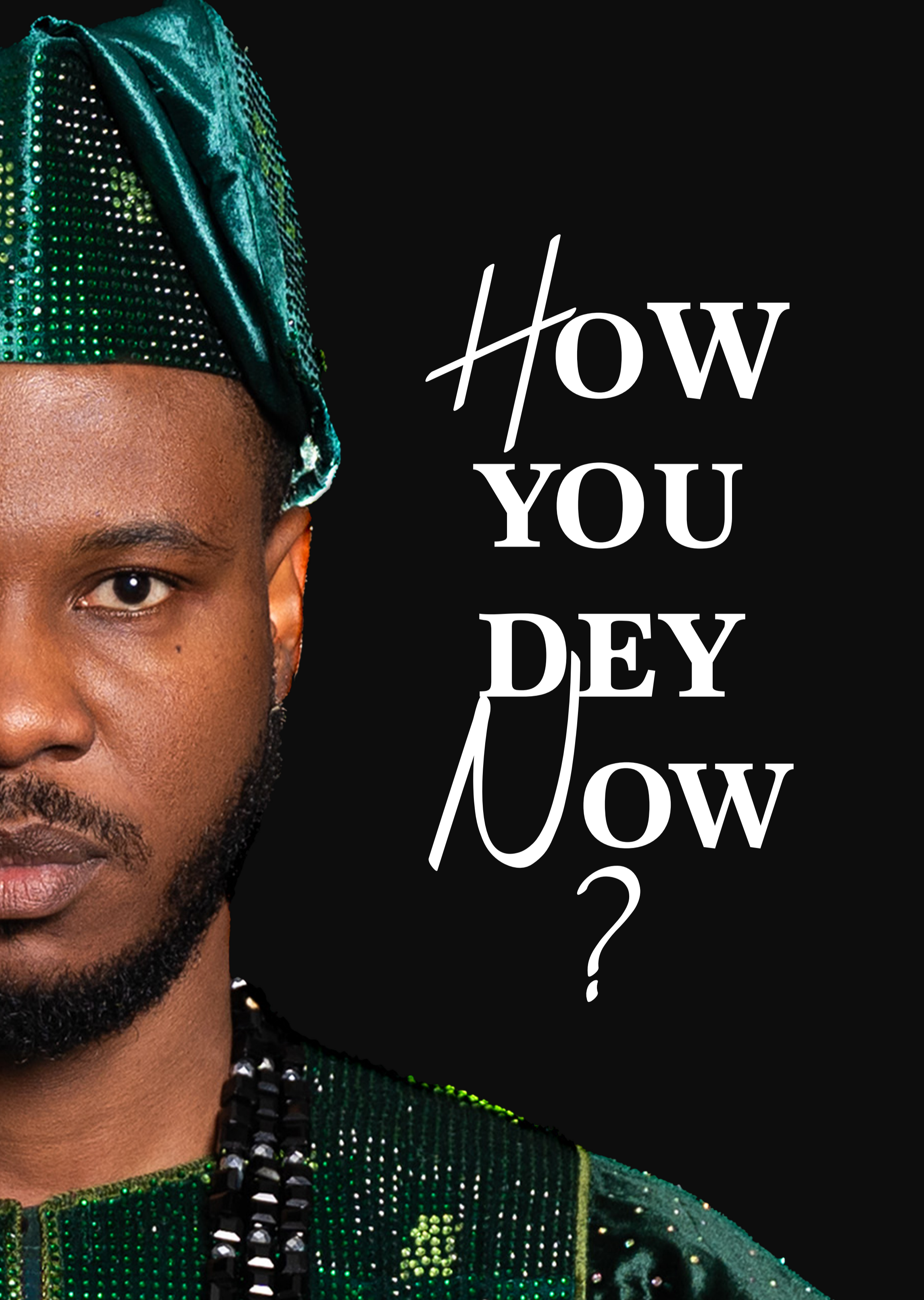
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Welsh Government

National Lottery Fund

Sub-Sahara Advisory Panel

WE NPOWER



How
YOU
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Now
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