

Department Initiatives

Stem Center, Planning Division

Planning Division Initiatives

Stem Center, Planning Division
Psychiatric Social Worker – Hiroyuki Kimura

1. Introduction

Continuing from FY 2012, the Stem Center Planning Division has been engaged in activities centered on raising public awareness, human resource development, negotiations with external organizations, and statistical processing of activities.

Overall, we have struggled to understand the constantly changing problems in disaster areas and to grasp the needs of the survivors and supporters, insofar as what kind of efforts will be of most help to them. Since we of the Planning Division have limited opportunities to actually visit locations, we have mostly acted in cooperation with the Community Support Departments of each Center.

As a result of our activities, the Center has become well known, and various requests, such as those for lectures, are increasing. Here, while looking back on FY 2013, we will describe the activities we plan on implementing in FY 2014.

2. Staff Composition

In April, one administrative staff member was switched out for another, and in July 2013 and January 2014 two psychiatric social workers joined us. We now have a nine-member division: six psychiatric social workers (one of whom is a transfer employee from a medical institution), one public health nurse (prefectural posting), and two administrative staff (one of whom is a dispatch employee).

3. FY 2013 Activities

(1) Raising Public Awareness

① Creation and Distribution of Pamphlets

We continued to distribute the pamphlets we had created in FY 2012. A pamphlet on alcohol titled “Symptoms and illnesses caused by drinking” was reprinted because it was in higher demand than expected. In 2013, we created pamphlets about dementia and are currently distributing a total of 10 types. We also listened to the opinions of experts outside the Center and tried to make the content of these pamphlets easy to understand. The pamphlets are becoming more widely known, and instances in which requests for additional copies from related organizations lead to consultations are increasing.

(For a list of awareness pamphlets created in 2013, see Page 5, under “Regarding Our Projects.”)

② Creation of a PR Magazine

In order to widely publicize the activities of this Center, we continued to create and distribute PR magazines for the general public and supporters. The publication highlights regional cooperation, not only in the activities of this Center but also in those of other organizations.

As for distribution destinations, we are continuing efforts to increase their number so as to ensure maximum visibility.

③ Management of Our Website

We updated our webpage 35 times, focusing on training workshops organized by this Center and on events of other organizations. We also posted published PR magazines and pamphlets to widely disseminate information on mental health in general. Currently, the site is accessed an average of 50 times per day.

④ Working with Newspapers, TV, and Other Media

The Planning Division responded to and coordinated various interviews with newspapers, TV, and radio.

(2) Community Resident Support

① Day Camp for Disaster-Affected Parents and Children

(For more information on the objective of this initiative, see page 7, under “Regarding Our Projects.”)

The day camp was held once again this year, on the tail of the FY 2012 event, and three members of the Planning Division were put in charge. The program was conducted for parents and children who lived in coastal areas at the time of the earthquake. Twenty-six children and three adults participated.

In the children's program, curry making, recreational activities like cardboard play and treasure hunting, and psychological education entitled "Studying the Mind" were conducted. In the questionnaire, all the children who participated answered that they had fun. For parents/guardians, a self-care program incorporating yoga and aromatherapy was implemented.

<Day Camp Questionnaire Results (1) Children (Excerpted)>

Was the "Studying the Mind" lesson easy to understand?												
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Count</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Easy to understand</td> <td>10</td> <td>60%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Normal</td> <td>7</td> <td>30%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Didn't understand</td> <td>1</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Count	Percentage	Easy to understand	10	60%	Normal	7	30%	Didn't understand	1	10%
Response	Count	Percentage										
Easy to understand	10	60%										
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Tell us what you thought about "Studying the Mind."												
I felt refreshed. / I still use those methods now. / It was very easy to understand and I feel I will be able to use some of the methods at home. / I think the information was very useful, and I enjoyed learning it. / I was able to really relax, and I think I'll try it out at home, too. / I'm glad I learned a way to help calm myself down when I'm stressed. / After I laid down, I started getting really sleepy. I felt relaxed. / I wasn't able to relax. / I often get stressed, but I felt better after taking deep breaths.												
Let us know any other thoughts or opinions you have about the event.												
I want you to have more events, like on Christmas. / The treasure hunt this year was really fun. I want to go again next year. / I liked eating the food we made and playing and learning with everyone. / The curry everyone made was really good, and I ate a lot. The roasted marshmallows and sweet potatoes were also super big and yummy. I had a lot of fun playing with the lady at the camp. / I made a lot of friends, and that made me happy.												
Now we'd like to ask the parents. Please let us know what you think of the program after having let your children participate.												
As the camp started early in the morning and continued until evening, I think children were pretty nervous about being away from their parents, that too in an unfamiliar place without many friends, for an entire day. But the moment my child came home, they said that they "want to go again next year." I was really surprised! I'm really moved at how much this fun experience and the effort all of you put in has made my child grow. / Nowadays, their school is still renting space somewhere else, and there's only 10-20 school-age children there anyway. I'm afraid that their worldview is going to end up being quite narrow because of this, so I want them to experience as much as they can to broaden their horizons. / They came back tired, but I think my children really grew as a result of this. The staff were very kind to them, and that made me happy. I hope you do this again next year. / You all did things with them that us as parents might not be able to. I'm grateful. / My child cried at first, saying that they didn't want to go, but I think they had a good time. I'm glad. Thank you. They definitely want to participate next year, too. / Even among a group of kids and adults they'd never met before, it seems they were able to share their thoughts and have a good time. I'd like them to participate again if and when this sort of event is held again. I'm still a bit worried about the fact that my child is easily scared, but I think that tendency is slowly going away as they gain more confidence. / The camp appears to have filled up my child's heart and tummy alike.												

<Day Camp Questionnaire Results (2) Parents (Excerpted)>

Do you feel you were able to learn a method that helps you relax?
I can do this yoga even when I'm home alone, and I think I'll give it a shot. Aromatherapy, however, is a bit harder for me to do by myself. I hope to participate again if the opportunity arises. / I think a little light yoga before I go to sleep could work well.
Do you think you'll be able to use what you learned here in your life?
I tend to get stressed, so I think yoga might be a good way to refresh myself.

(3) Human Resource Development

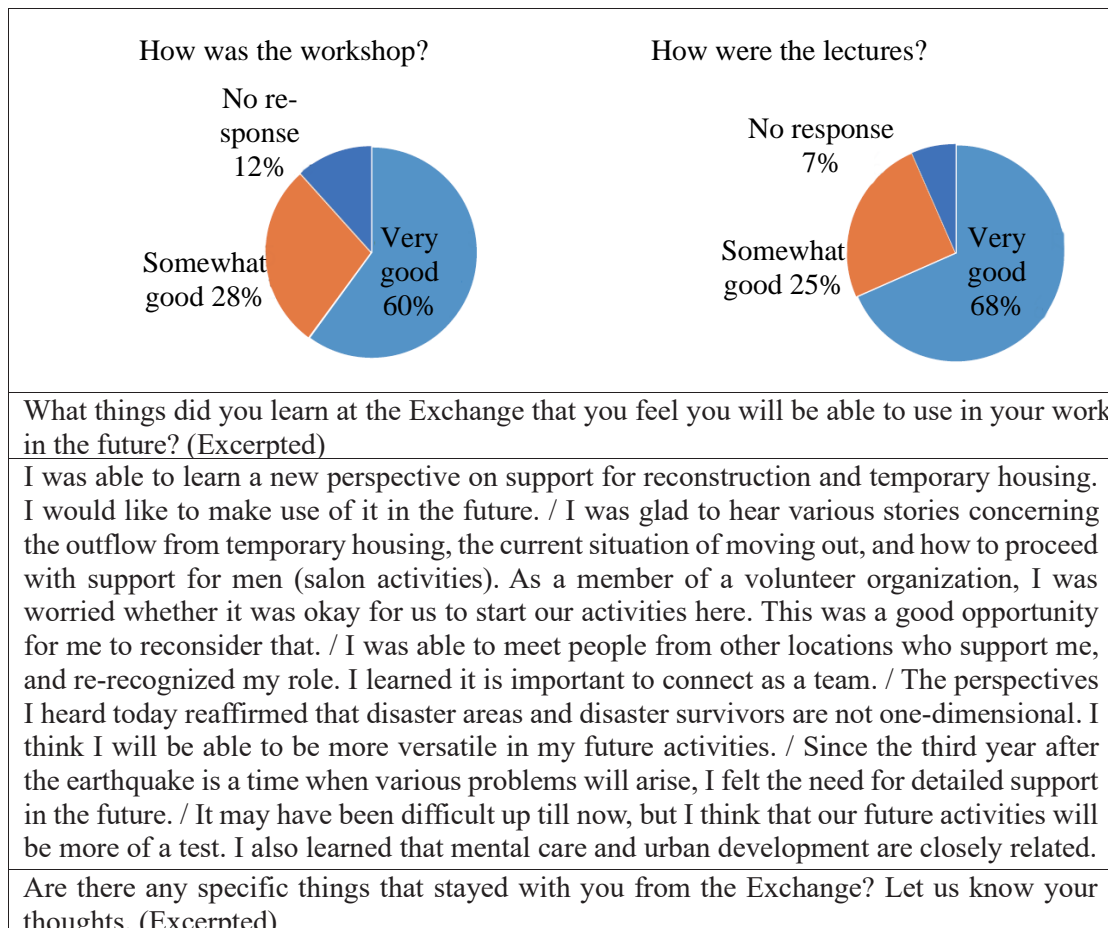
① Implementation of the Disaster Mental Health Care Exchange

After the earthquake, the Disaster Mental Health Care Exchange (hereinafter referred to as the “Exchange”) was hosted by the Disaster Mental Health Network Miyagi and this, the second edition, was co-sponsored by this Center. In FY 2013, the event was held in Kesenuma, Ishinomaki, and Sendai. The Planning Division was in charge of the 7th Exchange Meeting (Sendai City).

This project was aimed at allowing public health nurses and other officials who had been working without reprieve since the disaster a chance to take a step back from their areas of work, find time to refresh themselves, deepen their social relationships with participating officials from various other locations, and share information. At the 7th Exchange, in line with this purpose, we implemented a new initiative titled “Rounding the Edge of Support,” which involved communicating the message that cooperation among related organizations will be indispensable in responding to future problems, including relocation to public disaster housing and other changes in survivors’ environments.

The number of participants was the highest ever, with 81 people from 50 groups and departments, most of whom were supporters in the prefecture. It was conducted in two parts, a workshop and a lecture, and in a post-event questionnaire, most participants indicated that it was either “very good” or “somewhat good.”

<7th Exchange Meeting: Disaster Mental Health Care Exchange Miyagi, Questionnaire Results>

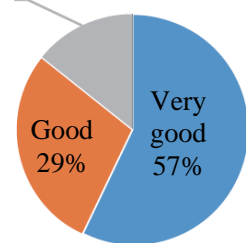


I felt that connecting people involved in mental care would be the best way to provide great support to survivors. / It seems there are few meetings aimed at supporter interaction like this one, so this was a valuable opportunity. / I was able to talk with people from various positions, and I realized once more that reconstruction happens with the involvement of everyone. / I was surprised that so many people were involved in supporting the survivors. There will be more disparities in the future, but I reaffirmed that it is important not only for the administration but also for various people to support one another because being connected to someone prevents us from becoming isolated. / I was inspired and awed by the fact that so many people in so many industries and regions are tirelessly pursuing support activities. / I realized once again that in order to carry out long-term support, it is critical that supporters themselves receive support. / I wanted to know what is important in the mental care of the supporter and what to be careful about. Both of you spoke about what you had done, and I wanted to hear from a specialist. / I learned a lot from the example you gave about leaving a message for an individual whom you had attempted to meet on a door-to-door visit but were unable to see. I'd like to try this in my own visitations. / I learned a lot about how other groups share similar issues. / I was able to learn more about the current status of activities, and I think the event was very meaningful. I'd like to use what I learned to push me to think about what I can do.

② Media Conference

We co-sponsored a training session with the National Center of Neurology and Psychiatry to report on mental health problems such as suicide and how mental health professionals should work together, as well as to deepen mutual understanding. There were 36 participants, including six people from four media companies.

Not sure
14%



Opinion on Content

③ Alcohol Training for Coastal Psychiatric Institutions

To deal with alcohol problems, which have increasingly surfaced since the disaster, a training workshop was held (and contracted to) Tohokukai Hospital, a specialized hospital, for staff of coastal psychiatric hospitals and clinics. There was a total of six participants.

④ Tri-Prefectural Disaster Mental Health Care Center Staff Training, Etc.

The training was conducted jointly by the Miyagi, Fukushima, and Iwate Heart Care Centers, which were established in the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake.

<Media Conference Questionnaire Results>

Yoga was included for the purpose of self-care. It will continue next year as well.

⑤ Training for Supporters

Training was conducted 167 times for those involved in support (including (1)–(4) above). The content included training on mental illness/disability; assistive technology training such as listening; mental health training for workplaces, geared toward supporters, children, and the elderly; self-death countermeasures; case studies, etc.

(4) Support for Supporters

In 2013, the Planning Division implemented almost no projects under the category of supporter support because of the time required to adjust the environment both inside the Center and with external organizations. In this second year of operations, I was reminded time and time again of the difficulty of teambuilding.

As for external bodies, regarding the projects outsourced to four organizations (Tohokukai Hospital, Miyagi Prefectural Psychiatric Medical Center, JASWA, Miyagi Prefectural Danshukai), we will coordinate the contents of the outsourcing and provide general administrative support.

(5) Research

① Construction of a Statistical System

The statistical system, which was under development since April 2012 for the purpose of clarifying the activity results of the entire Center, began operations this year. This system simplifies the aggregation and analysis of activity data.

In the future, we plan to collaborate with the Disaster Mental Health Information Support System being developed at the National Center of Neurology and Psychiatry, which will automatically report to the Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare and make reporting smoother.

(6) Support for Various Activities

We carried out a project aimed at cooperating with local governments, Health Centers, and concerned parties in the prefecture and supporting their activities. In 2013, we provided support for events hosted by the Sendai Grief Care Study Group, the AA Ojika Group, and the Miyagi Chapter of the Japan Psychiatric Division Nursing Technology Association.

(7) Staff Training

① Regular Training

Training for the staff of this Center has been conducted once a month since its establishment. These efforts are aimed not only at improving skills and sharing information but also at looking back on work and maintaining the mental health of staff.

However, as on-site activities increased, it became difficult for the staff to gather, and in FY 2013, we decided to hold these training workshops every other month. In addition, while these events have heretofore been held in Sendai, we also conducted training sessions once each at the Ishinomaki Regional Center and the Kesenuma Regional Center in order to better understand the situation in each location.

② A Training System for Maintaining and Improving Specialization

In addition to making training at Tohokukai Hospital and the Tohoku University Endowed Course compulsory so that staff can acquire more specialized knowledge, we arranged for our staff to participate in training conducted by other specialized organizations.

(8) Other

① Management of the Supporters' Club

The Supporters' Club is a human resources bank consisting primarily of qualified personnel, founded because it would have been difficult for Center staff alone to meet the enormous needs of various locations at the time of establishment. In FY 2013, in addition to the day camp mentioned above, we received cooperation from them for follow-ups after the survey of tenants of private rental housing and the operation of salons.

② Construction of a Web Meeting System

As the scope of our activities has expanded and the distance of our activity locations makes it difficult to hold meetings frequently, we introduced a web conferencing system.

③ Japanese Hospital and Community Psychiatry Association

Three Planning Division staff members will participate as secretariat members for the Japan Hospital/Regional Psychiatry Association to be held in Sendai City from October 31 (Friday) to November (Saturday), 2014.

4. FY 2014 Plans

Our business plan for FY 2014 is as follows, and we plan to review this business content within the Planning Division and establish the Planning and Coordination Department (Planning Division/Coordination Division) to implement it.

(1) Raising Public Awareness

In terms of our PR magazines and websites, we will continue our efforts so far. In addition to reprinting previous pamphlets as necessary, we will also create new ones on themes including stress and relaxation so that mental health can be incorporated into daily life.

Training for the general public on topics such as basic knowledge of mental health and self-care will also be conducted according to the actual conditions of the region.

<PR Magazine Publication Plans> four times per year (June, Sept, Dec, March)

<Pamphlet Creation Plans> About stress and relaxation Understanding children and mental health care, for school officials

(2) Community Resident Support

A day camp for parents and children in the disaster area will be held in 2014 as well. We will make a plan by referring to the questionnaire up to 2013 and the voices of local residents. It is scheduled to be held around October.

(3) Human Resource Development

We will continue to hold earthquake-affected care exchange meetings, media conferences, and tri-prefectural Disaster Mental Health Care Center meetings. Our alcohol training sessions, a project we have contracted to Tohokukai Hospital, aim to create a community that can deal with alcohol problems, and we will consider appropriate topics and program contents to increase the effectiveness of these sessions. In addition, training for supporters will be conducted according to the actual conditions of the region.

(4) Support for Supporters

In FY 2014, as we have done before, the Planning Division will provide support to enable the smooth implementation of outsourced projects with external organizations and will consider project content from a medium- to long-term perspective.

(5) Research

The staff will receive regular training so that the statistical system can be operated appropriately. Based on the data obtained from the statistical system, we will conduct surveys and research that will be useful for future community mental health, such as comparisons of different municipalities.

(6) Support for Various Activities

In FY 2014, as we have done before, we will cooperate with local governments, Health Centers, concerned parties, and other organizations operating in the prefecture and support their activities.

(7) Staff Training

Regular training will be held every other month as in FY 2013. Regarding the content of the event, we will take requests from the staff and plan something that meets the needs of the site.

In addition, we will look back on our activities, share information between Regional Centers, and maintain the mental health of our staff.

(8) Other

As for the Supporters' Club, there is still a chronic shortage of manpower in many communities, so increasing the number of registered members and establishing a system that makes it easier to utilize Supporters' Club members are future issues. The number of members will be doubled to 10 and we will aim to respond to local requests immediately. Furthermore, we will clarify the department in charge of the Supporters' Club and build a system that makes it easier to make use of its manpower.

5. Discussion/Wrap-Up

In Miyagi Prefecture, the construction of public disaster housing has begun in earnest, and the environment surrounding the survivors is about to change further.

Preparing a living environment for the survivors is the first step toward reconstruction, but when public disaster housing was built after the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, Niigata Chuetsu Earthquake, and Chuetsu-oki Earthquake, problems such as the disappearance of communities created in temporary housing and resident aging surfaced. The solving of brick-and-mortar problems, like the construction of housing, is often considered to be the only task of reconstruction. However, we must be aware that new challenges may arise in local communities.

Until now, we have been working in response to requests from local communities. I think this approach allowed us to very effectively respond to the challenges facing the region. However, in future, it will be necessary for us to proactively communicate with local entities regarding possible problems from a medium- to long-term perspective while responding to the needs of the region.

Unlike the Regional Support Division, the Planning Division has few opportunities to provide direct resident support, and it is difficult to see the actual results of our efforts. However, the work content is wide-ranging, such as negotiations with other organizations, meetings, and development and implementation of plans that transcend municipalities. We would like to learn from the experiences of the Hyogo and Niigata Disaster Mental Health Care Centers and aim to create an environment where not only the staff of this Center but also supporters related to the earthquake can easily work. In addition, with the goal of elevating the quality of mental health work throughout Miyagi Prefecture in mind, we would like to fully consider and implement more effective responses to the issues that are expected from here on out, even though our manpower is limited.

6. Conclusion

We received support from many people in 2013. In particular, I would like to thank the Disaster Mental Health Care Centers in both Hyogo and Niigata for their many suggestions from a medium- to long-term perspective. Our activities, aimed at responding to the ever-changing problems of disaster areas, are always touch and go. Amidst this floundering, hearing stories of their past experiences has been exceptionally reassuring, and we have relied to a great extent on their presence. And above all else, we hold the most profound respect for the effort and diligence we see in these narratives.

With these lessons taught to us by our seniors taken to heart, and as we accumulate experience after experience, we aim to put forth our best effort each and every day to move forward on our journey toward disaster and community mental health support.