

Introduction

Where does mental health care go from here?

Miyagi Prefecture Mental Health and Welfare Association

Director: Noriyuki Takashina

(Shotokai Minamihama Central Hospital Chairman)

Restoration and reconstruction are always implemented following a disaster. In an era of gradual social change, restoration may enable a lifestyle that is almost identical to that preceding the disaster. Conversely, in an era of rapid social change, we must restore and reconstruct while anticipating the social changes that will be present when reconstruction is achieved. However, following a disaster, we may not have the luxury of time to consider a specific form of reconstruction with the future in mind, and we must decide within a set period. For example, if an individual's home is damaged and at least partially destroyed, they will need to dismantle their home, which will cost millions of yen. To that end, they can use public funds at the expense of the local government, or fund it themselves after receiving subsidies. However, they will not receive subsidies if they fail to apply within the period specified by the local government (usually a few months). Realistically, individuals must decide whether to demolish their home within this timeframe or repair it and continue to live there. It is impossible to fathom 10 or 20 years into the future and decide accordingly, so these individuals must decide based on their various present circumstances. Now, the present has arrived, and does it align with the predicted future?

The novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) that began in 2020 continues to proliferate. In August 2021, 10 years after the Great East Japan Earthquake, the government classified COVID-19 as a disaster.

COVID-19 has made it more difficult for people to interact with each other and furthered the isolation of solitary individuals, and it has become more difficult for people to help each other to overcome a disaster.

After transitioning from a hunting society to an agricultural society to an industrial society, we are presently in the era termed the "information society." In the future, we will shift toward a new human-centered economic society, called Society 5.0. In Society 5.0, both economic development and resolution of social issues will be achieved. Moreover, people can lead comfortable, vibrant, and high-quality lives because of the advanced fusion between cyberspace and real space, as well as the provision of products and services that carefully meet diverse and latent needs without any disparities depending on region, age, or gender. Furthermore, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are international goals aimed at achieving a sustainable and better world by 2030, has the slogan: "Leave no one behind." What will inclusive mental health care look like in an irreversible COVID context and post-COVID society? We must find timely answers to this question and act immediately to find ways to help each other.