

# FY2020 Miyagi Mental Health Care Forum Implementation Report

## Introduction

The Miyagi Mental Health Care Forum has been hosted annually by the Miyagi Disaster Mental Health Care Center (hereinafter, “Center”) to facilitate exchange and information-sharing among supporters since 2017. It was planned from an early stage that the FY2020 event would involve content that summarizes support activities conducted over the past 10 years, given the major milestone of 10 years having passed since the earthquake.

However, just over a month after the end of the last Mental Health Care Forum, the novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) became a global pandemic, and various training activities and projects were forced to be canceled or postponed.

As the number of infected individuals continues to increase in Miyagi Prefecture, this year was truly one of trial and error. Questions loomed regarding whether the FY2020 forum could be hosted, and what form of forum would ensure stakeholders’ safety.

## 1. Implementation overview

The event was initially set to be hosted at the Sendai City Welfare Plaza in November 2020. However, given the increase in COVID-19 infections in the prefecture since the beginning of the autumn, the in-person event was canceled, and we began preparations to host an online event sometime in February 2021. It was a format with which we were unfamiliar, and there was a great deal of anxiety in our implementation; however, thanks to careful discussions between the managers, and the assistance of external collaborators, we were able to host the event.

The speakers were the following four people who have mainly been responsible for mental health-related support activities in the prefecture after the Great East Japan Earthquake, with all participation conducted online. Furthermore, we imposed time restrictions to reduce the risk of infection, sufficient distances were maintained between speakers in the photography venue, and we carefully considered ventilation and infection protocols. To avoid problems due to communication lines, questions from participants were answered using the “Q&A” function instead of verbal responses. We hosted the event with equal consideration to both COVID-19 countermeasures and to improving the communication environment.

### (1) Purpose of the event

The purpose was to take a prefecture-wide and broad perspective to share the current situation of the disaster area from practical reports of supporters, deepen knowledge through the exchange of opinions of participants, and investigate the way forward for community mental health and welfare.

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| (2) Date and time of event: | February 27, 2021 (Saturday) 13:00–15:00.  |
| (3) Event format:           | online conference system, Zoom, was used   |
| (4) Participants:           | Supporters, such as local governments, as well as associated organizations’ staff involved in disaster victim support  |
| (5) Theme:                  | Summary of support for disaster victims and prospects for community mental health and welfare  |
| (6) Program: Part 1:        | Summary of mental health care of the disaster area in Miyagi Prefecture (13:05–14:05)<br>Speaker: Hidekatsu Shirasawa (board member, Tohokukai Hospital)<br>Keizo Hara (Director, Karakoro Station Hara Clinic)<br>Akiko Obara (Director, Miyagi Mental Health and Welfare Center)<br>Naru Fukuchi (Vice President, Miyagi Disaster Mental Health Care Center) |

Part 2: Discussion (14:05–15:00)

## 2. Participant questionnaire results

We received 45 responses out of 81 participants (response rate of 55.6%). Approximately half of the participants were associated with government agencies and medical institutions. The other half were associated with welfare, education, and private organizations. For this event, approximately 30% of participants were from

outside of the prefecture.

For the content evaluation, responses were extremely favorable, with over 80% giving a response of “very good,” and the number increasing to almost 100% when including responses of “somewhat good.” Many of the comments included “district (community) diagnosis,” “outreach,” and “human resource development.” Many participants commented that this was an opportunity to re-affirm the necessity and importance of these aspects. Many comments asked about what the ideal way forward should be with support activities in the era of COVID-19, as well as requests for the implementation of Zoom-based projects in the future.

### 3. Event video and release of materials on day of event

Video of this forum is open to the public, along with the materials on the day of the event. These can be accessed from the Center homepage. Therefore, if you were unable to participate, please refer to the access method described below and confirm.

### 4. Conclusion

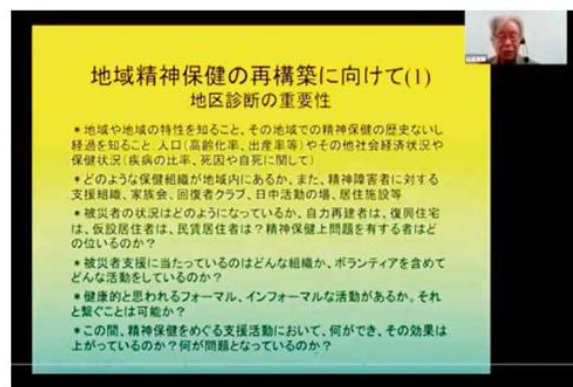
Given the COVID-19 pandemic, we were forced to host this event using Zoom; simultaneously, however, there were many advantages. For example, participants were able to join not only from other prefectures, but also from overseas. There have been many external supporters in Miyagi Prefecture since immediately after the disaster. Additionally, supporters who once worked at the Center are also active in other prefectures. We believe it is significant that such individuals had the opportunity to learn about the current situation of Miyagi Prefecture, 10 years after the earthquake, while remaining in their respective regions. Moreover, for the Center, we are grateful that many people are still interested in Miyagi Prefecture.

Furthermore, the events of the day were recorded and posted on our homepage. The speakers at this event are central figures who have supported the mental health of Miyagi Prefecture after the Great East Japan Earthquake in their respective positions. Thus, we think that the compilation of the materials and remarks of such individuals will serve as a valuable resource toward future disasters. These are new transmission methods created from the COVID-19 crisis.

COVID-19 is expected to continue for the time being. Many projects, such as salon activities, were limited in FY2020 due to COVID-19; however, as we accumulated knowledge on project implementation in COVID-19, we gradually moved toward resuming these projects. We believe that there is a need to continue maintaining important venues and connections for disaster-affected areas with sufficient consideration and innovations.



Forum photography venue



YouTube video transmitted from homepage

#### [Access method]

- ① Access on Center homepage at <http://miyagi-kokoro.org/>.

\* Alternatively, search for “Miyagi Disaster Mental Health Care Center” on your browser.

- ② From the top-page menu on the homepage:

“Activity Report” ➡ “Mental Health Care Forum (FY2020)”

➡ “FY2020 Miyagi Mental Health Care Forum (hosted 2021.2.27)”

➡ Access from “[Video is here](#)”.

#### [Access from smartphone]

In addition to the above-mentioned method, the video is accessible using the QR code on the right.

