

Document I

Second Operation Plan of the Miyagi Disaster
Mental Health Care Center (Summary version)
FY 2021–FY 2025

Purpose of plan

The prefecture has indicated a policy of continuing mental health care even after FY 2021 and formulated the “Miyagi Prefecture Mental Health Care Initiative Policy for FY 2021 Onward” in August 2020. Based on this, the Center decided to formulate a second operation plan to clarify the basic principles and policies of operation during the five-year period from FY 2021 to FY 2025.

Initiatives and issues to date

Resident support

We offered victim support upon the request of municipalities by sharing the role of support center support staff and others who supported residents requiring follow-up after health surveys. The number of requests for support for older adults living alone and cases with multiple problems, such as alcohol-related problems, has increased, and we provided support in cooperation with related organizations in municipalities and communities. These initiatives were indispensable for the early detection and early support of various issues.

We conducted forum activities for apartment-type rental housing residents, who tend to be isolated, in collaboration with municipalities and related organizations. These initiatives were effective in preventing isolation and deterioration of physical and mental health

Relocation to public housing has progressed, and the number of cases that lead to support from health surveys has decreased. Collaborations and relationships of trust were established with municipalities and related organizations through the activities. We have received more requests for supervising and accompanying visits of difficult cases, such as shut-ins

Support for supporters

Projects on alcohol-related problems and suicide prevention measures have led to the effective development of projects in line with community mental health and welfare issues as a result of cooperating with municipalities and health centers. The Center adopted a secondment system from an early stage to dispatch staff to municipalities upon their request. These staff members responded to various issues that arose in the disaster area after the disaster, such as overseeing mental health and welfare projects and difficult cases, and they were highly regarded by the municipalities.

We established staff member counseling service booths with the cooperation of the Department of Preventive Psychiatry of the Graduate School of

Medicine at Tohoku University based on requests from municipalities, and we provided individual consultations. We have seen promising results, such as increased awareness of the importance of mental health measures in the workplace through the continuous provision of support.

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Raising public awareness

We cooperated with community residents' workshops held by municipalities. The use of picture-story shows and skits that made the topics feel more familiar to the residents was effective in improving the mental health of the inhabitants.

We cooperated with municipalities and related organizations to try to understand residents who tended to be isolated, and we held forums and various classes.

This was effective in improving the physical and mental health of residents who tended to be isolated after moving into public housing or relocating.

Moreover, we disseminated various information, such as the Center's activity status and training, on the homepage and workshops, which led to an understanding of mental health issues and alcohol-related problems among residents.

Children's Mental Health Care Community Base Project

We responded to consultations from children and parents through walk-ins and home visits. The number of handled cases is increasing every year, and the content tends to be complicated. For the professional dispatch project, which has the objective of providing professional advice to supporters, we provided Center staff-based supervision upon the request of municipalities, dispatched professionals (e.g., clinical psychologists and psychiatric social workers), conducted case studies with municipal managers and others, and responded to consultations. This was an opportunity for municipal managers to recognize the usefulness of collaborating with external professionals.

We also invited instructors from outside of the prefecture to conduct training for educators and supporters. There was much interest from public health nurses, nursery teachers, school teachers, and others, and there were many participants in each session.

We conducted the "Children's Cohort Study" in three prefectures in the Tohoku region (Iwate, Miyagi, Fukushima) to evaluate the transformation of children and families and clarify efficient support. This is expected to offer valuable data, and it is thought that the project should continue into the future.

Human resource development

We took up a wide range of themes in response to requests from related organizations and supported the mental health promotion of victims. Initially, we received many requests for cooperation in earthquake-related lectures and training, such as stress and PTSD following the earthquake. Over the years, the topics changed to alcohol-related problems, suicide prevention, and workplace mental health.

We have conducted on-the-job training for alcohol-related problems since the opening of the Center after being entrusted by Tohokukai Hospital. We receive many requests every year. Many community medical organizations and local government officials have taken the course. However, although the number of graduates is increasing every year, we have faced difficulty in raising the level of community supporters owing to relocations at the affiliated location. In the future, we may need to collaborate with municipalities and health centers to continue studying the training content.

Research

The bulletin published every year and the official activity record published in FY 2020 are also the result of a detailed summary of the activities in the Center to date.

The Miyagi Mental Health Care Forum, which was started in FY 2017, was planned as a venue for sharing and understanding the current situation of the disaster area as well as investigating the reconstruction of community mental health and welfare in the future. As support organizations continue to withdraw from the region every year, there have been fewer places for where supporters can gather and exchange ideas. Visitors have noted the necessity of these types of plans.

Basic principle and basic policy

Basic principle

Improvement of community mental health welfare in disaster-affected areas

Basic policy

- ① Implement "seamless support for residents, from children to adults."
- ② Resident support involves mental health care activities centering on outreach, based on accompanying visits with related organizations, such as municipalities.
- ③ Support for supporters involves implementing activities that contribute to the improvement of the skills of supporters through case studies and consultations. It should aim for support relating to the mental health of supporters.
- ④ Raising public awareness involves activities relating to mental health for community residents that prioritize preventive viewpoints to deepen understanding and interest in the mental health of residents, delivered in cooperation with municipalities.
- ⑤ Implementing activities must be with the perspective of handing down the experience cultivated in past activities, such as summarizing the ideal way of support to be utilized in the event of a future disaster. The activities that the Center has overseen will be valuable knowledge of mental health care activities in the event of a disaster.
- ⑥ Activities must be conducted according to the actual circumstances of municipalities while collaborating and cooperating with related organizations, such as municipalities, to improve community mental health and welfare activities. The transition of various projects must be systematically implemented in anticipation of the conclusion of activities in FY 2025.

Project plan

Resident support

- ◇ There is a need to focus on older adults living alone, isolated individuals, infants and schoolchildren, people with alcohol-related problems, and those who have other problems, such as being a shut-in.
- ◇ Cases with multiple issues are increasing. We will conduct visits and consultations with municipal and health center public health nurses to provide seamless support to residents, from children to adults. Furthermore, we recognize the need to cooperate with medical and welfare-related organizations in the community and to shift to community mental health and welfare activities while responding by teams.

Plan

We will collaborate with related organizations to conduct consultation support activities for community residents who require mental health care, such as residents with psychological burdens after the disaster or residents who have become further isolated owing to changes in the community. We will seek to improve community mental health.

Support for supporters

- ◇ Supporters who oversee support activities in disaster areas will continue to be important players in reconstruction, and follow-ups on supporters represent an important task. We will supervise individual cases with an eye toward human resource development and provide technical support, such as accompanying visits, with an aim toward skill improvement of supporters. We will collaborate with health centers and mental health welfare centers depending on the local circumstances.

Plan

We will provide professional advice and accompanying visits for supporters to help them address a wide range of mental health issues. We aim to further improve the skills and reduce the psychological burdens of supporters by providing opportunities for various professional training (including self-care).

Raising public awareness

- ◇ Activities for raising public awareness among residents, to improve the mental health of community residents and preventing aggravation of any illnesses, will be conducted in collaboration with municipalities and health centers using various methods that we have cultivated. We will further establish the understanding and interest of residents toward mental health.
- ◇ Regarding places to gather, such as various forums with which the Center has been involved, there is a need for continuously providing a place where residents can connect and be active, and for investigating the ideal form of such activities in collaboration with municipalities and related organizations.
- ◇ The bulletin and its English translation, the official activity record compiled in the final fiscal year, and other materials are published on the homepage. The practice of the Center to date can be utilized for new disasters. The keeping of various documents relating to raising public awareness issued by the Center, such as organizing them by phase, is also an important issue to consider.

Plan

We will continue to disseminate information to further establish and deepen the retention of information on mental health that has been spread in the wake of the earthquake. We will provide places where people can casually gather. We will also deliver lectures to residents who work during the day, and we will use various methods to provide necessary information to all community residents. Furthermore, we will collect the knowledge gained through long-term activities and disseminate the results to contribute to future disaster countermeasures.

Individual support

We will visit residents who require support upon the request of municipalities. For difficult cases, we will collaborate with related organizations to strengthen the team-based support system. We will promote the transition through these activities so that we can respond as part of the community mental health and welfare activities, where local governments, related organizations, and community residents work together.

Community resident exchange project

Regarding places to gather, such as various salons with which the Center has been involved, we will continuously provide places where residents can connect and be active. We will investigate the ideal form of such activities in the future, in collaboration with municipalities and related organizations.

Supporter consultations

We provide professional advice from the perspective of mental health in response to requests from supporters regarding the handling of difficult cases and project management.

Supporters' mental health support

We will conduct training and interviews for supporters at the request of municipalities, with the aim of self-care promotion and skill improvement.

Support for supporters involved in children's mental health care

We will provide consultations and training for supporters through cohort studies. We aim to provide effective support for children's mental health care.

Mental health public awareness promotion project

We will make efforts that utilize the various methods we have cultivated to further establish the understanding and interest of residents toward mental health. Furthermore, we will provide information on mental health to elementary, junior high, and high school students in the prefecture. We will also disseminate professional knowledge and skills to related parties at the request of local governments.

Dissemination of mental health information

We will disseminate information on mental health through public relations magazines and the homepage to deepen understanding among residents. Additionally, we will actively disclose materials to utilize the knowledge that the center has cultivated for new disasters.

Annual activity report creation project

We will summarize the activities for each year and provide activity reports to related organizations.

Promotion of plan

① Progress management

After the end of the half term, manager-level employees and above will confirm and evaluate the implementation status of the operation plan. The steering committee will also evaluate the status.

② Promotion system

The system will gradually shrink as we move toward the conclusion of activities in FY 2025. Meanwhile, outreach by multiple occupations and support for supporters need to be developed as an important project of the Center. We will secure a personnel system according to the amount of work and promote this work.