

Ishinomaki Regional Center Community Support Division Activity Report

The activities of the Ishinomaki Regional Center (“Division”) during FY 2023 in the areas affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake were located in Ishinomaki City, Higashimatsushima City, and Onagawa Town, under the jurisdiction of the Ishinomaki Public Health Center.

【Resident support project】

1. Individual support

Since opening in April 2012, the Division has mainly cooperated with the local government’s disaster public housing health survey. It has provided support to those referred from other institutions, those who directly complained of poor health, and those with mental problems. The number of consultations has decreased since the end of the health survey.

Given the end of activities of the Miyagi Disaster Mental Health Care Center (MDMHCC), we considered a transition to health activities for the local government and provided support in cooperation with health centers as well as cities and towns when residents directly consulted the MDMHCC. We also endeavored to respond to requests, such as accompanying visits from related institutions, to the extent possible.

(1) Ishinomaki City

In FY 2023, we conducted an accompanying visit with a public health nurse from the Health Promotion Division of the Ishinomaki City Health and Welfare Department (“Health Promotion Division”) after receiving a consultation. We also received a request for cooperation from the Oshika General Branch Office Citizen Welfare Division, involving the need to examine and provide advice on a support method and future directions for an alcohol addiction case.

(2) Higashimatsushima City

In FY 2023, we received no requests for individual support from the Higashimatsushima City Health and Welfare Department, Health Promotion Division (“Health Promotion Division”).

(3) Onagawa Town

In FY 2023, we received requests from the Onagawa Town Health Promotion Division, Health Measures Section (“Health Measures Section”), for an accompanied visit to individuals with alcoholism and other issues, and we responded accordingly.

【Support for supporters project】

1. Supporter consultation project (e.g., advice from a professional a standpoint)

(1) Ishinomaki Public Health Center

In June 2023, we held a meeting with the mental health officer to discuss support for those released from involuntary hospitalization, cases in which responding to a consultation was difficult, and requests for support from the public health center.

In September 2023, the FY 2023 Regional Mental Health and Welfare Officers Meeting was held to (1) discuss efforts and issues of the FY 2023 mental health and welfare project (reports from the public health center, each city and town, and Division) and (2) exchange opinions and information (regarding mental health activities in the district and for the “establishment of a comprehensive community care system that also responds to mental disorders”).

At the request of public health centers, we also continued to accompany those who were released from involuntary hospitalization on home visits to provide support.

(2) Ishinomaki City

- ① We held meetings with the Ishinomaki City Health Promotion Division Mental Health Group as needed.

Ishinomaki City has trained listening volunteers and is currently providing support for local activities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, listening activities and training sessions were limited. This fiscal year, we decided to conduct follow-up training and cooperate as lecturers.

We noted many difficult mother–child cases in recent years. Discussions that included a mental health perspective were held, based on the analysis of cases by Ishinomaki City.

Upon the request of a maternal and child health group, we cooperated in various infant health checkups in the main government district, confirmed the health status of parents and children, and listened to the problems that the parents had. In conferences, we discussed the characteristics of children and how to respond to them, as well as examined support for parents from various backgrounds.

We also responded to consultations regarding cases involving the public health nurse in charge of the district as needed.

- ② In child-rearing consultations at the Ishinomaki City child-rearing comprehensive support center (“Issyo”), we directly provided consultations to parents and also examined the direction of support after the parents had consulted with the support staff. Common consultation contents included children’s mental and physical development, children’s characteristics and how to respond to them, discipline, responding to siblings, and communication with children. Many cases involved an intricate intertwining of problems faced by parents (e.g., work–family life balance, domestic violence, solo childrearing and housework, parenting, stepfamilies, confusion with raising a second child after a stillbirth or miscarriage, impact of parental trauma on children, flashbacks and poor health owing to the earthquakes) and the effects of parental stress being reflected on relationships with children.
- ③ We participated in a training seminar for new public health nurses as an advisor for the case study group.

(3) Higashimatsushima City

We held one meeting with the Health Promotion Division. We received a request from the Health Promotion Division and assisted in the review and creation of pamphlet contents for raising awareness about appropriate drinking habits, materials to be used in mental health lectures for older adults, and pamphlets to be distributed.

(4) Onagawa Town

We held bimonthly meetings with the Health Countermeasures Section of the Health and Welfare Division to share information on the mental health and welfare project as well as on individual cases. The Health Countermeasures Section of the Health and Welfare Division requested the dispatch of a lecturer for a suicide countermeasures training session for young town staff members and local health promotion officers. A Division staff member was dispatched.

2. Support for supporters regarding children’s mental healthcare (consultations, training, etc., for supporters)

(1) Children’s support facility visit project

The program was held twice in FY 2023. Prior to the program implementation, the public health nurse in charge provided information on the environment surrounding children, including the children’s families. On the day of the program, the children’s behavior was observed, followed by a staff conference.

The conference was attended by facility supporters and the local public health nurse in charge of child and family support. It involved an exchange of opinions on how to assess children’s problematic behavior, response methods, and parent support methods.

The content differed by case, but the themes of the lectures included understanding and responding to children’s problematic behavior, risks of forming attachments, emotional expression, and the mental health of supporters. In difficult-to-handle cases, differences in opinion between supporters sometimes resulted in a conflicting relationship. The conference was an opportunity to appreciate the hard work of supporters, each with their own perspectives, and to think about the direction of support that is desirable for the children, such as how to utilize the differences in perspectives as support.

【Public awareness campaign】

1. Mental health public awareness promotion project

(1) Mental healthcare lecture (health lecture) (Onagawa Town)

We cooperated in the implementation of the “Mental healthcare lecture” for residents organized by Onagawa Town, which consisted of a lecture by a psychiatrist, magic tricks by volunteers who are trained listeners, and a chorus by all participants.

Table X. Mental healthcare lecture, Onagawa Town

Date	Location	Content	Participants
December 15, 2023	Onagawa Town Sports Park Housing Building 6 Assembly Hall	Lecture: “Depression, providing mutual mental support in the community” Tsutomu Kimura, Director, Kaihoukai Kashima Memorial Hospital Magic tricks by 11 volunteers who are trained listeners	20 people

(2) Ishinomaki lunchtime meeting (Danshukai)

We received a request for cooperation from the Miyagi Prefecture Danshukai and provided logistical support at the monthly meeting. We also supported the organization in seeking future collaboration and cooperation in promoting the activities of the Danshukai to psychiatric and general hospitals in the Ishinomaki area.

2. Dissemination of mental health information

We responded to requests for providing information from public health centers and from two cities and one town.

【Summary/future prospects and challenges】

The Division is gradually scaling down its operations in preparation for concluding its activities by FY 2025, as per the Second Mental Health Care Center Management Plan formulated in March 2021. The volume of activity is decreasing each year. The Miyagi Disaster Mental Health Care Center Ishinomaki Regional Center Schedule was presented at the FY 2023 Regional Mental Health and Welfare Officer Meeting in September 2023, where the Division's future activity schedule was explained. We have previously explained the plan individually to the public health centers and local government units. We believe that we have achieved a certain level of understanding.

In the Ishinomaki area, we have shared the direction of community mental health and welfare activities from FY 2021 with public health centers, set the goal of "local supporters improving their capabilities and working together to support residents," and provided support to cities and towns. Regarding support for cities and towns, we have provided support with the awareness of contributing to the skills improvement of supporters, such as public health nurses, through accompanying visits upon request, case studies, and consultations. We have sought to respond to requests from related institutions to the extent possible. We have also responded to requests from related organizations for assistance in difficult-to-handle cases.

In the remaining time before the end of activities, we hope to continue to respond to requests from related organizations to the extent possible as before and to provide behind-the-scenes support for local supporters.