

Efforts toward “handing down”

The basic principle and basic policy of the Second Operation Plan clearly states as follows: “Implementing activities with the perspective of handing down the experience cultivated through past activities, such as summarizing the ideal way of support that can be utilized in the event of future disasters, since the activities that the MDMHCC has overseen to date will be valuable knowledge on mental healthcare activities in the event of a disaster.”

In FY 2022, we began our handing down efforts in earnest. We have been considering the who, what, and how of this process. In this fiscal year, we have been asked to use this work as a basis to make more specific plans. Therefore, we describe the progress of the handing down work thus far and the details of future efforts.

1. The conceptualization and framework of “handing down”

(1) Significance of handing down

To date, the MDMHCC has conducted various activities according to the needs of the disaster-affected area. Similar needs may arise in areas affected by future disasters. Therefore, the types of needs that may arise in disaster-affected areas must be clarified. Moreover, communicating and leaving behind the response activities that the MDMHCC had conducted will prove helpful in carrying out future support activities.

There are many records and materials on support activities in the field of mental health immediately following a disaster, but there are hardly any for the medium to long term. When the scale of a disaster is limited, the support immediately following the disaster is the primary focus. When a large-scale disaster like the Great East Japan Earthquake occurs, there is a need for medium- to long-term support. Therefore, it is important to communicate and leave behind the knowledge acquired by the MDMHCC.

(2) Two pillars of “handing down”

① Handing down what the MDMHCC has done

Analyze the accumulated figures related to the activities carried out by the MDMHCC thus far, examine the results and their significance, or issues, and clarify and hand over the knowledge gained through mid- to long-term support after disasters

② Handing down useful knowledge in future disasters through the MDMHCC’s experience

Based on the work in ①, organize the mental health support needs in disaster-affected areas that are expected to emerge in future disasters, as well as the effective methods and contents of support for those areas, and hand down this information to help with preparations during non-disaster periods.

(3) Specific efforts for “handing down”: Compilation by the subjects of the handing down process

We plan to divide the subjects of the handing down process into the following two categories, clarify the expected questions and issues when implementing support activities for each, and organize what can be communicated from the MDMHCC’s experience for addressing those questions and issues. Subsequently, we will disseminate them through various methods, such as through the Internet and books.

① “Handing down to local supporters involved in mental healthcare after disasters” (“handing down to supporters in disaster-affected areas”)

This initiative seeks to contribute to the smooth provision of mental health support to disaster victims and supporters by municipal public health nurses and other professionals.

② “Handing down of organizational management for mental healthcare practice after disasters” (“handing down to specialized mental healthcare organizations”)

This initiative seeks to help organizations that specialize in providing support for the mental health of disaster victims and supporters (mental health centers or similar organizations) as well as their staff to conduct their work in a smooth manner.

2. Initiatives in FY 2022

The concept, framework, and work of “handing down” were shared within the MDMHCC.

- (1) We decided to summarize the various activities that the Stem Center, Kesenuma Regional Center, and Ishinomaki Regional Center (“three centers”) had been conducting in the local community in accordance with the shared concept and framework of “handing down.”
- (2) It is essential for the three centers to work together. They began to consider a system for this purpose.

3. Initiatives in FY 2023

Specific tasks for “handing down” involved work along the lines of “handing down to supporters in disaster-affected areas” and “handing over to specialized mental healthcare organizations.”

① “Handing down to supporters in disaster-affected areas”

We narrowed down the efforts to the themes of “support for temporary supporters (non-professional supporters), such as temporary housing lifestyle supporters,” “salon activities for residents of private rental housing,” “support for alcohol-related problems,” and “changes in support as an external organization,” and compiled our efforts.

② “Handing down to specialized mental healthcare organizations”

We divided the MDMHCC’s activity period into three, with a focus on when the MDMHCC began its activities. We compiled the MDMHCC’s activities, with a focus on the establishment of a specialized mental care organization after the next disaster and proceeding with activities.

4. Future initiatives (initiatives in FY 2024)

For “handing down to supporters in disaster-affected areas,” we are not only compiling our activities but also planning to conduct similar compilations on themes such as “support based on health surveys,” “support after suicide,” and “transition from high-risk approach to population approach, and actual support” in the future. Additionally, for “handing down to specialized mental care organizations,” we plan to continue to consider the MDMHCC’s active and closing periods and compile the results. Our goal is to compile the activities by December 2024. We intend to implement specific transmission activities through the Internet, books, training, and other forms of media from April 2025 onward.

Master schedule for future handing-down efforts

	2024 Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	2025 Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Milestone	11 Administrator meetings ↑	8 Steering committee 22 Overall M						Over all M						Steering committe e Over all M		
Handing over (overall)	Steering committee approval of materials	Steering committee report												Steering committe e report		Start of commu nication work
Handing over of organizational management		Overall M report						Over all M report								
	Coordination implementation							Coordination implementation					Verification, review			
Handing over to supporters in disaster- affected areas		Over all M report						Over all M								
	Coordination implementation							Coordination implementation					Verification, review			

M : Meeting