

Initiatives of Each Department

Stem Center Planning and Coordination Department

Initiatives of the Planning and Coordination Department

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1. Introduction

From FY2014, the “Planning Division” has been reorganized as the "Planning and Coordination Department," which consists of both the Planning and the Coordination Division. Among the duties that the Planning Division was responsible for, the Coordination Division became responsible for several tasks, including research and statistical systems. Due to the reorganization, the number of staff members increased from 9 as of April 1, 2014, to 11 (as of March 31, 2015) mid-year as needed. Unlike the Community Support Division, which mainly provided support to residents in the target area, the Planning and Coordination Department played a major role in planning training sessions and public relations work for the entire prefecture alongside coordinating with other prefectures' mental health care centers and related organizations. We constantly worked with the three regional support divisions to share information and drafted plans based on the needs of residents and supporters.

2. FY2014 Activity Status Report

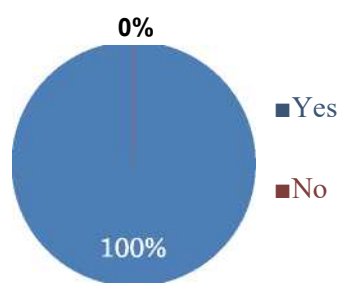
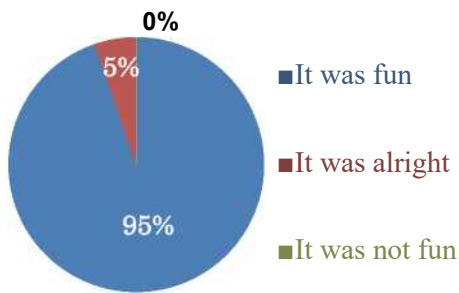
(1) Resident support

- Day camps for parents and children in the affected areas

A day camp was held for elementary school students and their parents living in the coastal areas near Sendai City to provide them with a unique and refreshing environment, to raise their interest in mental health and improve their self-care skills. From 2014, the day camp was co-hosted with the Boy Scout Miyagi Prefectural Federation Sendai District and received various opinions and suggestions regarding the selection of the venue and recreation content based on their previous activities. Besides, we received a great deal of cooperation in the pre-acquisition and on the day's operation, and the project became more fulfilling. Besides, many people helped with preparations and management on the day of the event, making the project richer. The children's program included a variety of recreation activities, such as making yakisoba with milk packs and making hot dogs, and a psychoeducation session involving breathing and muscle relaxation techniques entitled "Kokoro no Benkyo (Studying Mental Health)." Parent programs included mini-lectures on stress and communication, yoga, and aroma hand massage. Twenty people participated in the children's program, and five people participated in the parent's program held at the same time.

Table 1 Day Camp Questionnaire Results – Part 1 Children (some excluded)

How did you feel about participating?	Did you learn from the “Studying Mental Health” session?
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Comments regarding the “Studying Mental Health” session

It was easy to understand / I learned / I felt calm listening to various things while lying down / my heart was beating fast but gradually calmed down / I became good at calming my feelings down so I learned a lot

Comments regarding participation in this event

Starting the fire was fun / I will be in middle school next year, but I still want to go again / it was fun to make new friends / it was very fun because everyone was kind and encouraging / I was happy because I made a lot of friends

Comments regarding children’s participation (parents’ opinions)

When my child was younger, he often felt nervous to raise his hand during class or at class plays, but by participating in this event, he has shown lots of growth as he now is not afraid to volunteer for various things. Thank you. / I was anxious at first because it was my first time letting my child participate in such as the event on her own, but since she said it was fun when she came back, I would love her to participate in this event again next time. / Since this was my child’s first time on a trip alone, I was very worried until he came back home. However, as soon as he got back, he seemed very confident and like a different person saying, “It was so fun!! I want to go again!” I was very surprised by his reaction as he is not usually very social, but I’m glad that I took the chance to let him go. / She seemed very happy to meet her friends from the previous event. / Since it was my child’s second time attending, he was looking forward to it. When he came back, he was determined to go again as he said, “I’m going to go again next year.” He seems to have become more confident as he can take on various roles as he gets older. / My child has been participating since the very first event and she is always looking forward to the next one. I slowly see her growing as a person as she meets and spends time with new people. Thank you for providing such a fun experience.

Table 2 Day Camp Questionnaire Results – Part 2 Parents (some excluded)

Opinions / Comments
I don't usually have opportunities to spend time away from my child, so it was nice to have my own time for a change. Participatory lectures were also helpful. It would be great if you could increase the number of such opportunities. / It would be great if this event could be held once every six months (even just for parents) / I would like an event, as this time, that has relaxing contents and where childcare is available.

(2) Support for supporters

- Dealing with alcohol-related issues

One of the issues that have emerged in stricken areas since the earthquake is the alcohol problem. In places where there are few medical institutions and limited social resources, if medical intervention is deemed necessary, the staff of a specialized agency will handle the situation through local government officials, and daily supervision will be provided by life support staff or other local supporters. Many local supporters seek opportunities to learn about alcohol issues and other specific measures as they are not professionals.

We continued to sign consignment contracts with the three specialized organizations (Medical Corporation Tohokukai Tohokukai Hospital (hereinafter referred to as Tohokukai Hospital), Japan Social Worker Association for Alcohol-Related Problems (hereinafter referred to as ASW Association), and Nonprofit Organization Miyagi Prefecture Danshukai (hereinafter referred to as Prefecture Danshukai)) and held one-on-one visits and various workshops for life support staff and local supporters.

(3) Raising awareness

① Creation and distribution of various pamphlets

In FY2014, the coordination department was in charge of creating pamphlets targeted at the entire the prefecture, and worked with the departments of the Miyagi Disaster Mental Health Care Center (hereinafter referred to as our center), the Tohokukai Hospital, local government officials, and related organizations to create three new types of pamphlets: one for heavy drinkers and two for mental and physical health during the reconstruction period. The pamphlet on mental and physical health during the reconstruction period was created and distributed not only to residents of disaster public housing and reconstructed homes but also to those who continue living in temporary housing and those in areas that accept disaster victims. Besides, we cooperated in preparing pamphlets according to the actual conditions of each region and the needs of the region. In FY2014, there were many requests for content related to mental health and self-care, so we tried to make the content structure accessible to a wide range of people.

② Creation of a public relations magazine

The “Miyagi Disaster Mental Health Care Center Newsletter” was issued four times in FY2014, mainly for supporters in the affected areas, and was distributed to about 800 places including related

organizations in the prefecture. In addition to each regional center, we asked the Tohoku University Graduate School of Medicine Department of Preventive Psychiatry to contribute by writing. In the magazine, information on various regions with useful support activities, training sessions, and event announcements was provided. Each issue also included a simple self-care method that could be shared by supporters at their support activities.

③ Website management

In addition to utilizing the various training programs and co-sponsored / sponsored projects conducted by our center, we also used a blog to publish our PR magazine and introduce daily activities by each regional center. We used it to spread local information, such as training sessions for related organizations and to announce events.

④ Response to various interviews

From around December to March 11 of the following year, mass media coverage was quite concentrated, but in FY2014, there weren't as many, and many requests were made relatively close to the time of the actual interview. One of the reasons maybe because of the 20th anniversary of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, which offered many opportunities to discuss this topic. Many of the interviews at our center were related to the disaster, with questions such as "How have you applied the lessons learned from the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake to support activities of the Great East Japan Earthquake."

(4) Human resource development

① Holding Miyagi Disaster Mental Health Care Social Gatherings

The first "Miyagi Disaster Mental Health Care Social Gathering (hereinafter referred to as the "social gathering") was hosted by the Disaster Mental Health Care Network Miyagi and co-hosted with our center for the second event. In FY2014, we held social gatherings in Minamisanriku Town in September, in Sendai City in November, in Ishinomaki City in December, and the Planning Division was responsible for the ninth social gathering (Sendai City) in November.

Various problems have surfaced during the relocation to disaster public housing being promoted in various parts of the city, some of which are difficult to solve with the efforts of individual organizations and limited methods. For this reason, the ninth social gathering entitled "Enhancing the Edge of Support," set a new theme of revitalizing the local community, while following previous objectives of socialization and information exchange between persons in charge. By encouraging cooperation among support groups operating in the Miyagi Prefecture, the aim was to diversify the support activities generated from them and strengthen their support capabilities.

This time 49 people and 26 organizations participated, mainly supporters in the prefecture. The exchange meeting was conducted in three parts: lectures, group work, and discussions, and the questionnaire showed that most participants generally had positive evaluations. As an element that can be used in future activities, "I was able to learn about 'the direction and viewpoints of support activities' and 'specific support methods'" and "sharing opinions and information with other cities and organizations was stimulating and I learned a lot."

② Media conference

Since FY2012, the Center has been working on a plan for the press and mental health professionals to understand each other's roles and to deepen their awareness of issues such as suicide and how to report on the stricken areas. Since FY2014, the program has been hosted by our center with the cooperation of the National Psychiatric and Neurological Research Center (currently the National Research and Development Corporation). Under the theme of "Measures for suicide in stricken areas and the media's approach on ~ how to collaborate in the future" in FY2014, we discussed future collaborations as we looked back on media and mental health initiatives immediately after the earthquake to the present day. The Suicide Survivors' Association and administrative agencies reported on their activities to combat suicide after the earthquake. Local radio stations and newspapers reported their efforts in stricken areas after the earthquake, which was then followed by a discussion. Looking back on those days, we saw individuals speaking as they suppressed their emotions, making us acknowledge that the disaster is not yet something of the past. Of the 42 people who participated, three were from two media companies, expressing high evaluations regarding the contents of the conference in the questionnaire.

③ 3 Prefectures' Mental Health Care Center Meetings

Meetings in which the mental health care center staff in three Tohoku prefectures shared information were held three times in FY2014. The first meeting was held in June with the cooperation of the Tohoku Welfare Bureau. We shared information on the current situation in stricken areas and last year's mental health care centers' achievements with relevant government agencies. In the latter half, the staff members of the three prefectures were divided into groups to study alcohol-related cases and exchanged views on the DMHISS (Disaster Mental Health Medical Information Support System) and data aggregation system.

At the second meeting in December, we asked Professor Ken Masame of Miyagi University's Faculty of Nursing to speak on the theme of collaboration and communication between professionals. All participants took part in a relaxation involving communicating while moving one's body, mini-lectures, and group work on the theme of supporting the transition to disaster public housing.

The third meeting was held in March, in which participants mainly exchanged opinions on planning and reviewing for the following year. Due to the difficulty of recruiting from a long-distance during busy times, staff members who participated were limited. It is necessary to consider these issues.



Picture 1 Picture from the Meeting in December

(5) Other

① Research

The purpose of this research project is to grasp an understanding of the current situation of the stricken areas and the affected people, verify the activities of our center, and discuss how we should be supporting the stricken areas, and leave these findings as lessons for the next generation. Until now, research and research projects have been slower than other projects, but from FY2014, a “research group” was organized to work more effectively. Group members have been recruited from each division and have been in full operation since October 2014. From FY2015, we aim to conduct full-scale research in cooperation with the Tohoku University Graduate School of Medicine Department of Preventive Psychiatry.

- a. Regulations on research (Code of Ethics for Staff, Rules for Ethical Committee Management) were prepared.
- b. Regular meetings were held by the research group, and a research idea format, a research plan format, and a flow of research for our center were created.
- c. The research group shared the conference schedule.

The main projects in FY2014 were the publication of Bulletin No. 2 and a health survey of staff in the municipal social welfare council in the affected coastal areas (in cooperation with the Tohoku University Graduate School of Medicine Department of Preventive Psychiatry). About 1,200 copies of Bulletin No. 2 were sent to 850 related organization sites in and outside of the prefecture to report the activities of our center in FY2013.

The staff health survey of the municipal social welfare council in the affected coastal area was conducted through the social welfare corporation Miyagi Prefectural Council of Social Welfare, targeting the staff of the municipalities’ social welfare councils who requested the survey. In FY2014, we received requests from six Social Welfare Councils (Sendai City, Shichigahama Town, Higashi Matsushima City, Onagawa Town, Kesenuma City, and Yamamoto Town), and in addition to health surveys, we also held training sessions on mental health.

② Creation of a statistical system

FY2014 was a year of system repair, confirmation, error, correction, and confirmation.

Compared to the initial stage of development, the number of staff members at our center increased and our range of activities expanded, causing an increase in the number of business reports submitted. Perhaps because the large increase was far beyond what was expected at the time of system design, it often caused system errors, and administrators were often forced to deal with them.

Additionally, in our previous statistical system, only the cumulative number of resident support cases could be seen, and the actual number of people receiving consultations could not. To grasp the practical situation of our center more accurately, discussions on restructuring the system were started from FY2014.

After creating the draft within the department, the managers, system administrators, SRA Tohoku Co., Ltd. and other related parties discussed and restructured the system. Besides, we repeatedly explained the reconstructed system during staff training, and from April 2015, we assigned IDs to work reports (resident support) so that we could report activities using real numbers.

In the future, we would like to analyze the characteristics of our center's activities from the data obtained by the reconstructed system and clarify the needs of each region.

③ Support for various activities

We took part in projects aimed at supporting the activities of municipalities, health centers, and NPOs operating in the prefecture. As a specific initiative, in FY2014, we provided support for events and lectures hosted by the Mental Health Care Center in Hyogo Prefecture, the Tohoku University, the Miyagi International Association, and so on.

④ Staff training

a. Regular training

Currently, with more than 70 employees, the center is not only a multi-professional group but also consists of people from all over Japan. The opportunity for regular training is not only a place for employees to acquire knowledge, but to also get valuable time for socializing and exchanging information between staff members.

The main topics of the training sessions were skill improvement, reflecting on work, maintenance of employee mental health, and sharing information. In 2014, regular training was held five times, two of which were held at two regional centers. Evaluations from the reflective questionnaire in FY2014 were positive overall. We would like to use the results of the questionnaire analyzed using the KJ method in some form for future regular training.

b. Newcomer training

It is imperative that newcomers understand the current situation in the stricken areas and quickly understand the role and work content of our center. For this reason, the role of newcomer training is extremely important. Held four times in FY2014, the main contents of newcomer training included lectures on "Basic Stance of the Mental Health Care Center" and "Progress and Current Issues after the Earthquake," explanations of roles for each department or section, methods of creating business reports, and visiting the community center and stricken areas. The training incorporates elements of group therapy and introduces a trial to promote relationships among current employees.

⑤ Supporters Club Members

In the "Supporters Club Project," our center dispatches supporters club registrants (hereinafter referred to as supporters) to areas and organizations that have requested support to enhance mental health activities for disaster victims. In other words, it can be said that this is a human resources bank of qualified persons in the field of mental health, welfare, and medical care. Although there is a chronic shortage of human resources to meet the huge needs of the community and the workplace, many supporters can provide support for one-time activities or ones that occur some days a week, allowing them to make use of their specialized fields and skills. The Supporters Club Project's purpose is to supplement the shortage of human resources by linking the needs of both parties and dispatching supporters from this center to areas and institutions where support is requested.

In 2014, eight members (a cumulative total of nine members) were dispatched to meet the requests of municipalities.

The dispatch of registrants is mostly for one-time projects (such as for the day camp, or as training lecturers), but some municipalities have requested continuous support from professional staff.

One of our current issues is the low utilization of registrants. Although the number of registrants has slightly increased, the total number of dispatched individuals has not changed significantly. It is difficult to think that the needs of the region are decreasing, so it is necessary to devise effective utilization methods in the future.

3. Regarding the policies and plans of FY2015

(1) Residents support

The day camp project is expected to be held in the same period as FY2014 in FY2015. A plan will be created based on the results of the FY2014 survey, in cooperation with the Boy Scout Miyagi Prefectural Federation Sendai District.

The relocation of residents is progressing in various places due to the construction of disaster public housing and home reconstructions on their own. Until now, public awareness of day camps has been called for mainly at school districts in the coastal area of Sendai City, but we will have to discuss to what extent we will be calling for participation in 2015 as residents continue to relocate.

In the previous questionnaire, evaluations of the parent program were generally positive. In FY2015, we plan to prepare a program that allows parents to participate more easily, such as preparing a program that can be participated in only for half a day.

In FY2014, the staff of the Planning and Coordination Department actively cooperated with the activities of the Stem Center Support Division, increasing opportunities to visit the region.

In FY2015, we will continue to cooperate in supporting residents in the same way and hope to connect the information we obtain to the planning of projects.

(2) Support for supporters

Regarding alcohol issues, the project has been outsourced to an external organization (Tohokukai Hospital, Prefectural Danshukai, ASW Association), and we have requested for assistance of supporters so that they can appropriately handle alcohol issues in the stricken areas. We will also cooperate in case studies, workshops, and support for the establishment of a Danshukai. With a focus on fostering and expanding manpower that can respond to alcohol issues in the region, we would like to work together with external organizations, local government officials, and the community support division of each center.

(3) Raising awareness

Awareness-raising efforts will be comprehensively conducted through multiple mass media channels as follows. We will provide appropriate mental health information regarding issues occurring during the reconstruction period, with an emphasis on how to deliver the information to those who need it.

The necessary information and knowledge will be transmitted to the general public mainly through the website, pamphlets, and mental health training, and to the supporters mainly through public relations magazines and pamphlets.

Besides, we will continue to consider how to utilize the press and cooperate with them.

- ① We will renew the contents of our website and actively use blogs, and provide information on activities of our center and mental health.
- ② In addition to a public relations magazine (published twice a year), the latest training information will be sent through e-mail newsletters.
- ③ We will create new brochures that meet local needs. The number of existing pamphlets will also be increased and provided as needed.
- ④ We will provide information through mental health training for residents.
- ⑤ We will consider sending information through newspapers, the radio, and television.
- ⑥ We will think of ways to cooperate well and create positive relationships with the press.

(4) Human resource development and training

Projects that have been implemented so far will continue to be held in FY2015.

Regarding social gatherings, the staff members in charge of the Planning Division and the three Community Support Divisions will cooperate and plan based on the opinions obtained from the questionnaire for participants in FY2014. Details on the specific content, such as the venue and theme, will be confirmed in the future.

As with FY2014, the media conference is scheduled to be held after January, when coverage will intensify. In FY2014, we introduced our initiatives that began immediately after the disaster, to which the press and support groups in the prefecture responded positively. In FY2015, we will continue to provide a forum where discussions on improving cooperation with the press and related organizations can be initiated.

Alcohol training commissioned by Tohokukai Hospital is scheduled to be implemented in FY2015, aiming to create a community where alcohol problems can be addressed. 'In-hospital' training will be conducted approximately six times per year for those responsible for local alcohol issues.

Regarding the three prefectures' Mental Health Care Center meetings, in FY2014, we held three meetings in cooperation with the Tohoku Welfare Bureau. We want to continue to discuss details of plans with these Mental Health Care Centers and the Tohoku Welfare Bureau in FY2015 to deepen relations with one another. If a disaster occurs in the future, it is possible that a new mental care center will be established, and that our center's staff will provide support. We believe that the support we received from the mental health care centers in Hyogo and Niigata prefectures should be returned in some form. In this framework, we would like to consider transferring the experiences and lessons, knowledge, and know-how of mental health care centers nationwide to the next generation.

Other supporter training will be conducted according to the actual situation in the region while discussing it with the Community Support Division.

(5) Other

① Research

Research on post-disaster mental health will continuously be discussed by the research group, and support will be provided for ongoing and new research. Ongoing research includes health surveys at local government and social welfare councils and day camps for parents and children in the stricken areas. Besides, we plan to support new research by analyzing our center's activities.

- a. We will cooperate with the Tohoku University Graduate School of Medicine Department of Preventive Psychiatry to continue and work on new research.
- b. We will organize and operate a research ethics committee.
- c. A bulletin (No. 3) summarizing the activities and research results of our center will be issued.

② Support for various activities

We will coordinate and cooperate with local governments, health centers, and organizations that provide support for various activities within the prefecture.

Four years have passed since the earthquake, and some support organizations outside the prefecture have gradually started to withdraw. Our greatest concern is that the burden on residents will increase due to the interruption of local services and the lack of support. We will continue to discuss the role of mental health care centers with local support groups to build support systems in new communities.

③ Staff training

Regular training is scheduled to be conducted every other month as in FY2014. As in the previous year, we will take up the issues in need of being addressed at that time and take into account the requests of the staff.

With the increase in the number of employees and workers, it has been very challenging year by year to gather every person. However, this training is one of the few opportunities for employees to come together, and hence will be used effectively to share information as well as for other purposes.

④ Supporters club members

We will continue to dispatch supporters to sponsored projects (day camps, social gatherings, workshops, etc.). Besides, in response to requests from local governments for continuous support, we will coordinate with our support system to make effective use of the supporters' club members. To do so, we will create a system that will make the use of members easier by making sure their specialized fields and days available for activities can be seen and they can make use of their experience and knowledge.

4. Considerations

Construction and occupancy of disaster public housing have progressed throughout the prefecture, and new community development has begun.

For those who have made steady progress in the wake of the disaster, rebuilding their homes must have finally been a symbol of hope. However, when it comes to reality, some say that they felt unexpectedly lonely within the new community, and some missed the connections and interactions they had at their temporary housing.

On the other hand, there were also reports that organizations that had rushed to support the affected areas from outside the prefecture and from abroad, had withdrawn from various areas at the end of the year. There are concerned voices regarding the cessation of café activities and other activities that had been taking place in the community until now, saying that this would result in the loss of opportunities for residents to go out and gather with one another.

The Planning and Coordination Department has few opportunities to directly participate in community support as compared to the Community Support Division. However, it is necessary to understand the changing realities of the above-mentioned areas from the limited information we have and to plan and develop projects that meet the needs of residents and supporters.

Until now, one of the basic policies of the Planning Division was “based on needs,” and we have encouraged a humble attitude so that supporters are not easily self-satisfied. The real meaning behind this is that we cannot only respond to requests but must think about their needs together and make various proposals to respond to them. Therefore, close coordination with the Community Support Division, which is in daily contact with residents and supporters, is indispensable, and the most important role of the Planning and Coordination Department is to coordinate with residents and supporters to meet their needs.

Another role of the Planning and Coordination Department is to cooperate with “Mental Care Centers” in other prefectures, support groups, and related organizations. In FY2014, we collaborated with the Hyogo Prefectural Mental Health Care Center to exchange information and created materials for the Niigata Prefectural Mental Health Care Center. With the Fukushima Mental Health Care Center, we shared information on how to hold online meetings and to aggregate statistical data. Furthermore, as mentioned above, we are also focusing on planning mental health care center meetings with the three prefectures.

Until now, only five mental health care centers have been established nationwide, and we feel the need for the centers to cooperate and share information and know-how. At the Miyagi Disaster Mental Health Care Center, such an external role is representative of the Planning and Coordination Department. We will continue to work on this as an important task.

In any role, what the Planning and Coordination Department needs is effective internal and external coordination, and the formation of positive relationships as a prerequisite for this.

In FY2015, we will continue to respond flexibly with a caring attitude and humility as our basic stance.

5. Conclusion

The Miyagi Disaster Mental Health Care Center was originally composed of various staff members from inside and outside the prefecture, of different ages, occupations, and experiences. It is also a young organization that has only been in full operation for four years. Despite the various difficulties faced by such a special organization, the staff in the Planning and Coordination Department (Planning Division and Coordination Division) have performed their duties very carefully and humbly.

It may be a department that has little involvement in supporting residents and has had few chances to receive appreciation. However, I would like to mention here that the staff in this department are doing

“Ibushigin (someone who is restrained but impressive) Fine Play” in the shadow of the spotlight.