

# Five Years after the Earthquake

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Five years have passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake. The lives, minds, and bodies of people are still being recovered after this triple disaster, which entailed an earthquake, a tsunami (both natural disasters), and nuclear power plant accidents (man-made disasters). Also, pain and grief due to separation from significant others and various losses remain. The disaster had a pervasive, deep, and long-lasting impact on the whole society, putting the lives, minds, and bodies of people at risk of negative consequences. Besides, various psychological and physical problems have been reported.

However, we have taken various measures to tackle these problems. Everyone in government, non-governmental organizations, and volunteers alike have made persistent efforts in areas such as living foundation, economic activity, community development, medical services, health, and welfare.

The Miyagi Disaster Mental Health Care Center, established in December of the year that the earthquake happened, has been providing mental health care to the victims of the disaster. Our support activities have been evolving by trial and error, learning step by step from past experiences of disasters and connecting with many people. During the period, we assisted the supporters of the victims of the disaster and made efforts to improve our ability to maintain the mental health of the entire community. We deployed secondary staff, visited the affected coastal areas, and spoke with the local municipalities about support methods and the next step. The five years since the disaster have passed quickly.

It is difficult to set a landmark for the project or the support activities for the victims of the disaster. However, if a decade is considered to be an epoch, we are at a turning point. It is now time to review our activities, consider the prospects of the future, make a specific plan for the next five years, and renew the intentions and methods of our project. We are determined to clarify our tasks and goals with regards to mental health care and to make a consistent effort to find, by trial and error and through close collaboration with the stakeholders, a specific process to achieve those goals.

Although disasters and difficulties are inevitable in the contemporary world, we expect that sharing our experiences in overcoming difficulties and finding happiness will bring hope and courage to the people. We will continue to engage in down-to-earth support activities to create a friendly and tolerant community by sharing our experiences around many disasters and difficulties.

Here we present a record of our activities in 2015. I thank you for your continued guidance, support, and encouragement.