

3. Collaborative Initiatives

Tohoku University Graduate School of Medicine, Endowed Department of Preventive Psychiatry

Medical Corporation Tohokukai, Tohokukai Hospital

Non-Profit Organization Miyagi Prefecture Danshukai

Activity Report of the Endowed Department of Preventive Psychiatry in the Realm of Disaster Psychiatry and Health

Tohoku University Graduate School of Medicine

Department of Psychoneurology / Endowed Department of Preventive Psychiatry (Concurrent)

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The Tohoku University Department of Psychiatry has been involved in community support work and research since the Great East Japan Earthquake. Much of these efforts have centered on the Endowed Department of Preventive Psychiatry, which was established by a donation from Miyagi Prefecture in October 2011. Our most active members in FY 2018 have been: Drs. Shoji, Usukura, and Kunii, from the Endowed Department of Preventive Psychiatry; Dr. Matsumoto, from the Department of Psychoneurology, and Drs. Sakuma and Ueda, from Hospital Psychiatry. Much of our work was conducted in collaboration or cooperation with the Miyagi Disaster Mental Health Care Center, and we are also active as part-time employees of the Center.

To support the work that community support workers are doing in their home regions, we continued our partnership with the social welfare councils in three prefectoral municipalities (Kesennuma, Onagawa, and Shichigahama). We continued to offer regular health checkups at support bases; health counseling at the workplace; advice for HR supervisors; and employee training among other things. Since every workplace has its unique problems, we devised and implemented training regimens and support systems specifically suited to each one of them. One issue going forward will be the question of how to maintain mental health countermeasure systems following the end of support activities by this department.

One of the biggest issues that the prefecture of Miyagi has grappled within the wake of the disaster, is trauma. We believe that it is necessary to disseminate the knowledge and skills necessary for dealing with psychological trauma, for the benefit of disaster survivors. On November 15, 2018, we invited Dr. Tomomi Kameoka of the Hyogo Prefecture Mental Health Care Center to lead a training workshop titled “Trauma-Informed Care for Supporting Children and Youth: A Training Workshop in Kesennuma” in the city of Kesennuma. Forty-five individuals from a variety of professions participated, including psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, psychiatric social workers, public health nurses, and teachers.

We held several training sessions at multiple levels to spread the cognitive-behavioral approach to a wide range of subjects. Our “Training Exercise for the Mind and Heart” sessions were held twice last year and primarily targeted lay supporters. The theme this year was problem-solving. People from a wide range of professions (mostly from Miyagi Prefecture) participated in this training program (91 in all). For specialists who wished to learn the cognitive-behavioral approach in more detail, we held three “Psychological Support Upskilling” sessions. For two of these sessions, we invited Dr. Yutaka Ono to serve as a lecturer. As we did in FY 2017, we used case studies to educate participants about cognitive-behavioral approaches that are easily applicable to a variety of situations. Finally, we invited Dr. Toshihiro Kanai once to conduct the last training session on obsessive-compulsive disorder.

To formulate better youth mental health policy, we have continued to work on strengthening the relationship between mental health care organizations and the school system. In cooperation with Miyagi Prefecture and the Aoba District of Sendai City, we held training sessions for faculty at high schools and vocational schools that involved supervised meetings with students; knowledge of, and responses to, mental illness; and well-honed communication skills for interacting with students, parents, and other faculty members. Additionally, as members of a Japan Agency for Medical Research and Development (AMED) project, entitled, “Research on Mental Health Development and Growth in Childhood and Puberty” (principal investigator: Masafumi Mizuno), we held a training workshop for clinical psychologists working as school counselors, titled “Collaboration

between Schools and Psychiatrists" on November 10, 2018, in Sendai, where we discussed early intervention and therapeutic methods. We also carried out a survey in Miyagi Prefecture aimed at identifying examples of beneficial collaborations between schools and mental health therapists. As part of another project on joint research efforts, we used an ICT (information communication technology) Web conferencing system to hold a remote case study conference on March 15, 2019, between Tohoku University and a high school in the northern part of the prefecture. Twenty-nine faculty members participated.

This year, at the request of prefectural municipalities and the Miyagi Disaster Mental Health Care Center, we dispatched lecturers—who have conducted workshops within the prefecture on suicide countermeasures and mental health—to training and lecture sessions. In addition to conducting broadcasts, both in Miyagi Prefecture and elsewhere, that raise public awareness of mental health issues, we have presented reports on disaster mental health as well as the results of our research at various academic conferences and symposia. We also co-hosted the Miyagi Prefecture DPAT training workshop to which we invited Dr. Taku Otsuru, from the National Hospital Organization Ryukyu Hospital, to deliver a lecture. Finally, we continued our efforts to support research by serving on the Miyagi Disaster Mental Health Care Center Ethics Committee and participating in the Miyagi Mental Health Care Forum.

In FY 2018, in collaboration with the NEC Solution Innovator, we continued working on a research initiative to develop a health promotion support program, for community residents, that makes use of ICTs and the cognitive behavioral therapy approach.

The Endowed Department of Preventive Psychiatry's activities is supposed to come to an end in FY 2019. With that end in sight, we plan to carry out all the preparations and procedures necessary to either hand over our support programs to other agencies or just end them altogether. This, even as we summarize and compile the results of our support and research efforts. Apart from looking back on the work we have done so far, we will be planning symposia to learn, not only about efforts other communities have made in the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake but also about the human resource development and training initiatives they have deployed to educate people about trauma in children.

We will always hold our relationship with the Miyagi Disaster Mental Health Care Center in high regard. To expand community mental health care in Miyagi Prefecture and develop preventive psychiatric approaches, we will continue our comprehensive support, education, and research activities. This includes supporting hometown supporters; popularizing the cognitive-behavioral approach; encouraging support for those dealing with psychological trauma; strengthening the relationship between mental health care agencies and schools; spreading and raising public awareness of disaster psychiatry, and developing countermeasures and policies to prevent suicide and encourage workplace mental health.