



Soso Team for Establishing a New Health and Welfare System for Psychiatric Care

Soso Cocoro News Nagomi

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2012

The 2nd International Symposium “Long-term Mental Health Care after Disaster”

We held an international symposium at Hall No.8, Fukushima Medical University on Sunday, October 21st. The content of the symposium was very valuable, covering September 11th Families’ Association, the Great East Japan Earthquake, and the Great Hanshin and Awaji Earthquake.

Dr. Yamamoto shared the importance of healthcare activities through community work based on his experience in the Great Hanshin and Awaji Earthquake. Dr. Yanagisawa talked about the support activities in the East Coast, and the importance of integrating mental healthcare and internal medicine, which was developed through consulting victims of New York terrorism.

Mr. Ielpi lectured on the activities of September 11th Families’ Association. I felt that it was important to utilize the data and methodology accumulated through the past activities for future activities.

Dr. Katz talked about various activities he had been involved in, ranging from El Salvador to September 11th. Mr. Ielpi’s statement, “We must hand down the story of that day from generation to generation. Hatred will not solve anything” affected me deeply.

During the fellowship, each member of the Families’ Association shared his or her experience, and Ms. Shizue Takahashi, a representative of the Subway Sarin Gas Incident Victims’ Association, gave an appreciation speech to Mr. Ielpi in English. The speech inspired a deep bond between those who have experienced disaster, and reminded us that it goes beyond national borders and our positions. (Otani)



The 2nd International Symposium “Long-term Mental Healthcare after Disaster”

Topics

- Dr. Aiko Yamamoto (Research Institute of Nursing Care for People and Community, University of Hyogo)
“Disaster and Long-term Post-disaster Care”
- Dr. Robert Yanagisawa (Mt. Sinai School of Medicine)
“The Great East Japan Earthquake and US’ Support to Japan – from the Experience in New York”
- Mr. Lee Ielpi (September 11th Families’ Association, NY)
“Message from 9.11 Victims Dedicated to the Great East Japan Earthquake Victims”
- Dr. Craig Katz (Mt. Sinai School of Medicine, Global Psychiatry)
“Long-term Prospect in Mental Health in Disaster: from 2001 El Salvador Earthquake to 9.11 Terror Attack”

Volunteer Report

Iizuka Hospital, Physician, Dr. Koji Kobayashi

It has already been one year since I started my volunteer work in Soma. In the beginning, I was concerned especially about the elderly, that they would lose the balance of their mental and physical health. I also wondered what I could do to help them.

Of course, I am still concerned about them. But my mere concern has turned to a feeling of respect and admiration for them. Each one of them has an irreplaceable life story, and as they have shared their life history with me, I have been overwhelmed by the greatness and preciousness of what they have lost. How heavy their burden is when they have to live with a constant sense of loss, despair, fatigue and resentment.

Yet they are very resilient. I could not help but to have a feeling of veneration for that. It taught me that the value of a person is not self-sufficient, but it has to be discovered by others and shared in relationship with others. It might seem to be apparent, but this has become a precious lesson for me. I also feel that, without knowing it, my role as a volunteer has changed to that of a friend. I would be happy if I could continue visiting and working in Soma, with my humble but always unchangeable friendship.



Dr. Kobayashi commutes from Aizu and serves as a volunteer every Wednesday. He helps in blood pressure checkup and health consultation. He listens to the residents attentively and gives them advice.

Volunteer Report

Medicine Du Monde, Nurse, Ms. Yuri Kamiyama

I have been taking part in Salon Activity of Nagomi through Medicines Du Monde since March 2012, exactly one year after the disaster occurred. In the salon, the participants share about their feelings with each other and sometimes are moved to tears spontaneously. But in other occasions, they are immersed in playing sports or games, and the community center is filled with their laughter.

We cannot pretend that the earthquake did not happen nor change the fact that they live in temporary housing. But as we carry out our activities, we have been hoping that the salon would be a place where they can share their feelings that they are keeping within themselves, they can receive support to achieve something that they cannot do otherwise, and they can forget about their problems and smile at each other even for a short time by devoting themselves to something productive and therapeutic.

I am sometimes driven by a dilemma because the only thing I can do is just to listen to them attentively. But when I hear some participants saying, “I have not laughed like this for a long time. This is my enjoyment now.” Or when some of them, being motivated by our Salon Activity, voluntarily created a place to share their feeling over a cup of tea, I am very happy and feel the meaning and necessity of Salon Activity.

One year and nine months has passed since the earthquake. The number of people who leave temporary housing is gradually increasing. On the other hand, in the temporary housing for evacuees from radiation contamination, various facilities are being installed slowly, which implies the administration’s presumption that their stay there will be long-term, making some of the residents anxious. The salon is still needed and this situation has not changed yet. I believe that each one of our activities through the Salon will lead to helping the participants take each step forward and I would like to continue working with Nagomi.



Ms. Kamiyama is a nurse who is friendly and has a charming smile. She is popular in the salon.

Congratulations! The number of Supporting Members Reached 100!

Thanks to your support, the number of our supporting members in fiscal 2012 reached over 100. Taking this opportunity, we would like to thank all of you. In fiscal 2013, we plan to register our organization as an authorized nonprofit organization (NPO), and will continue to rely on your support.

From all the staff



Soso Team for Establishing a New Health and Welfare System for Psychiatric Care Facebook Account is Open!

You can see the activities of Nagomi. Please check it out! <http://on.fb.me/SQ56Ju>

We update our website every day. <http://nagomi.soso-cocoro.jp>

Nagomi CLUB is Actively at Work

What is Nagomi Club?

The club was established to create a space where people with a mental disability and people who are withdrawn into seclusion at home can stay during the day. We ask the participants to tell us what they want to do and where they want to go, and then we try to accommodate their wishes.

Additionally, the club gives them a sense of security by having friends around during the day, and also provides life skills training so they can experience and acquire the skills needed for living.

Open: every Monday, Wednesday and Friday 10:00-13:00

On Wednesday, 26th December we are planning to have a Christmas party. We will talk with the participants, have performances, sing songs, decorate a room, eat cakes, etc. We expect it to be an enjoyable party for everyone.



Application for Membership of Soso Team for Establishing a New Health and Welfare System for Psychiatric Care!

We are recruiting regular and supporting members who sympathize with our purpose.

1. Regular member Annual membership fee 10,000 yen
2. Supporting member Annual membership fee 3,000 yen

How to apply

- ① Specify the following and apply by mail or fax to the address below:
Regular member or supporting member; address; affiliation; occupation; phone number; e-mail address



Bank Name: Toho Bank, Soma Branch
Account Number : Savings account no.1044879
Account Holder : Specified non-profit corporation
Soso Team for Establishing a New Health and Welfare System for Psychiatric Care
Chair of the Board Niwa Shinichi

In the case of remittance by mail:
Account Number : 02260-0-126825
Account Holder: Specified non-profit corporation
Soso Team for Establishing a New Health and Welfare System for Psychiatric Care
Please note that the name of the account holder is different from that of the Toho Bank account

- ② Applications are also accepted through our website.
<http://soso-cocoro.jp> (in Japanese only)

Contact:

1-2-8, Okinouchi, Soma City, Fukushima 976-0016
TEL 0244-26-9753
FAX 0244-26-9739
Person in charge: Satomi Sato · Ren Otani
E-mail Address: office@soso-cocoro.jp

※We will regularly deliver our newsletters and local information to our members. We look forward to your active participation.

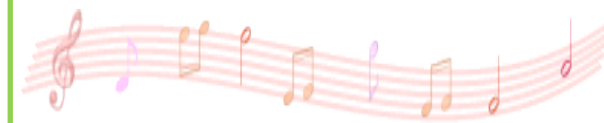


September 11th Families' Association Dialogue Meeting at Shinchimachi Gangoya Emergency Temporary Housing

On Thursday, October 25th, we assisted the group of the bereaved, September 11th Families' Association, US Inglewood Rotary Club and Koriyama Nishi Rotary Club dialogue meeting with victims of the disaster at Shinchimachi Gangoya emergency temporary housing. Mr. Ielpi, a representative of the Families' Association, founded the September 11th Families' Association after he lost his son who was a firefighter. The association's activities include telling about the misery of terrorism to people who come from all over the world to visit Ground Zero.

In the beginning, the residents who gathered at the meeting looked nervous, but Mr. Ielpi's warm talk gradually relaxed them. After that, psychiatrist Dr. Katz suggested having dialogue in small groups, and they started mingling with the help of interpreters. The dialogue was so engaging that it continued beyond the scheduled time, with participants not wanting the meeting to end.

The sadness of losing a loved one and being chased away from homes by war or a man-made disaster can be shared regardless of race and national borders. It is said that Japanese have a tendency to treat endurance as a virtue rather than sharing one's problem with others. But I think everybody certainly needs a place to express his or her feelings. We, Soma Wide Area Mental Health Care Center Nagomi, will also try to offer personnel and space in order to facilitate sharing of feelings. (Yonekura)



Talk of a Newcomer / Natsumi

I went to watch a theatre drama called "Rorschach," a story of four men who face their inferior complex, and agonize over justice. They wish to be different from who they are now and behave unnaturally, but of course it does not work out. Then here comes the line to scold them, "Don't you, salmon roe, try to be caviar! Be a salmon!" The line sounds funny, but I felt that it is a marvelous way of putting it. Just like salmon roe cannot become caviar, we cannot be anybody else but ourselves.

This year was my first year of work after I graduated from my college. "When I was a student, my character was like this, but I want to be different," I would think. Or, "Even though I have to behave unnaturally, I want to show that I am this kind of person!" I used to think like that sometimes, but now I know that it did not work so well. Whatever happens, I am me.

The drama was heart-warming. It made me think that I am like a symmetry inkblot used in a Rorschach test. At the same time, it encouraged me, frustrated by my previous attempts to change myself, by telling me, "You are OK as you are. That was OK."



This year is close to the end. It will soon be one year since Nagomi was founded. We had many challenges in various activities, symposiums, health checkups etc. But we, all the staff, are relieved that we were able to carry them out successfully. This is because of your guidance and support and we are very grateful. This year was our first year since the foundation. So we were working wholeheartedly. Next year, we want to do our best to work more closely with the communities and provide more attentive support. Please continue to support us next year. (Editorial member, Satomi)