



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

Soso Cocoro News Nagomi

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“Nagomi” from Now On

Chair of the Board
Takako Okawa

Summer has come again this year, the season when we hear warnings against heatstroke here and there. I remember commuting to one client's house, in the year of the earthquake, who kept all the windows and doors closed because of hallucinations and paranoia, with Pocari Sweat as a gift. That client was admitted to a hospital for heatstroke. When I drive on the National Route 115, I remember the time I drove desperately on the way back from Soma in thunder and lightning, which was almost piercing the top of the mountains. The rain was hitting the windshield so strongly that I was not able to see the way, even with the wipers at full speed. I feel as if these events happened just recently. However, when I drive up and down on the same highway and find a new viaduct and barren surface of mountains where the trees have been cut down to open Soma Fukushima Road (highway for automobiles), I feel that time has surely passed. It has been nearly one and a half years since Nagomi opened. In the general assembly on June 2, we proposed to develop our activities based on the following four pillars, and they were approved.

- 1) Promotion of mental health and prevention of suicide after the disaster
- 2) Supporting the community life of mentally disabled persons
- 3) Mental care for the elderly
- 4) Mental care for children

Based on these, we are planning and preparing to start a home nursing station and provide consultancy and support work in the fiscal year 2014 in order to enrich the community life support for mentally disabled people.

As one of the steps to develop these operations, we are now constructing a prefabricated one story office building in what is currently a parking area along National Route 6 on the east side of the Soma Office. The construction will be finished at the end of July. It will have an office, an interview room, a room for meetings and small group sessions. We would like to expand our activities by utilizing this new space effectively and bringing out various ideas.

At the Mental Clinic Nagomi, Dr. Ryouji Arizuka assumed office as director. He had been working in the Okinawa Kyodo Hospital until March this year and has been involved in the treatment and research of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) caused by the war in Okinawa. As we tackle various mental problems caused by the earthquake and nuclear power plant accident, it is very encouraging for us to welcome Dr. Arizuka. We will work hard in cooperation with the Mental Clinic Nagomi so that our presence will help be helpful to local people and be appreciated by them.

Our NPO has 106 regular members and 188 supporting members as of June 2. It is supported not only by local people but also by people all over the country. In the future, we aim to obtain a corporate status as a specified nonprofit organization. We would like to ask for continuous support. We also would like to have more people to understand the objectives and activities of our organization and become members. We would appreciate it if you could share with others about us.

Outreach Activity Report

Nurse Terumi Sato

We are now working with 27 clients in our outreach activity. Among them are 8 men and 19 women; 6 are related to the disaster, 10 are those who stopped their treatment, 5 are untreated, 4 are after long-term hospitalization, and 2 are hikikomori (socially withdrawn). Since the outreach activity started, we have received requests from 43 clients in total as of June 2013, and 16 have finished their therapy. Of course, this includes the patients who were repeatedly in and out of the hospital.

About 70% of the clients are staying at home, and various people such as parents or a spouse are taking care of them, but in many cases their family is not functioning well. However, I feel that even though it is not easy, their family members have a strong will to protect them, and it has become accepted that they are the main concern in their family's life.

One year and a half have passed since we started visiting clients in Nagomi, and now we have our own style of visiting. After we receive a request from the administration and accompany them to visit a client, we examine the case in an outreach conference and start our visiting activity. We target those who fall within the five classes in our operation guidelines. However, there are many cases that do not fit in these classes, and we are often troubled with how to deal with them.

In the outreach activity, it is our custom to become a part of the family, and we suffer, think, and take action together while listening to them attentively. Sometimes we cannot see what the clients and their family are hoping for, but I feel that we can understand it gradually as we work on their problems one by one.

Two years and four months have passed since the disaster, and people in general as well as mentally disabled clients seem to have become calmer somehow. However, I think now is the time when they need energy to overcome their anxieties such as unstable health conditions and murky futures. Although the energy of one person is not enough, if she/he can get additional energy from somebody trustworthy, it will turn into a “strength to live.” We hope to work side by side with local people so that we can add to them the energy of “staying close together.” Please give us continuous support and guidance in the future.



Photo: Supporting client's outing



We are open again this fiscal year!
Saturday
Chotto Kokode
Hitoyasumi no Kai

Schedule: Saturdays 10:30-12:00
Venue: Soma Health Center (please inquire about the date)

Contact
Soma Wide Area Mental Care Center
Nagomi
Tel: 0244-26-9753

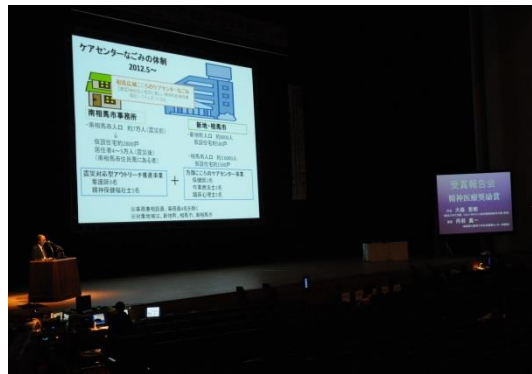
It is a place for consultation and children's play. Please visit us!





The Japan Society of Psychiatry and Neurology We Received the Psychiatric Care Encouragement Award!

At the 109th annual meeting of the Japan Society of Psychiatry and Neurology on May 23-25, our NPO was awarded the Psychiatric Care Encouragement Award! Our representative and chair of the board, Dr. Shinichi Niwa participated in an award ceremony and received a certificate and a token. He also reported our activities. All the staff members are very happy and encouraged that our activities were recognized in this way. We will do our best to contribute to the development of mental health care in cooperation with related agencies and give support to people in the Soso area.



2013 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 Okawa Takako

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)

Contact:
1-2-8, Okinouchi, Soma City, Fukushima 976-0016
TEL 0244-26-9753
FAX 0244-26-9739
Person in charge: Satomi Sato/ Natsumi Sato
E-mail Address: nagomi@soso-cocoro.jp

- ② Applications are accepted through our website and also by Paypal. <http://soso-cocoro.jp/> (Japanese Only)

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



The Third Year Occupational Therapist Mina

It seems to me that the third year came around very quickly, and personally I feel like I was left behind by time. I remember in the year of the earthquake, when we talked about “after two or three years,” I felt like it was a distant future and was not able to imagine what I would be doing that time. After reaching the third 3.11, I wonder if the fourth and the fifth years will come around just as quickly as this.

In Nagomi, I make a round of visits to each temporary housing in Soma City and Shinchi Machi, and I also visit Minami Soma. In the fiscal year 2013, the number of people who move out from the temporary houses in Soma City and Shinchi Machi has rapidly increased. I visit the temporary houses for Saron Activity (small group gatherings) and often find that some residents are not there anymore. I am happy to hear from those people who have the chance to reconstruct and show a sign of relief on their face, and I simply think it is good. Of course, they have worries about their new place. So we check on them and continue to visit them individually if necessary.

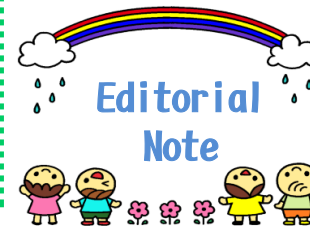
However, people who remain in the temporary housing have complicated feelings. I hear from them, “We still cannot move,” “We don’t know what we will do,” and “We feel lonely” (because many are moving out). The form of support we provide changes according to their needs, but I have a growing feeling that we should continue our activities as long as the temporary housings exist.

I visited a person whose house is in the former evacuation zone and heard his desperate voice “I know that radiation is high, but I cannot help cleaning my house. Please do not turn the fertile soil upside down, which I worked on to improve for many years. Nothing will grow on such a land even if I returned there to farm.” It seems there are also different opinions within a family. I felt as if I was confronted with the reality.

In my job, I am a supporter, but I am also in the same position as him. After I talked with him, I went down the national highway and entered the former evacuation zone after a long time. Scars left by the tsunami were still there. Many cars were still abandoned in paddy fields, and big garbage bags in town have nowhere to go. If you go northward along the national highway, there is a sign in an area submerged by the tsunami and it says “of the past.” The meaning of the word “disaster” remains unchanged, but I cannot help feeling the obvious passage of time. Though time goes by, nobody can tell if it is “already three years” or “yet three years.”



Photo: Current Situation of Minami Soma



Two months have passed since the fiscal year 2013 began. Two years have passed since the disaster and in this time the environment surrounding the people in the Soso area has been ever changing. In such a situation, all the staff members hold meetings for each project and are working hard on them. I feel that people have less interest in the disaster area these days than right after the earthquake. But in reality, many people are still suffering. We will continue doing our best to work closely with them and support them in the future. Please give us your support and guidance.
Editorial Member, Natsumi