



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!



