



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

# Soso Cocoro News Nagomi

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## Midsummer Greetings



The rainy season is over and summer has come. I hope that you are doing well. Taking this opportunity, I would like to express my gratitude for your support to our NPO, the Soso Team for Establishing a New Health and Welfare System for Psychiatric Care.

It is two months since we started our activities under a new organization with 12 staff members. We have conducted diverse activities so far, including not only salon and visiting activities but also participation in study sessions and ACT training courses. We have also considered—through brainstorming—what we can do for our target residents to help them continue to live in their community and have discussed with all staff members which direction we should take as a mental health care center. I believe these activities have helped promote our teamwork and staff members' awareness of mental health care.

The first general meeting was held at the Hamanasu Kan in Soma City in June 10, where our activity plans and budget were approved. This allowed us to start a full-fledged business. Since the abbreviation "KCN (*Kokoro no Care Nagomi*)" is now available as a name for our NPO, I hope it will make our Center more familiar to you.

In our third newsletter, I would like to introduce various activities of *Nagomi*, such as activity reports of "*Chotto Kokode Hitoyasumi no Kai*" (Gathering for taking a short break) held on Saturdays, as well as our new staff members. Your continued cooperation and support are greatly appreciated. I sincerely pray that you will take good care of yourself.



**We learn lessons from our forerunners.**  
**Kazuma Yonekura, Director of the Center**  
**Soma Wide Area Mental Health Care Center "Nagomi"**



Photo: Soma Health Care Center (May 2012)

Thank you for your great support for our activities. It has already been six months since the Soma Wide Area Mental Health Care Center "*Nagomi*" was established. Just one year ago, we were in a very chaotic state because we were busy preparing for door-to-door visits to all temporary homes as the moving-in from evacuation centers to temporary housing was advancing, and undertaking emergency crisis intervention for residents. Looking through last year's records of our mental health care team, I fondly remember that 10 to 20 people visited the Soma Health Care Center on average every day in order to provide support to residents in the district.

It was thanks to not only Ms. Okawa, Deputy Director of the Center, working as a coordinator, but also two health nurses from the Soso Public Health and Welfare Office that our temporary support teams, which comprised people with different occupations and whose members changed from day to day, could perform their proper function in our activities. At the time, I worked at the Soso Public Health and Welfare Office because the hospital where I used to work was forced to close. It was there that I met those two nurses. I learned from them how to talk naturally to local residents to obtain information necessary for supporting them, and how to build relationships with disabled people with worsening symptoms in the district. I believe that those visiting techniques might have been cultivated before psychiatric care services were mainly provided in each municipality and that there must have been forerunners who had served as models for those two health nurses.

Therefore, I believe that what is important for our outreach and other activities is not to try to do something new at all times but to acquire our forerunners' techniques by looking back on their wisdom through our activities. In an age in which efficiency is given an increasingly higher priority, we still have to deal with living human beings while considering ourselves a tool for assisting them. Through our activities, I would like to obtain really necessary techniques for providing support without adhering solely to superficially new methods, and to definitely hand them down to the next generation.

## Outreach Activity

Psychiatric Social Worker Fumihiko Kimura

Three months have passed since I started to work here in April. While I was working at a hospital, I had sometimes visited patients' homes and group homes as a visiting nurse.

In my home visiting nursing care services at the time, I would ask patients the same questions: "Do you take medicine as instructed by a doctor?"; "Do you sleep well at night?"; "Are you keeping regular hours?" Although these questions are surely necessary for continuous treatments, they are not sufficient for my current job.

Since I belonged to the *Nagomi* team, I have been required to collect various kinds of information, analyze our challenges based on the information and reflect them in our visiting activities, discussing with people from other institutions and with different occupations. Specifically, we need to consider how patients want to live in their familiar environment, what they want to do, whether such activities are suitable for their current situation, and how their medication is going.

"People should lead their daily lives their own way in their familiar communities." This is easy to say but very difficult to achieve. I intend to make efforts to overcome such difficulties.



Obtaining the qualification of a psychiatric social worker and a care manager, Mr. Kimura is well acquainted with the knowledge of welfare services such as disability pensions and welfare benefits.



## Salon Activity

Health Nurse Kayo Fushimi

We conduct various salon activities, including exercises, origami performances, quiz sessions and dumbbell exercises using brown-rice-filled dumbbells, in order to cheer up the residents. Recently I have introduced beanbag juggling, which provided an opportunity for residents to talk about their childhood memories and exhibit their great juggling performances.

"When I come here, I'm happy to laugh with others. When I stay home alone, I rarely laugh out loud," said an elderly woman. I hope our salon will help the residents forget their stress even for a short time.

Although I want the residents to enjoy themselves in our salon, I expect that it will also function in a different way. Sometimes the earthquake has been the sole subject of their conversation in a salon. They have their own stories regarding the experiences that they have had over the year since the earthquake, and their sufferings have differed depending on the individuals and which municipality they came from. One of the damages caused by the earthquake was that it gave the victims so diverse experiences and thoughts that they could not feel sympathy for each other through their usual conversation. I hope that our salon will offer a space for residents to talk about anything that they would normally refrain from saying, albeit while sometimes complaining and grumbling.

I have recently heard more residents say that they cannot sleep well, that they are awakened at night and that they dream more frequently. I think the earthquake in Fukushima is still having an impact on them. Some people often feel left behind by others, who seem to be becoming more settled in their life. I will continue to empathize with their feelings and give consideration to their individual thoughts.

Ms. Fushimi takes the role of an elder sister in *Nagomi*. She holds a health class once a month, which is popular with participants.



## Organizations and individuals that provided support (excluding volunteers)

- Soma City
  - Public Interest Incorporated Foundation Yamato Welfare Foundation
  - Public Interest Incorporated Foundation The Nippon Foundation
  - Specified Nonprofit Corporation Doctors of the World
  - Rotary International Club Englewood club, New Jersey
  - Rotary International Club District 7490, New Jersey
  - Koriyama Nishi Rotary Club, Fukushima, Japan
  - CWAJ (College Women's Association of Japan)
  - Japan Society
  - The Japanese Medical Society of America
  - The Japanese Society for Day Care Treatment
  - Soma Wide Area Association of Local Municipal Offices
  - NPO Palette Nojigiku Studio
  - Day Care Service, Psychiatry Department, Arakaki Hospital, Medical Corporation *Unokai*
  - Yasuko Shijiki
  - Kenichi Hosoda
  - Tomoya Tsunoda
- (Titles omitted; random order)

Taking this opportunity, we would like to express our thanks to you. We will use donations and goods offered by you for restoration of the Soso District.



## Chotto Kokode Hitoyasumi no Kai on Saturdays

“Chotto Kokode Hitoyasumi no Kai” is held at the Soma Health Care Center every Saturday.

Although we initially provided support only to residents with psychiatric conditions living in the Soso District after the earthquake, we later widened the scope of our assistance to all residents in the district. The purpose of our gatherings is to offer residents who tend to remain indoors the opportunity to go out and talk about their worries and troubles.

These days many parents and children have visited our salon because, due to the effects of radiation, children cannot play outside freely, and extracurricular activities of kindergartens and nursery schools have become restricted. In addition, the number of people seeking consultations regarding childcare—including those seeking advice on mothers’ stress, how to take care of children, admission to kindergartens, and child development—has grown, and our health nurses and clinical psychologists are available to give advice to such inquirers.

“Chotto Kokode Hitoyasumi no Kai” is conducted not only by Nagomi’s staff members but also through the cooperation of Fukushima Prefectural Yabuki Psychiatric Hospital, Team Japan 300, student volunteers from graduate schools in Tokyo, yoga therapists from the Japan Yoga Therapy Society, and doctors visiting Nagomi to provide support.

We are now preparing to conduct our activities in not only Soma City but also Minamisoma City. (Satomi is responsible for this article.)

“Chotto Kokode Hitoyasumi no Kai” on Saturdays

Date and time: Every Saturday 10:30-12:00

Venue: Soma Health Care Center

(Since “Chotto Kokode Hitoyasumi no Kai” may not be held due to venue availability and other reasons, please contact us about the schedule.)



## 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 stated below:

Regular member or supporting member; name; address; affiliation; occupation; phone number; e-mail address

Bank name: Toho Bank, Soma branch  
Account no.: Savings account no. 1044879  
Account holder: Director Shinichi Niwa  
Specified non-profit corporation  
Soso Team for Establishing a New Health and Welfare System for Psychiatric Care

In the case of remittance by mail:  
Account no.: 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)

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



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: office@soso-cocoro.jp

## Staff Introduction ②



Clinical psychologist  
Yusuke Haneda

I hope that *Nagomi* will become a mental health care center residents in the district feel familiar with, as if it were their friend who can give advice whenever they need it.



Nurse/Health nurse  
Yuko Kawamura

I spend every day in contact with nature, including by looking after a garden and climbing mountains. Such activities inspire my health and mind. I believe my role is to share my energy to give you more vitality.



Psychiatric social worker  
Fumihiko Kimura

I want to conduct my activities with a focus on visiting activities so that residents can live in peace of mind in their community.



Office clerk/Counselor  
Satoshi Suda

I will strive to maintain close communication with residents in the district to further meet the needs of their communities through our salon activities and door-to-door visits.



Health nurse  
Kayo Fushimi

I intend to place importance on how individual residents feel and what they want so they can all have happier lives.



Office clerk  
Natsumi Sato

This is the first year for me to start my career. I am striving to become accustomed to my new environment. I hope that I can cheer up residents in the district through my job.

### Talk of Office Manager

I began walking in June. Until then, my lifestyle had been far from healthy. I did not get up until immediately before the time I had to leave for work and I returned home late at night, exhausted from work. However, when I listened to the talk of Dr. Ebata, who visited *Nagomi* to provide support, I decided to start walking. He told a surprising story, saying that he had finished a full marathon at the age of 71 and reduced his time by 50 minutes at the age of 72. I was calmly inspired by his positive attitude. He told me his belief about marathons, which was as follows: marathon running is a very economical sport because you can start it with only a pair of shoes; what is crucial for marathon running is to continue with it for a long time at your own pace because you are not a professional runner; you should follow the advice of professional coaches (in his case, Mr. Kin Tetsuhiko); his training menu consists of 15-minute bike-ride exercises and one hundred squats; anyone who develops the ability to run approximately 15 km once every two weeks can finish a full marathon. So, I began from walking. I have got up at five o'clock and walked every morning for a month. As a result, I walk for an hour now. This has improved my physical condition. There are many such wonderful encounters in *Nagomi*. If you have trouble in your life, please visit Soma city.



From July 28, the Soma Nomaai, which is considered one of the six great festivals of the Tohoku region, will be held in Soma City. Although it was conducted on a smaller scale last year as a result of the earthquake, this year it will be held as usual. I hope that many people will visit Soma City to see the festival.

Apart from tourists, many visitors such doctors, clinical psychologists, psychiatric social workers and nurses have come to *Nagomi* to observe our activities. They have also held study sessions, which have stimulated our staff members to provide more helpful support services.

Editor Satomi