



**Ministry of Health,
Labour and Welfare**

For people, for life, for the future

Measures to Maintain Mental Well-being and Respond to COVID-19

Shuichiro Hayashi

Director, Mental Health and Disability Health Division, Department of Health and Welfare for Persons with Disabilities, Social Welfare and War Victims' Relief Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan

Outline:

Impact of Covid-19 on Mental Health

Main Focuses of Reform

For people, for life, for the future



**Ministry of Health,
Labour and Welfare**
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

Impact of Covid-19 on Mental Health

For people, for life, for the future



**Ministry of Health,
Labour and Welfare**
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

Impact of Covid-19 on Mental Health

- We conducted a study on the psychological impact of the Covid-19 epidemic and measures such as behavioral restrictions.
- In April and May 2020, many people felt anxious.
 - The greatest number of people felt anxiety about their own and their family members' infection.
- Informing preventive actions against infection may help to alleviate such anxiety.

Survey on mental health related to COVID-19: Outline and Results 1

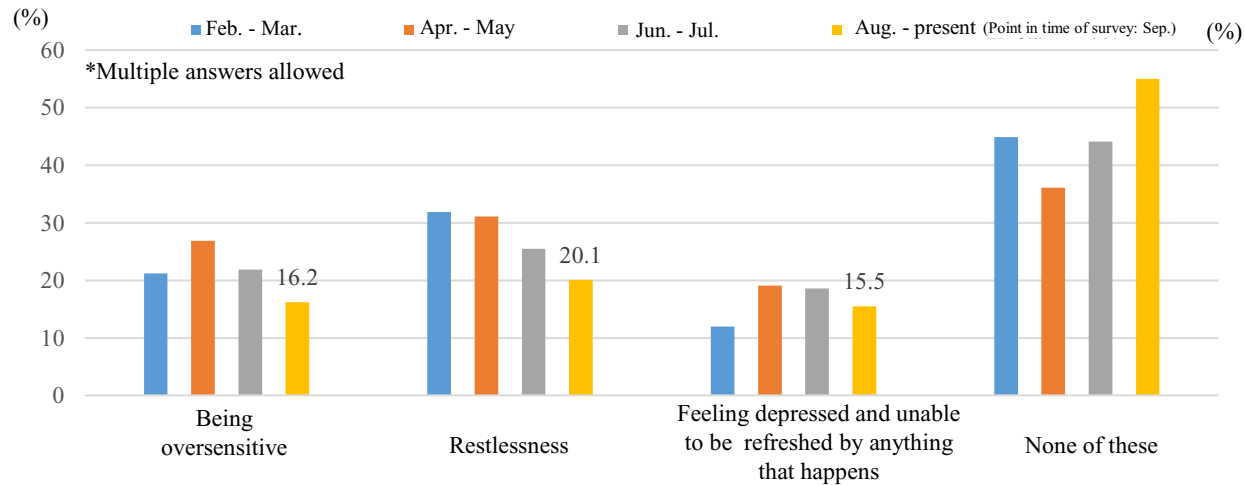
Outline of survey

The survey was conducted to understand the impact of COVID-19 and related measures such as behavioral restrictions on the psychological aspects of people, including anxiety about infection and stress associated with behavioral changes. The results will be utilized for practices, such as providing consultative support at Mental Health and Welfare Centers and setting of future measures.

- ◆ period: Friday, September 11 – Monday, September 14, 2020
- ◆ method: Internet-based survey
- ◆ subjects: general public (15 years and older)
- ◆ Collected responses: 10,981 responses

Major survey results 1

1. During all periods, nearly half of the people felt some kind of anxiety, etc. (60% between April and May)



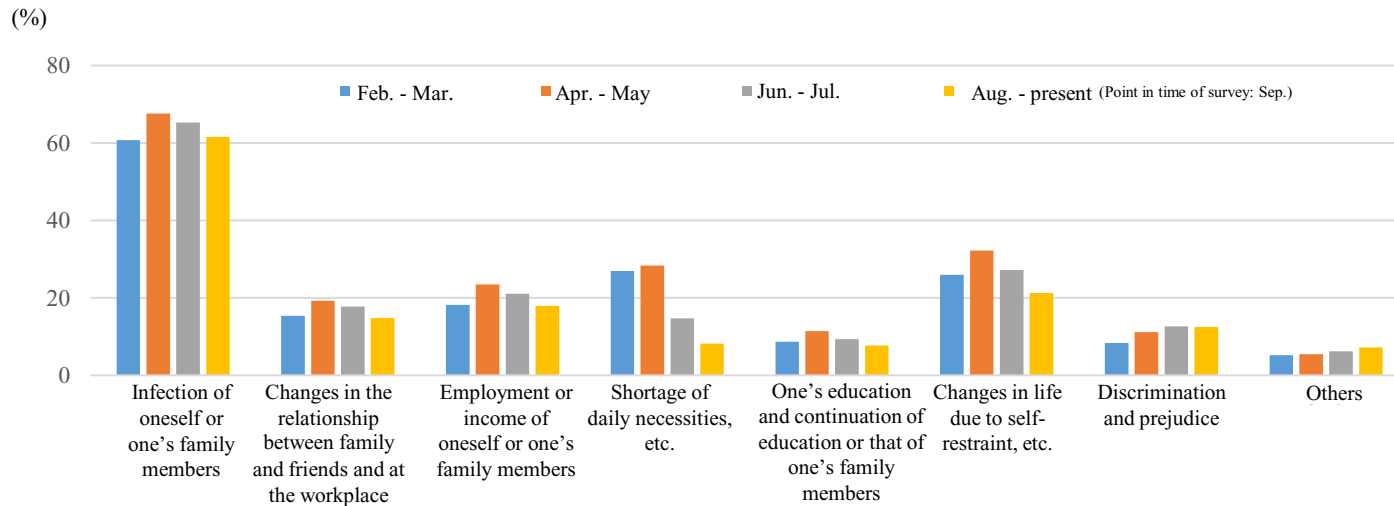
Ratio of people who felt any anxiety, etc. (by period)

Feb. - Mar.	Apr. - May	Jun. - Jul.	Aug. - present
55.1%	63.9%	55.9%	45.0%

Survey on mental health related to COVID-19: Outline and Results 2

Major survey results 2

2. The most common objects of anxiety was “anxiety about infection of oneself or one’s family members,” recording the highest rate of 60% or more in all periods.



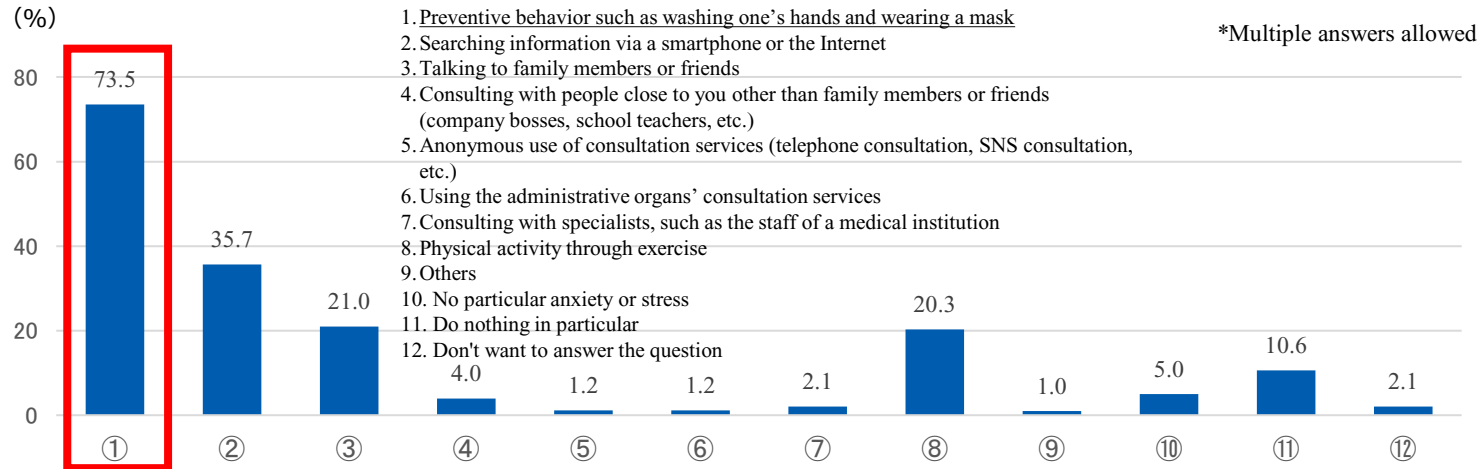
Objects of anxiety (top 3)

Period	1 st place	2 nd place	3 rd place
Feb. – Mar.	Infection of oneself or one's family members	Shortage of daily necessities, etc.	Changes in life due to self-restraint, etc.
Apr. - May	Infection of oneself or one's family members	Changes in life due to self-restraint, etc.	Shortage of daily necessities, etc.
Jun. – Jul.	Infection of oneself or one's family members	Changes in life due to self-restraint, etc.	Employment or income of oneself or one's family members
Aug. - present	Infection of oneself or one's family members	Changes in life due to self-restraint, etc.	Employment or income of oneself or one's family members

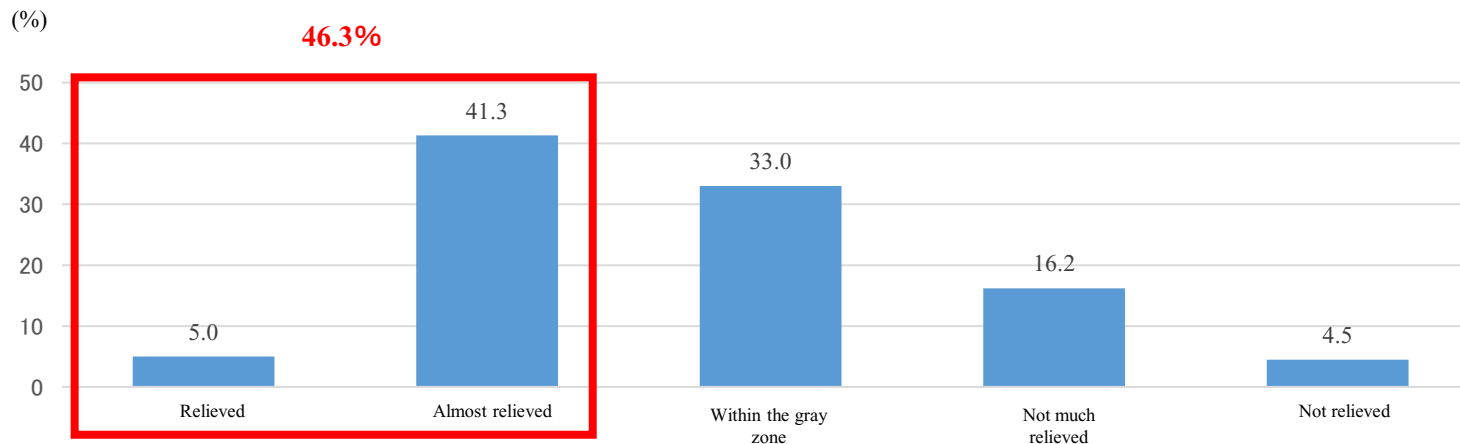
Survey on mental health related to COVID-19: Outline and Results 3

Major survey results 3

3. The largest percentage of methods to relieve anxiety or stress was preventive behavior, such as washing of hands and wearing a mask.

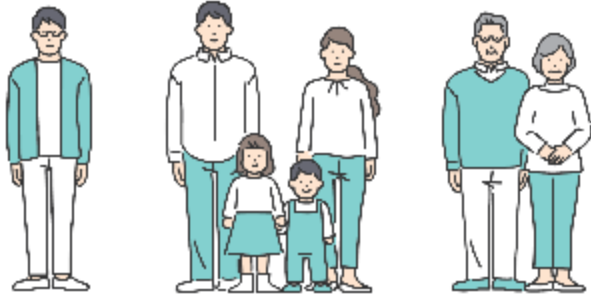


Approximately half of the people who took any of these measures answered that they were able to successfully relieve or eliminate their anxiety or stress.



Do you have any anxiety or stress due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Please tell us about your problems



If you want to talk to someone about your problems or consult with an expert, please feel free to have a consultation at a consultation desk.

List of consultation desks

List of consultation desks on mental health (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare)
<https://www.mhlw.go.jp/content/10900000/000643326.pdf>

Mamorouyo Kokoro (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare)
<https://www.mhlw.go.jp/mamorouyokokoro/>

Support sites search site (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare) <https://shienjoho.go.jp/>

List of consultation desks on financial matters, employment, housing, DV, etc.

List of nationwide consultation desks on support for independent living (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare)
<https://www.mhlw.go.jp/content/000614516.pdf>

For people who have difficulty living due to a decrease in income amid the COVID-19 pandemic (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare)
<https://corona-support.mhlw.go.jp/>

Support information navi to search support measures for your problems (Cabinet Secretariat)
<https://corona.go.jp/info-navi/>

Consultation on DV + (plus) (Cabinet Office)
<https://soudanplus.jp/>



The survey results shows:

Preventive behavior of washing hands and wearing a mask

Talking to family members or friends

Physical activity through exercise

etc.

The percentage of people who **could** relieve stress by taking these measures:



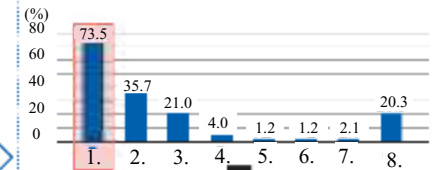
46.3%

responded they "could be relieved" and "could almost relieved" their stress.

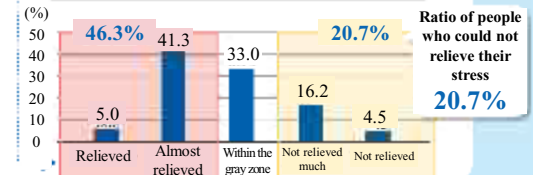
Survey results graph

What they did to relieve anxiety or stress

1. Preventive behavior such as washing one's hands and wearing a mask
 2. Searching information via a smartphone or the Internet
 3. Talking to family members or friends
 4. Consulting with people close to them other than family members or friends (company bosses, school teachers, etc.)
 5. Consulting an anonymous consultation desk (telephone consultation, SNS consultation, etc.)
 6. Utilizing the administrative consultation desk
 7. Consulting with a specialist, such as the staff of a medical institution
 8. Physical activity through exercise
- *Multiple answers allowed



Approximately half of the people who took any of these measures answered that they were able to successfully relieve or eliminate anxiety or stress.



Other ways to relieve stress:

Exercise Stretch



Breathing exercises Yoga



Setting a fixed daily routine



Talking with friends or family members



Writing down what you feel at the time



Listening to music



Laughing



etc.

Main Focuses of Reform

1. Awareness
2. Access
3. Integration of service

For people, for life, for the future



**Ministry of Health,
Labour and Welfare**
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

1. Develop Awareness of Mental Health

- The number of people with mental health problems is increasing.
- By promoting interest and knowledge in mental health, we will
 - Increase the number of people who are aware of mental health issues and can connect and listen to others
 - Eliminate the stigma of mental disorders.
- We plan to launch an action program to train one million supporters.

For people, for life, for the future

ひと、暮らし、みらいのために



**Ministry of Health,
Labour and Welfare**
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

Capacity building of mental health supporters at community level

What is the mental health supporter?

A person who has the correct knowledge and understanding of mental health and mental illnesses such as depression and anxiety, and who supports family members and co-workers with mental health problems, focusing on listening (for people from elementary school to the elderly).
 ⇒ An interactive training program based on the MHFA concept that can be conducted in about two hours (classroom lecture + practical training) will be used.

*Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) practice structure

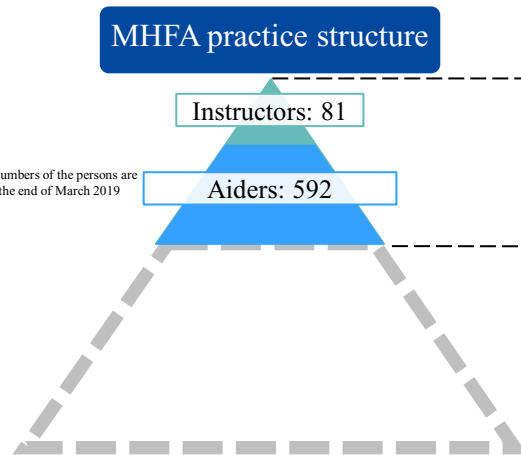
◆ Instructor

Participation in a two-day instructor training course
 (Training tips and practice, mock training, evaluation and feedback)

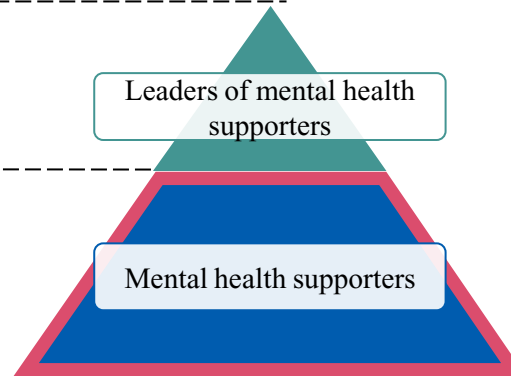
◆ Aider

Participation in a **two-day MHFA practitioner training course**
 (covering the MHFA basic philosophy, depression, anxiety disorders, mental illness, addiction, etc.)

The numbers of the persons are as of the end of March 2019



Structure of mental health supporter training



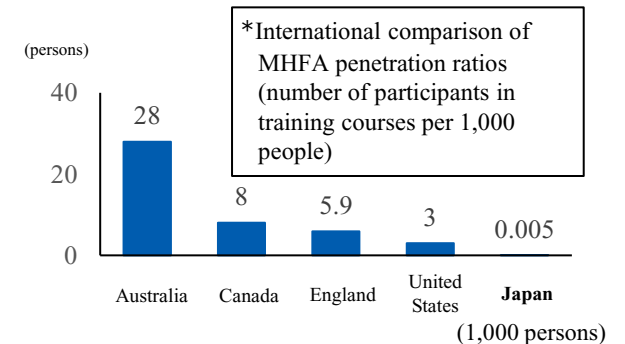
*Structure of mental health supporter training

◎ Leaders of mental health supporters

- Being an MHFA instructor and aider
- Attending a **two-hour** instructor training course

◎ Mental health supporters

Taking a two-hour practitioner training course

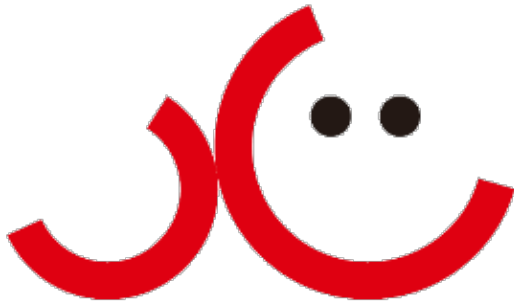


Capacity building of mental health supporters at community level



<https://cocoroaction.jp>

NIPPON COCORO ACTION Contractor in FY 2021: National Institute of Mental Health of the National Center of Neurology and Psychiatry (NCNP)



**NIPPON
COCORO
ACTION**

Nice to meet you.

This is NIPPON COCORO ACTION.

We promote the introduction of nationwide mental health supporters who support persons who need support due to mental disorders.

No specific certification or special knowledge is required to become a mental health supporter.

You will learn basic mental health skills, which will be useful to you in the future, and be able to listen to other people talking about their worries.

Any of us may experience mental disorders at some stage. It is important to increase the number of people in our surroundings who can notice the signs of disorders as well as those who can provide first aid for the mind.

By spreading an understanding of mental health, we intend to create an environment where people worrying about mental disorders can talk about it freely.

Hearts are invisible. So,
we have to listen to them.

NIPPON COCORO ACTION

Project of creating “mental health supporters”

Future direction	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024 -
Preparation of the training program	→				
Training (in model areas)		→			
Training (nationwide)					→
Preparation of a leader training manual	→				
Leader training		→			

2. Improve Access of Mental Health Services

- Each local government has its own consultation service for mental health issues.
 - Prefectures
 - Municipalities
- The national government has provided financial support to local governments to deal with anxiety due to the impact of the Covid-19 epidemic.
- Various consultations are provided through these services.

For people, for life, for the future



**Ministry of Health,
Labour and Welfare**
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

Structure of mental health consultation services

Variety of mental health consultation services

- Mental Health and Welfare Centers (in prefectures and designated cities)
- Public Health Centers (in prefectures, designated large cities, and special wards)
- Consultation desks established by municipal governments (e.g.: Health Centers)
- Consultation desks for working people, etc.

Mental Health and Welfare Centers

- Located at 69 sites across the nation (three sites in Tokyo and one in each prefecture and designated city)
- Professional staffs such as doctors, mental health social workers, certified public psychologists, etc., handle consultations on re-integration in society, mental health, adolescent problems, addiction (alcohol, drugs, gambling, etc.), depression, etc.
- The total number of consultations reached 125,164
- In addition to face-to-face, telephone and email consultations, we also offer consultations via SNS (LINE, Twitter, Facebook, etc.).



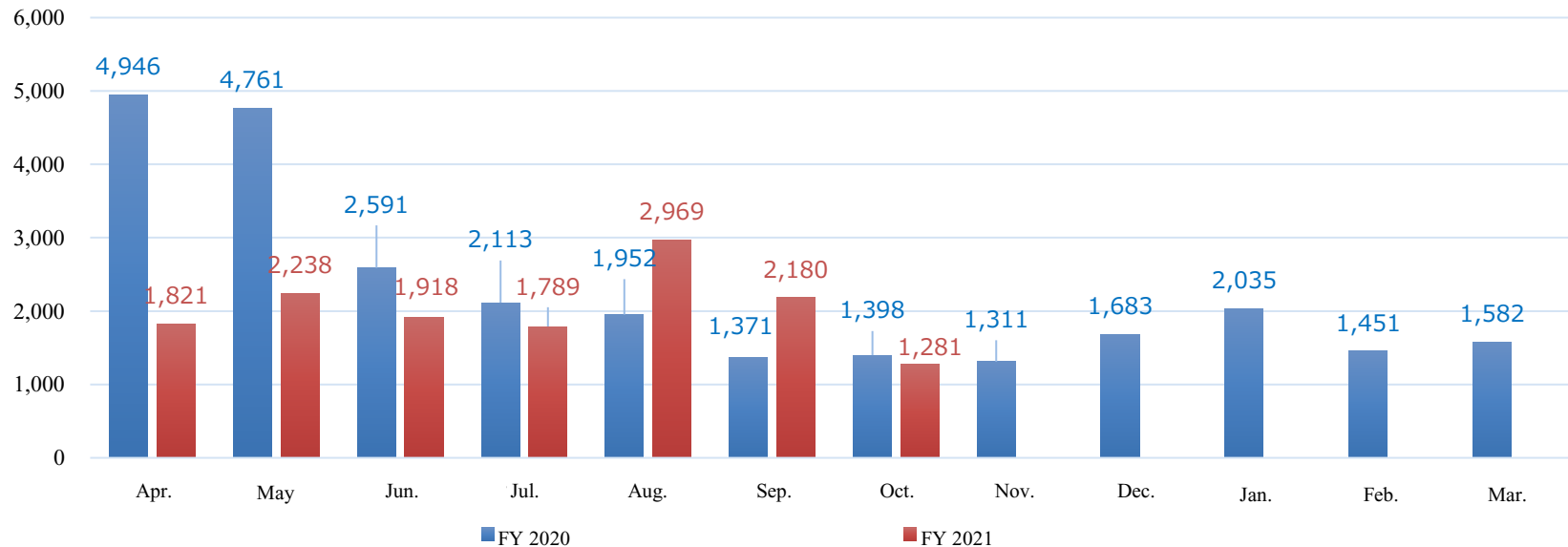
Response status of Mental Health and Welfare Centers regarding COVID-19 pandemic-related mental health consultations

The numbers of mental health-related telephone consultations as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic at Mental Health and Welfare Centers from Apr 2020 to Oct 2021 and their contents are introduced below.

[Total number of consultations]

○ Number of consultations at Mental Health and Welfare Centers in prefectures and government ordinance-designated cities (69 locations): 1,281 (−899 from the previous month)

Changes in the number of cases from April 2020 to October 2021



[Major consultation contents]

- Anxiety about becoming infected
- Worsening of mental symptoms due to anxiety, insomnia
- Stress as a result of self-restraint on going outside
- Anxiety about living due to unemployment and decreased income
- Concerns and anxieties related to family and personal relationships
- Anxiety about the 6th wave of COVID-19 (re-spreading of infection)
- Anxiety about vaccination, adverse reactions, and discrimination against those not vaccinated
- Stress over differences in attitudes toward vaccination among family members and others
- Stress or anxiety about discrimination, prejudice, slander, etc. related to infection
- Deteriorated mental health of affected persons (patients at home, lodging facilities, etc.), people who recovered with sequelae, close contact persons, etc.

*Depending on the results of consultations, we refer those who need medical treatment to medical institutions, and those who need consultation on difficulties in living and workplaces to the relevant consultation desks.

*The total number of consultations from February 7, 2020, to March 31, 2020, was 1,742.

3. **Integrate** Medical and Social Services for Mental Health

- In an aging society, people are spending more and more time living with illness.
- The service delivery system is being reformed based on the concept of supporting people's lives by integrating medical care, nursing care, employment support, and housing support, rather than just curing illness.
- The same concept is being applied to mental illness, and the service delivery system is being reformed so that various services can be provided in an integrated manner.

For people, for life, for the future



**Ministry of Health,
Labour and Welfare**
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

Establishment of a comprehensive community-based integrated care system for mental disorders (Image)



Backup

Discussions with health, medical and welfare personnel in each municipality: municipalities

Backup

Discussions with health, medical and welfare personnel in each health and welfare area: Public Health Centers

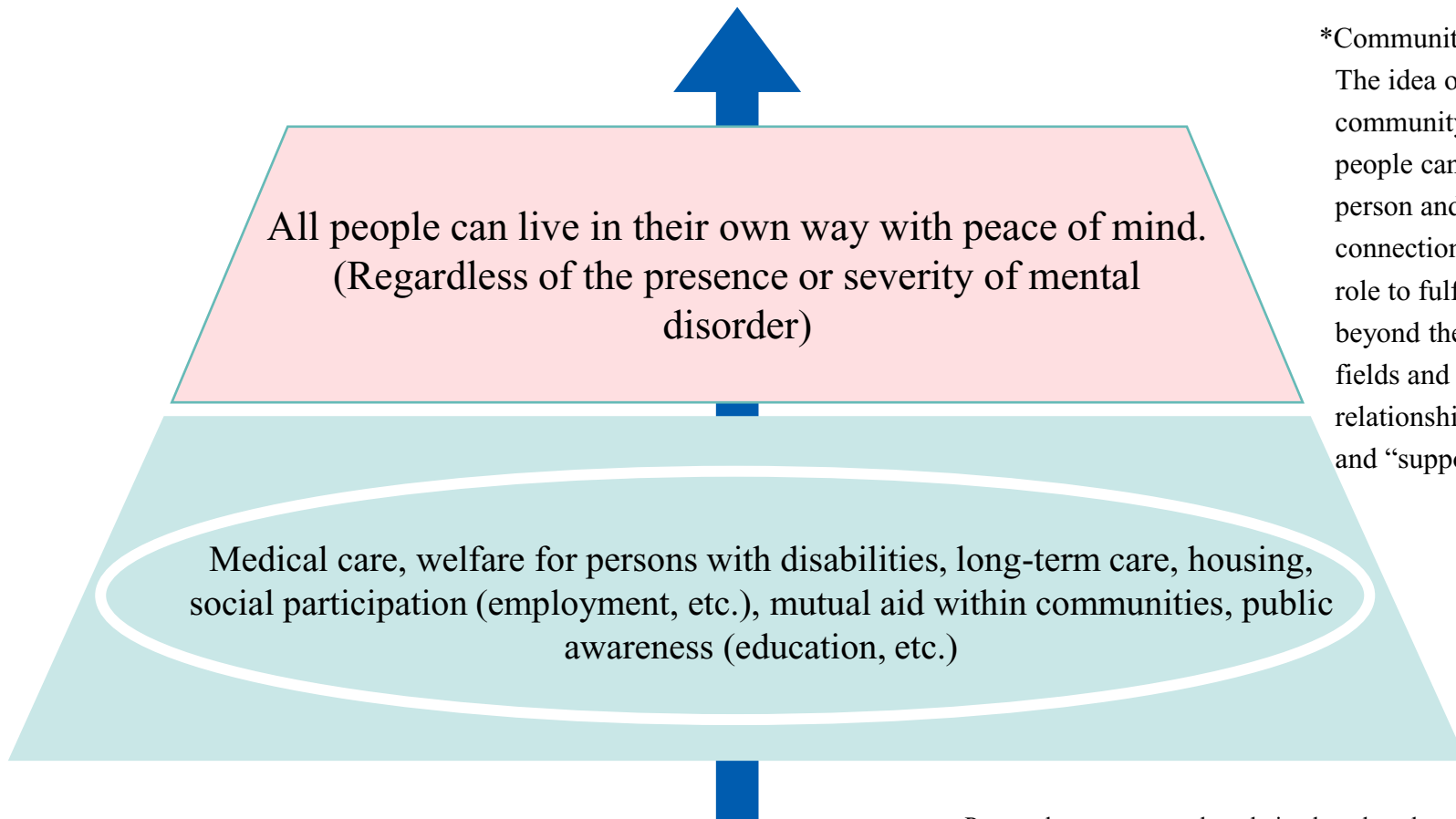
Backup

Discussions with health, medical and welfare personnel in each prefecture: prefectural governments

What is the comprehensive community-based integrated care system for mental disorders?

System and Mechanism for realization of a Community-based Inclusive Society

Realization of the Community-based Inclusive Society*



*Community-based Inclusive Society:
The idea of creating an inclusive community and local society where people can live with sound person-to-person and person-to-society connections as well as a purpose and role to fulfill while helping each other beyond the boundaries of institutions, fields and the traditional framework of relationships between the “supporting” and “supported” sides.

Prepared as a conceptual rendering based on the report of the review meeting on the establishment of a comprehensive community-based integrated care system for mental disorders



Summary

- The Covid-19 epidemic had a significant impact on mental health.
- We will use this opportunity and lessons learned to take steps to improve mental health from the three perspectives of awareness, access, and integration.

Thank you for your attention 😊

For people, for life, for the future



**Ministry of Health,
Labour and Welfare**
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare