

Free Clinical-Educational Center for Fukushima Reconstruction

Newsletter from Heart of Fukushima

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From Clinical Organizer

Hidefumi Kotani, Ph.D.
Clinical Organizer of FCECFR

While we have been practicing psychological treatment for people with PTSD in Sendai who were exposed to fearful tsunami and had lost their loved ones, since 6 months after the event in March 11th, 2011, we had opportunity to see some patients and consulted some clinicians from Fukushima and was given the knowledge that there are no such clinic with PTSD experts to help them. It was not easy for us to begin a new clinic in Fukushima area while continuing the Clinic in Sendai, the East Japan Center for Free Clinical-Educational Services. However, in responding to those strong needs from people of Fukushima, we have succeeded in establishing our new clinic named “Free Clinical - Educational Center for Fukushima Reconstruction (FCECFR)” by the strong backup of the Association for Fukushima Projects of Psychological Reconstruction (AFPPR).

I greatly appreciate that Mr. Zenkuro Kubota, President, and the Board members of domestic and international experts of the field and all members of AFPPR who had supported us to actualize our plan of establishing the clinic as soon as possible. We



actually were able to make this happen in three months. We have started the clinic from September 1st and already have found a big difference in practicing trauma / PTSD treatment between Sendai and in Fukushima. People in Sendai are suffering from fear of death and the death of love objects, while people in Fukushima are suffering from fear of deadly disease caused by radiation exposure which has never been resolved in the area of Fukushima. Our new mission is really going to be tough and needs a great help from all of you, global citizens.

I wish we do confront this terribly critical situation in Fukushima so we can work through it for new hope.

What is Free Clinical-Educational Center for Fukushima Reconstruction(FCECFR)?

FCECFR was opened as a free clinic for psychotherapy services to provide treatment, cure and prevention of PTSD and psychological trauma caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake and nuclear power plant accidents. For now, registered certified clinical psychologists travel to Fukushima twice a month on weekends to provide the services. Cooperation with medical care is arranged when it is necessary.

Dr. Hidefumi Kotani, the clinical organizer of the center, constructing a backup cooperative system as one of the members of IAGP Trauma / Disaster Task Force and has been responding to the PTSD of victims since the day of the disaster, March 11th, 2011, and now it has led him to start his practice in Fukushima.

What We Do

■PTSD treatment: Individual psychotherapy, group psychotherapy, community building

We provide individual consultation for psychological upset which has emerged after experiencing the disaster / nuclear power plant accidents. Clinical staff will help to understand the present condition and will prescribe a recovering program combining individual psychotherapy, group psychotherapy and other programs. In any case we will be working together.

■Consultation for solving problems in organization / group

We provide consultation, coaching, psychotherapy and such to organization leaders, team leaders and / or team members who are experiencing difficulties in problems of their organization / group after the disaster.

■Advocacy and various Workshops

Lectures and talks for citizens will be held to provide correct knowledge about PTSD and psychological resiliency. We will have Support Groups so people can talk freely about post-disaster stress, and variety of workshops such as SET (Socio-Energetic-Training) and SMG (Story Making Group) will be provided.

■Consultation concerning children, about raising and educating children

We provide a space where parents can talk freely about their concern of the effect of radiation and of their growth. We also provide consultations on how to respond to your children such as how to answer their questions about radiation or what you can do for children not being able to run around freely outside.

■Direction and / or supervision for professionals working with PTSD.

Consultations on supporting victims and handling PTSD, training skills and techniques for PTSD treatment, and helping stress care of the supporter him / herself would be provided.



Where We Start - Report of the Opening Ceremony of FCECFR-

Maya Hashimoto, M.A.

Registered Certified Clinical Psychologist of FCECFR

The long awaited opening ceremony of the Free Clinical-Educational Center for Fukushima Reconstruction (FCECFR) had taken place on September 1st, 2013, gathering 26 concerned and devoted people of Fukushima. 13 had participated to hear the director in the opening workshop (the day before as the pre-opening program), “The key to psychological revival—the treatment, cure, and prevention of earthquake disaster PTSD.” It was not a large turnout as some might think but each and every participant had their own reasons, aspirations, anger, sorrows and love for their families, neighbors, hometown and country, which amounted to make this red-letter day a great success. Starting with Dr. Kotani, clinical organizer, Dr. Hashimoto, the director of the center, each shared their efforts and endeavor to find this day,



showing us a strong bond as a secure base to which the Center is founded on. Joined by Mr. Zenkuro Kubota, the president of Association for Fukushima Projects of Psychological Reconstruction (AFPPR), and Mr. Isamu Yamaguchi, special advisor of AFPPR, mocking each other for taking up too much time but also having their say from each of their stand points. Mr. Kubota as an influential business leader in Fukushima insists that he is supporting the takeoff of this project and to move the government in

running it eventually, for the government should make use of the rehabilitation expense in directly helping the people. Claiming that phallic force (aggressive and creative spirit: see the next article) is the key for revival of Fukushima, the participants roared out their voices from the bottom of their hearts in a physical exercise (a traditional cheer of triumph) followed by a psychological exercise (SET: Socio-Energetic Training; one of the workshops that will be held in the center).

Not only the leadership had things to say, but the citizens within or from Fukushima has unspoken thoughts left in their hearts. Anger towards the nuclear plants, the government and to the people who had moved on living in distance, and the fear of being left behind were spelled out. The despair of the deadly reality of interruption in family tradition and heritage of the land and house for it is contaminated or destroyed by the decontamination. One old man said that he cannot decide in which is worse, this disaster or the World War II.

The only regret of the two days was that although mass media had come and reported the news in their media, they had just stayed for only the first part and thought they saw the picture and left. They could not stay to witness and hear the stories of their citizens, let alone report and face their own fear and stories as the mass media. Here, we see the epitome of Fukushima and the country Japan in the face of this disaster.

Mr. Yamaguchi was especially delighted by the fact that people had gathered from all over Japan, from Tokyo of course, Sendai (another afflicted area) and Wakayama (west Japan) for the launch of this center. Letting the people know that they are not alone helps and at the same time knowing that we are not alone helps as well. We can use all the help from you, from all over the world.

~Interview with Dr. Kazunori Hashimoto~

Where We Come From, Where We Are Heading -History and Goal of FCECFR-

Interviewer: Jeong a Nam, M.A.
Registered Certified Clinical Psychologist of FCECFR

Free Clinical-Educational Center for Fukushima Reconstruction (FCECFR) opened in Koriyama city, Fukushima, on September 1st, 2013. Dr. Kazunori Hashimoto, the Director of the center, is a clinical psychologist from Fukushima and started to visit Fukushima a month after the disaster. His aim was to support his family, neighbors, and friends in Fukushima, many of who showed Post Traumatic Stress Reaction (PTSR).

At first, reaction to the earthquake itself was noticeable and people in Fukushima did not show much concern about the problem of the nuclear power plants. After a while, officers measuring radiation dose showed up around the town and anxiety about the radiation issue grew strong rapidly. People lost trust in the safety of food and began to eat non-perishables such as canned food.

About half a year after the disaster, some in Fukushima began to claim physical disorder such as high-blood pressure, diabetes, or heart disease. People's attention was focused on physical care and psychological care was overlooked.

On September 2nd, 2012, a year and half after the disaster, Dr Hashimoto held a support group for people of Fukushima as one of the programs in the Disaster Clinical Program in the 18th annual congress of International Association of Dynamic Psychotherapy (IADP). Confronting the group member's trauma and his own trauma, he strongly felt the needs of professional treatment program for



people of Fukushima.

Since March, 2013, Dr. Hashimoto and Dr. Hidefumi Kotani, organizer of the Association for Fukushima Projects of Psychological Reconstruction (AFPPR), began to visit key figures in Fukushima and shared the information about situation of reconstruction. It turned out that “denial” was a serious issue in Fukushima. Even key figures in the prefecture said “It has been two years and we are alright now”, even though the problem of radiation leak had never been resolved and people are now still under chronic stress. At the same time, town officials claimed that they could not handle anger of the people and needed professional help. The lack of PTSD experts was serious problem in Fukushima. Although many school counselors began to work in Tohoku, there is not much outcome of trauma care and counselors themselves have been suffering from helplessness due to lack of knowledge, techniques, and support.

Three months later, encouraged by successful work of EJ Center in Miyagi, and with strong backup of AFPPR, we were finally able to open the free-clinic for PTSD treatment and psychological

reconstruction in Fukushima, which is called “Free Clinical-Educational Center for Fukushima Reconstruction (FCECFR).”

FCECFR provides prevention, treatment, and cure of PTSD and ongoing stress due to the earthquake and nuclear plant problem. Focusing on phallic force*, we intend to promote people’s ego strength and resiliency, and encourage them to confront the reality and let out their voice for reconstruction. FCECFR also offers professionals knowledge and treatment techniques of PTSD.



Although the center opens on every other weekend now, we aim to make it possible to carry out practice on a daily basis in the coming five years.

Fukushima is still in a serious condition. As time goes, people of other regions pay less attention to the reconstruction of Tohoku, and the situation is

getting more difficult. Reconstruction effort needs to be made with cooperation of all the people. We would like to request for any kind of help from professionals all over the world. Dr. Hashimoto says “We hope all of you would understand the difficult situation in Fukushima and give us any kind of help. Sending messages would be welcomed, and if you have an occasion to come to Japan, we would like you to give some lectures or workshops about PTSD in Fukushima or even in Tokyo. We need your help and hope to collaborate with you, global citizens.”

 *Phallic force is a positive and creative aspect of aggression. It is active energy which has its developmental origin on the pre-oedipal phallic phase (2-3 years old) and is the basis of activeness, initiative, ambition, courage and such.

Heart for Fukushima -Request for your support-

FCECFR would like to request for your warm supports for running our center.

Supports could be...

- ◆ **Financial support**
- ◆ **Material support**
- ◆ **Knowledge, intellectual support**

(Giving workshops and lectures for both citizens and professionals, Sharing interesting and useful information/resources/researches)

- ◆ **Manpower, human support**

(Visit us whenever the occasion arises, send us messages)

and more

Although “Heart for Fukushima” of individuals can be just a small light, gathering these lights could create a big fire. Please feel free to contact us and share your idea. We are waiting for your voice and are eager to co-work with you.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Special Topic

Information about Association for Fukushima Projects of Psychological Reconstruction

Charter

Over two years have passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake and yet its impact still has its effect on us in various forms. The problem of exposure to radiation continues and people are under serious stress, without knowledge of trauma and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Damage caused by the disaster is broad and therefore creates tremendous social dynamics*. It causes many kinds of splitting among individual victims, ordinary citizens, families, communities, local areas, organizations, local and central governments. Victims become isolated day by day. Thus Fukushima's problems are becoming complex and gradually hidden. This hidden impact is very serious. It manifests itself as chronic fatigue with irritation and chronic depression in adults, resulting in child abuse and domestic violence in conjunction with addiction to alcohol, gambling, and suicidal threat. Untreated trauma / PTSD can create the most severe problems in the future as well as suffering at the present time.

We cannot allow PTSD to go underground. Professional aid for Fukushima, therefore, is surely needed for individuals, and at the same time, for a broad range of social systems including government.

The Association for Fukushima Projects of Psychological Reconstruction (AFPPR) was founded for the purpose to appeal to the country and the world, the need for the "psychological reconstruction of Fukushima", consisting of local corporate leadership, psychotherapists and psychiatrists, who specialize in treatment for trauma and PTSD. We plan to gather 300 people within the year and more in the following years and advocate the need for "psychological reconstruction". We are already building up what we can do toward "Global Fukushima." We call for the psychological reconstruction by the citizens of the prefecture and country as a whole, and the psychological reconstruction by the earnest collaboration with the world. Please draw your interest upon us and your contribution and support would be deeply appreciated.

*Hidefumi Kotani, organizer of AFPPR, calls it "the Fourth Disaster."
(in Invited Article "Struggling with the Fourth Disaster in East Japan", *Forum*, IAGP (in press))

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