

The General Principles of Suicide Countermeasures Policy (Cabinet decision, October 2022) (Summary)

- Basic Act on Suicide Countermeasures came into effect in 2006.
- Promoting suicide countermeasures based on "The General Principles Suicide Countermeasures Policy" under the above act.

Current: Cabinet decision on October 14, 2022
3rd: Cabinet decision on July 25, 2017
2nd: Cabinet decision on August 28, 2012
1st: Cabinet decision on June 8, 2007

1. BASIC PHILOSOPHY OF COMPREHENSIVE SUICIDE COUNTERMEASURES

Aiming to realize a society in which no one is driven to suicide

✓ Suicide countermeasures decrease the risk of suicide in society as a whole by reducing "disincentives to live" and increasing "incentives to live" in society.

Disincentives: Overwork, deprivation, fatigue from childcare and nursing care, bullying and isolation, etc.

Incentives: Self-esteem, trustworthy relationships, ability to avoid crisis, etc.

2. THE CURRENT STATE OF SUICIDE AND THE BASIC UNDERSTANDING OF COMPREHENSIVE SUICIDE COUNTERMEASURES

✓ Most suicides are deaths which people have been driven to

✓ The annual number of suicides is on the decline, but a state of emergency still persists

✓ Promotion of countermeasures tailored to the impact of the spread of COVID-19

✓ Promoting practical measures at the local level through the PDCA cycle

3. BASIC POLICIES FOR COMPREHENSIVE SUICIDE COUNTERMEASURES

- 1.Promoting them as comprehensive support for living
- 2.Working on them comprehensively, strengthening organic coordination with related measures
- 3.Effectively linking measures at each level according to the stage of response to a suicidal case
- 4.Promoting both practical initiatives and awareness-raising
- 5.Clarifying the roles of the national government, local public entities, related organizations, private entities, businesses, and people in Japan, and promoting cooperation and collaboration among them
- 6.Considering the honor of people who died by suicide and peace of life of bereaved people

4. IMMEDIATE PRIORITY POLICIES IN COMPREHENSIVE SUICIDE COUNTERMEASURES

- 1.Strengthening support for practical initiatives at a local level
- 2.Encouraging everyone to be aware of and watch over potential suicide risks of others
- 3.Promoting research and studies that will contribute to the promotion of comprehensive suicide countermeasures
- 4.Securing, training and improving the quality of human resources engaged in suicide countermeasures
- 5.Promoting development of mental health and a supportive environment for it
- 6.Ensuring that appropriate mental health and medical welfare services are available
- 7.Reducing the risk of suicide in society as a whole
- 8.Preventing suicide attempt survivors from re-attempting
- 9.Improving support for bereaved people
- 10.Strengthening cooperation with private entities
- 11.Further promoting suicide countermeasures for children and youth
- 12.Further promoting suicide countermeasures due to work-related problems
- 13.Further promoting suicide countermeasures for women

5. NUMERICAL TARGETS FOR SUICIDE COUNTERMEASURES

✓ In order to realize a society where no one is driven to suicide, the suicide death rate (number of suicides per 100,000 population) shall be reduced by at least 30% by 2026 compared to 2015, aiming to reduce it to the current level of the other developed countries for the time being. (2015: 18.5 ⇒ 2026: 13.0 or less) *2020: 16.4 per 100,000

6. PROMOTION SYSTEMS, ETC.

- 1.Promotion systems at the national level
- 2.Promoting systematic suicide countermeasures in local areas
- 3.Policy evaluation and management
- 4.Review of the General Principles of Suicide Countermeasures Policy

The General Principles of Suicide Countermeasures Policy:

4. IMMEDIATE PRIORITY POLICIES IN COMPREHENSIVE SUICIDE COUNTERMEASURES

1. Strengthening support for practical initiatives at a local level

- Creating profiles of local suicide status and policy packages for local suicide countermeasures
- Supporting local governments to formulate and to review local suicide countermeasure plans
- Supporting local suicide countermeasures promotion centers
 - Supporting the establishment of the director of local suicide countermeasures promotion centers
 - Supporting for holding meetings for all the directors of local support centers across the country
- Promoting the establishment of dedicated department and assignment of staff for suicide countermeasures

2. Encouraging everyone to be aware of and watch over potential suicide risks of others

- Conducting awareness campaign of Suicide Prevention Week and Suicide Countermeasures Strengthening Month
- Implementing education that contributes to suicide countermeasures for students
 - Promoting education on the importance and the preciousness of life, how to seek help, and maintenance of mental health of children and youth, including correct understanding and appropriate response
- Disseminating accurate information about suicide and related matters and promoting public awareness about depression, etc.
 - Spreading the recognition that many suicides are deaths to which people have been driven and that suicide countermeasures are comprehensive support for living
 - Raising and promoting awareness of accurate knowledge of mental health

3. Promoting research and studies that will contribute to the promotion of comprehensive suicide countermeasures

- Surveys, research, and verification on the actual suicide situations and the implementation of suicide countermeasures, and utilization of the outcomes on them.
 - Considering the utilization of information collected by counseling facilities
- Surveys on suicide among children, youth and women, and utilizing the system to investigate cause of death
 - Conducting more detailed investigations and analysis for cases of suicide, etc.
 - Promoting the Child Death Review for Prevention
 - Understanding of the actual conditions with direct assistance for young people, women and sexual minorities in regard to the difficulties in their lives
- Surveys on suicide and related matters during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Research leading to elucidation of the pathology of psychiatric diseases, such as depression

4. Securing, training and improving the quality of human resources engaged in suicide countermeasures

- Promoting education on suicide countermeasures in coordination with universities/colleges and specialized training colleges
- Training of human resources in charge of coordinating suicide countermeasures
- Improving the qualifications of family doctors, community health staff and occupational health staff
- Awareness-raising for school teachers and staff
- Training for nursing care support specialists, etc.
- Training people as gatekeepers
 - Gatekeeper training including young people
- Mental care for those engaged in suicide countermeasures
 - Supporting assignment of specialists who play the role of supervisors
- Supporting supporters including family, friends, gatekeepers, etc.

5. Promoting development of mental health and a supportive environment for it

- Promoting mental health measures in the workplace
 - Promoting measures against power harassment and implementing online counseling
- Establishing systems to promote mental health promotion in local areas
- Establishing systems to promote mental health promotion at school
- Promoting mental care and life reconstruction for victims of large-scale disasters

6. Ensuring that appropriate mental health and medical welfare services are available

- Improving the linkage of psychiatric care, health care, welfare, etc. and assigning specialists
 - Assigning human resources responsible for mental health and medical welfare services
 - Improving systems to detect at an early stage those at high risk for suicide and to ensure that they are referred to psychiatric care
- Developing systems to provide mental health and medical welfare services for children
 - Improvements to the mental care system for children
- Promoting measures for high-risk individuals with depression and other mental illness such as addiction

7. Reducing the risk of suicide in society as a whole

- Improving of counseling systems, transmitting understandable information such as consultation services, and reinforcing outreach
- Utilizing ICT (internet and social media, etc.)
 - Expanding support for consultation services by utilizing social media and disseminating information using ICT
- Strengthening measures against slanders and suicide-related information on the internet
 - Promoting necessary suicide prevention measures related to inducements and solicitations for suicide and cyber patrol efforts
 - Supporting for prompt deletion of slander postings toward specific individuals and implementing human rights consultations
- Supporting hikikomori, victims of child abuse, sexual crimes and sexual violence, those in poverty, and single-parent families
- Improving support for sexual minorities
- Sharing information necessary for coordination among related organizations, etc.
- Promoting the provision of spaces of belonging that contribute to suicide countermeasures
 - Promoting the creation of places, including online initiatives, to prevent social isolation
- Disseminating the WHO guidelines, etc. to media professionals
- Promoting international cooperation on suicide countermeasures

The General Principles of Suicide Countermeasures Policy:

4. IMMEDIATE PRIORITY POLICIES IN COMPREHENSIVE SUICIDE COUNTERMEASURES

8. Preventing suicide attempt survivors from re-attempting

- Establishing local medical facilities that serve as bases for supporting suicide attempt survivors
- Upgrading the medical care system provided by psychiatrists at emergency medical facilities
- Strengthening comprehensive support for suicide attempt survivors by promoting coordination between medical care and the community
 - Improving a medical care coordination system for suicide attempt survivors to transition smoothly to psychiatric treatment after discharge from hospital
 - Promoting efforts to analyze the actual conditions obtained from suicide attempt survivors and create an anonymous database
- Providing support through interconnectedness with measures to create spaces of belonging
- Supporting close supporters such as family members
 - Creating videos and other materials for learning listening skills and raising awareness of listening skills
- Encouraging postvention at school and workplaces

9. Improving support for bereaved people

- Supporting the operations of self-help groups for bereaved people
- Encouraging postvention at schools and workplaces
 - Encouraging the appropriate postvention for the bereaved people at schools, workplaces and public agencies
- Promoting the provision of information relating to the comprehensive support needs of bereaved people
 - Promoting support for bereaved people with administrative formalities and legal issues
- Improving the quality of personnel at public agencies who deal with bereaved people
- Supporting bereaved children
 - Enhancing support for bereaved children who have become a young carer

10. Strengthening cooperation with private entities

- Supporting human resource development at private entities
- Establishing a local coordination system
- Supporting counseling services by private entities
 - Expanding support for the counseling service by utilizing social media, etc., to respond to a diverse needs
- Supporting pioneering and experimental approaches by private entities and their efforts in suicide hotspots

11. Further promoting suicide countermeasures for children and youth

- Preventing child suicide due to bullying
- Improving support for students
 - Promoting suicide prevention before and after a long vacation
 - Promoting identification of suicide risk using tablets and dissemination of information on push-type support
 - Establishing a system which enables school and local supporters to work together to prevent child suicide and teachers and other staff members to quickly consult with experts about emergency responses
 - Securing space of belonging for children who don't attend school to stay inside and outside school
- Promoting school-based help-seeking programs
 - Promoting education on the importance and the preciousness of life, how to seek help, and maintenance of mental health of children and youth, including correct understanding and appropriate response
 - Organizing an environment where children can easily seek help, as well as the adults around them recognize the signs a child has sent
- Improving support for children and young people and tailoring support to their characteristics
 - Expanding counseling service support by utilizing social media and disseminating information using ICT
- Supporting friends and acquaintances
 - Creating systems to maintain mental health for those engaged in suicide countermeasures, including gatekeepers
- Establishing a system to promote suicide countermeasures for children and youth
 - Working with the Children and Families Agency to consider the improvement of the system

12. Further promoting suicide countermeasures due to work-related problems

- Rectifying the practice of long working hours
 - Promoting thorough management of working hours and correction of long working hours
 - Promoting the introduction of an inter-work interval system
 - Promoting mental health measures in the workplace, including remote work, which has progressed during the COVID-19 pandemic
 - Promoting measures to prevent deaths, etc. from overwork based on the Outline for Measures to Prevent Death and Injury from Overwork
 - Providing support for side and concurrent business
- Promoting mental health measures in the workplace
- Measures to prevent harassment
 - Preventing power harassment, sexual harassment and harassment related to pregnancy or childbirth

13. Further promoting suicide countermeasures for women

- Improving support for expectant and nursing mothers
 - Providing support for young pregnant women with physical mental concerns or anxieties due to unexpected pregnancies through the Sexuality and Health Consultation Center Project, etc.
- Supporting women in light of challenges that have emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic
 - Providing detailed employment support for women raising children
 - Further enhancing support for victims of spousal violence, including the development of a counselling system
 - Supporting initiatives by local public entities to provide detailed counseling and support for women with various difficulties and challenges
- Supporting women facing difficult problems