



# Newsletter Vol.38 (December 2024)

## Japan Suicide Countermeasures Promotion Center

Thank you for subscribing to the newsletter of Japan Suicide Countermeasures Promotion Center (JSCP). This issue includes a report on the WHO Mental Health Forum where suicide countermeasures in Japan were highlighted, details about a study session for film and stage professionals on the portrayal of suicide, and a report on the Basic Training for Comprehensive Support of Living based on the Comprehensive Support Guide for Those Bereaved by Suicide (Revised Edition) that was published this past September.

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1. **[Presentation Report]** Report on suicide countermeasures in Japan from the WHO Mental Health Forum 2024

The WHO (World Health Organization) held the “Mental Health Forum” over two days, on October 9 and 10, 2024, at its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, in conjunction with World Mental Health Day on October 10th. The forum was attended by over 200 participants (including those online), such as government officials, staff from international organizations, NGO representatives, and researchers, working in the field of mental health. At the request of the WHO, Yasuyuki Shimizu, Representative Director, and Yuka Nishina, Head of the Office for International Cooperation, attended in person from the JSCP, a WHO collaborating center focused on suicide countermeasures. They reported about efforts being made in Japan for suicide countermeasures to help young people.

In his opening speech on the first day of the forum, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the WHO, emphasized the importance of “Mental Health at Work,” which was the main theme of this year’s Mental Health Day. He also explained the need to overcome mental health biases and the importance of global action. Next, there was a report on efforts being undertaken by the WHO in collaboration with other international organizations, including joint programs with UNICEF (United Nations Children’s Fund) designed to improve the mental health of young people, the launch of a research team on mental health in Ukraine by The Lancet medical journal, and guidelines for mental health at work created jointly with the ILO (International Labour Organization).

On the second day, efforts in different countries and activities by each WHO regional office were introduced, and future policies were also shared. During the session on suicide countermeasures, Shimizu of the JSCP reported on the efforts being made in Japan for young people. In his report, he stated, “After the Basic Act on Suicide Countermeasures was enacted in 2006, the suicide rate in Japan has gone down by about 35%.” However, the suicide rate among children and youth is on the rise. Therefore, the Japanese government intends to actively promote suicide countermeasures for children and youth as a top priority. Meanwhile, sufficient efforts have not been implemented nationwide, and issues such as securing funds and addressing the personnel shortage remain.” During this session, there was also an interactive discussion on suicide countermeasures from a wide perspective, including the role of social media, ways to strengthen support systems, and the importance of data collection. The WHO showed great interest in the suicide countermeasures being implemented in Japan and the efforts by the JSCP, and requested that Japan contribute by sharing information about these efforts internationally. The JSCP aims to collaborate on global suicide countermeasures and will continue to act as a cooperating center for the WHO.



Shimizu, JSCP Representative Director (far left), and Nishina, Head of the Office for International Cooperation (2nd from the right), in attendance at the WHO Mental Health Forum 2024.



Shimizu reported on suicide countermeasures for young people during the session about suicide countermeasures on Day 2.

■ More information about the WHO Mental Health Forum 2024

- <https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-who-mental-health-forum--9-october-2024>
- [Global Mental Health in Motion: Looking Back, Looking Forward](#)

## 2. [Event Report] Study session for film and stage professionals on the portrayal of suicide

On November 8, 2024, the JSCP held an online study session titled “Study Session for Film and Stage Professionals on the Representation of Suicide: Points to Understand When Planning, Producing, or Expressing Matters Related to Suicide or Self-Harm.” The JSCP has held Study Meetings on Suicide Coverage seven times for media and members of the press, however, this was the first study session specifically for film and stage professionals. The purpose was to provide a platform for everyone involved to consider the issues and key points when planning and producing films and dramas that depict suicide or self-harm. Over 200 people attended, mainly from TV stations and film companies.

During the study session, Yasuyuki Shimizu, JSCP Representative Director, explained the current status of suicide and trends in suicide reporting in the media. Following this, Akiko Ie from the Public Relations Office reported research cases on the potential impact of films, referring to the WHO guidelines titled “PREVENTING SUICIDE: A resource for filmmakers and others working on stage and screen.” Two guests who are actually involved with drama productions that have depicted suicide or self-harm joined to help deepen the discussion.

At the time, Natsuko Katsuta, chief producer of NHK’s No. 3 Production Center, explained how they depicted suicide-related scenes, including the dialogue, in the drama *Fill in the Blanks* (2022). Lea Goto, Director of the Welfare Team at the NHK Osaka Broadcasting Station, who has been involved in welfare-related documentaries and planned and directed *Momo* and *the Seven Papagenos*, explained the purpose of focusing on the “Papageno Effect”(\*) and shared the points she kept in mind when depicting suicide attempts and self-harm, and characters in the program. Both were created with great attention to detail, referencing the WHO guidelines and incorporating feedback from experts. In addition to the panel discussion held later, there were discussions that included specific practices and cases, resulting in many participants expressing that they found it insightful.



**Top row: Natsuko Katsuta (left), Chief Producer at NHK No. 3 Production Center, Lea Goto, Welfare Team Director at the NHK Osaka Broadcasting Station, Bottom row: Yasuyuki Shimizu (left), JSCP Representative Director, and Akiko Ie of the Public Relations Office.**

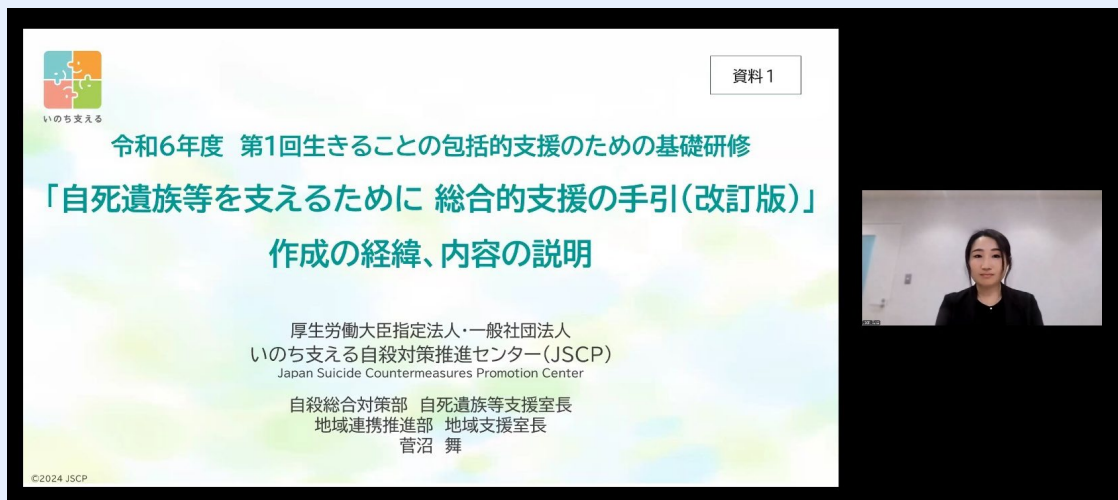
\*Papageno Effect: This refers to the effect where encountering a story about how a person with suicidal ideation overcame their crisis can have a suicide prevention (or mitigating) effect. Named after the character Papageno in Mozart’s opera, *The Magic Flute*.

- A detailed event report of the study session will be published later on the JSCP website.

### **3. [Event Report] “1st Basic Training for Comprehensive Support of Living” held in FY2024**

On November 14, 2024, the JSCP held the “1st Basic Training for Comprehensive Support of Living” online for FY2024, targeting people in charge at local governments who may contact those bereaved by suicide. This training is conducted with a different theme each year to help people in charge of suicide countermeasures at local governments plan projects and better understand support methods, thereby promoting local suicide countermeasures as “comprehensive support for living.”

This time, based on the “Comprehensive Support Guide for Those Bereaved by Suicide (Revised Edition)” published in September 2024 by JSCP, we introduced the details of the guide’s revisions and specific cases of local government efforts. Additionally, a panel discussion was held to help them review existing projects, consider new projects, and provide reference information for when contacting those bereaved by suicide. About 500 people attended from throughout Japan. A detailed training report and video for explaining revisions to the guide are published on the JSCP website.



At the beginning of the training, Mai Suganuma, who is the Head of the Office for Suicide Bereaved Support explained the background and some details related to the revised guide.

- Click [here](#) to see a detailed report on the training.
- Click [here](#) to see the video about the guide.

#### 4. [Investigations & Research] Call for Papers: *Research on Comprehensive Suicide Policy*

The JSCP publishes an open-access journal in Japanese titled *Research on Comprehensive Suicide Policy* for improving research on the actual status of suicide and suicide countermeasures to help promote such countermeasures. Papers are now being accepted for Volume 5, No. 1, which is scheduled to be published in March 2025. Themes include a wide variety of topics on suicide and suicide countermeasures. For more information, please see the submissions and writing guidelines at the link below, and contact the JSCP Journal Editorial Board Secretariat by email with your name, affiliation, manuscript category, and (tentative) title by Friday, December 20, 2024 (the submission deadline for full papers is Friday, January 10, 2025, and for reports on practical cases is Friday, January 31, 2025).

- Click [here](#) to see the submission guidelines, etc.

#### 5. [Investigations & Research] Release of analysis on suicide trends during the COVID-19 pandemic

On November 15, 2024, the JSCP released “Tend in the Number of Suicides in Japan During COVID-19.” The JSCP analyzed statistics on suicide from sources such as the National Police Agency regarding changes in the number of suicides in Japan following the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in January 2020. While we published the “Emergency Report” in October 2020, this is an updated research report on the trend in the number of suicides during the three years and four months up until it was downgraded to Category 5 in May 2023 based on the Infectious Disease Act. Other factors behind suicide were examined in addition to gender, age, and cohabitation status.

- Click [here](#) for more information

## 6. [Investigations & Research] Survey results published for the Les Halles of Suicide Countermeasure Promotion

The JSCP conducts the Innovative Research Program on Suicide Countermeasures, which is a commissioned research program that publicly recruits researchers in fields related to suicide countermeasures to promote evidence-based policymaking and research that contributes to social return. On September 2, 11, and 20 of 2024, the Les Halles of Suicide Countermeasure Promotion (interim and final results presentations of commissioned research in FY2023) was held as a briefing report on the program in order to disseminate research results more broadly and apply them practically in local areas. The survey results have now been published.

A total of about 650 people, mainly local government officials, attended on those days. The survey was conducted according to three fields of the program (Field 1: Suicide countermeasures for children and youth, Field 2: Analyzing the current status of high-risk groups and how to help them, and Field 3: Suicide countermeasures using big data and AI). There was a total of 327 responses (50.3%). In total, 97.6% of responses were favorable, with 55.7% indicating they were “Satisfied” and 41.9% indicating they were “somewhat satisfied.” Each field of the program was also highly evaluated (Field 1: 94.9%, Field 2: 98.5%, and Field 3: 100.0%). Feedback was received on the practical use of the data and evidence acquired from the research.

- Click [here](#) to see an overview of the survey results.
- Click [here](#) to see the event report on the Les Halles of Suicide Countermeasure Promotion. (interim and final results presentations of commissioned research in FY2023)

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- Training videos are gradually being uploaded to the YouTube “JSCP\_PR Office” channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNWP2O5zTuul-j8GITeKzHQ>

- JSCP shares articles on suicide issues and countermeasures via Yahoo! News Expert

(Written by Ms. Kaoru Yamadera, Head of Public Relations Office at JSCP)

<https://news.yahoo.co.jp/expert/authors/yamaderaakaoru>

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<https://jscp.or.jp/newsletter/>

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