



Newsletter Vol.39 (January 2025)

Japan Suicide Countermeasures Promotion Center

Thank you for subscribing to the newsletter of Japan Suicide Countermeasures Promotion Center (JSCP). This issue features a dialogue between JSCP Representative Director Yasuyuki Shimizu and Special Advisor to the Cabinet Shiro Yamasaki, as well as a report on the 1st Zoom Concierge event held in FY2024, which focused on providing support for supporters in suicide countermeasures at public health centers.

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<Vol.39 Topics>

1. **[Dialogue Project]** Shiro Yamasaki, Special Advisor to the Cabinet, and Yasuyuki Shimizu, Suicide Countermeasures Practitioner
 2. **[Event Report]** The 1st Zoom Concierge event held in FY2024
 3. **[Presentation Report]** JSCP staff speaks at a bereaved family support event for financial institutions
 4. **[Investigations & Research]** Publication of the “Report on Commissioned Research Results,” “Final Report on Commissioned Research,” and “Post-Evaluation (General Comments)” for the 2023 Innovative Research Program on Suicide Countermeasures
 5. **[Applications Now Open]** Training and opinion exchange meetings for Support groups for those bereaved by suicide
 6. **[Conference]** The Japanese Society of Comprehensive Suicide Countermeasures held the “2024 Autumn Lecture”
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1. **[Dialogue Project] Shiro Yamasaki, Special Advisor to the Cabinet, and Yasuyuki Shimizu, Suicide Countermeasures Practitioner (Representative Director of JSCP): “If 30% of people get serious, society will move.”**

<JSCP Dialogue Project No. 4>

We feature Shiro Yamasaki, a former Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare official who was involved in the implementation of the long-term care insurance system and has been known as “Mr. Long-term Care Insurance.” Since 2022, he has been working on population issues as a Special Advisor to the Cabinet and has published the novel Population Strategy Bill: Is There a Way to Stop Population Decline? (Nikkei Publishing, 2021), advocating for a society where youth can work and raise children at ease.

Meanwhile, Yasuyuki Shimizu, who founded an NPO focusing on suicide countermeasures and currently serves as the Representative Director of JSCP, has been engaged in surveys and other efforts to reveal the reality of youth suicide in order to prevent the increasing trend of suicides among children and youth. Countermeasures to combat the declining birthrate and prevent suicide are complex and involve multiple intertwining factors. After the Lehman Shock, which dealt a major blow to youth employment, the two longtime acquaintances worked together on policy formulation. In this issue, we bring you a dialogue (Part 1 and Part 2) in which they discuss, from their respective perspectives, the keys to resolving social issues: “personal commitment” and behavioral change, a society where youth can envision a hopeful future, as well as developments after institutionalization and the “ecosystem” that keeps measures running in a sustainable and evolving manner without letting the system become a mere formality.

(Below are some excerpts from the dialogue)



Mr. Shiro Yamasaki (left) and JSCP Representative Director Yasuyuki Shimizu (right)

Shimizu) In recent years, suicide among children and youth has become a very serious problem. In 2022, 514 primary, secondary and high school students died, the highest number ever. And last year, the number exceeded 500. Among the G7 countries, Japan has by far the highest suicide mortality rate among teenagers (number of suicides per 100,000 people), and it is the only country where suicide is the leading cause of death in this age group. While the overall number of suicides in Japan has been decreasing, the number of suicides among children and youth is actually increasing. We're not sanguine at the overall number decreasing. Instead, there is great alarm that children who have a latent risk of suicide are growing into adults, and that a growing proportion of people in society are at risk.

Yamasaki) When it comes to advancing countermeasures, isn't it indeed important to “accurately understand the reality”? When the reality of suicide was revealed in the “White Paper on the Reality of Suicide”, it was not just the parties involved but also government officials who first became aware of this reality, and relevant parties began to take action. It is the same with children and youth, and I think it would be very effective if we could communicate this reality to people around them, including government and school officials. The progress of countermeasures depends on how many people come to realize that they, too, need to change.

Shimizu) That's true, and I think it's truly a matter of awareness. It's not that people refrain from taking measures against suicide because of some belief, but rather that they simply don't know about it.

■ Click below to read the full dialogue article (Part 1 and Part 2)

[\[Part 1\]](#) / [\[Part 2\]](#)

2. [Event Report] The 1st Zoom Concierge event held in FY2024

On Wednesday, July 10, 2024, JSCP, in collaboration with the Japan Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, prepared and published “The Crisis for Pregnant and postpartum Women Nurturing Life: The Reality of Suicide Revealed by New Suicide Statistics.” In January 2022, the items in the Suicide Statistics were revised to include items related to pregnancy and postpartum conditions. In response, the JSCP, guided by the advice of the Japan Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, analyzed these statistics, and the two organizations worked together to compile this as foundational information to prevent suicide among pregnant women and new mothers. Following the publication of this information, several major media outlets reported that “at least 118 women died by suicide during pregnancy or within one year of giving birth over the two-year period from 2022 to 2023.”



The JSCP Office during the online Zoom Concierge event

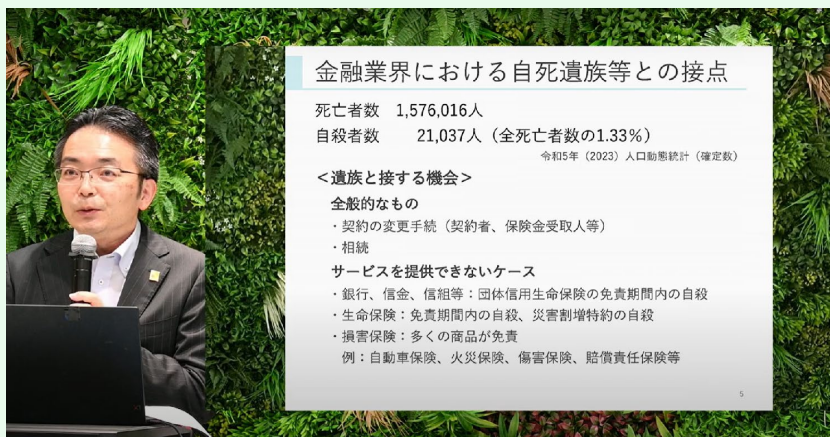
Prior to the event, JSCP conducted a pre-event survey to understand the challenges faced by public health centers when providing supporter support to municipalities. The survey aimed to identify items related to providing such support, dividing the topic into three major themes: information sharing, human resource development, and individual support. The results were summarized on the day of the event, and opinions were exchanged on each theme.

■ Click [here](#) for more information

4. [Investigations & Research] Publication of the “Report on Commissioned Research Results,” “Final Report on Commissioned Research,” and “Post-Evaluation (General Comments)” for the 2023 Innovative Research Program on Suicide Countermeasures

On November 15, 2024, Hitoshi Akita from the Office for Suicide Bereaved Support at JSCP spoke at the 6th Grief Care Forum hosted by the Japan Grief Care Gift Association and sponsored by the Financial Services Agency and the Digital Agency. This forum has been held annually since 2019 with the aim of sharing information among financial institutions that have incorporated the principles of grief care into their operations. This time, the forum was held in a combination of face-to-face and online formats. A total of 252 people from 79 companies participated, mainly from financial institutions such as banks and life insurance companies. At the forum, eight companies and organizations, including JSCP, presented specific examples of business improvements from the perspective of bereaved families and standardization of inheritance procedures among multiple local financial institutions. Akita from JSCP explained the framework for suicide countermeasures and the points of contact between the financial industry and those bereaved by suicide, and also presented an overview of the “Comprehensive Support Guide for Those Bereaved by Suicide (Revised Edition)” published by JSCP in September 2024.

■ Click [here](#) for more information about the 6th Grief Care Forum



JSCP's Hitoshi Akita giving a lecture at the Grief Care Forum

4. [Investigations & Research] Publication of the “Report on Commissioned Research Results,” “Final Report on Commissioned Research,” and “Post-Evaluation (General Comments)” for the 2023 Innovative Research Program on Suicide Countermeasures

To promote evidence-based policymaking and research that contributes to social return, the JSCP conducts the Innovative Research Program on Suicide Countermeasures, a comprehensive public-private partnership research program on suicide countermeasures, as stated in the General Principles of Suicide Countermeasures Policy (more information [here](#)). In the 2023 Innovative Research Program on Suicide Countermeasures, research has been carried out on 16 projects in three fields (continuing from the previous year), and the Report on Commissioned Research Results has now been published. We have also published the “Final Report on Commissioned Research” and “Post Evaluation (General Comments)” for the research projects that were completed at the end of FY2023 (five projects), so please have a look.

Three Fields of the Program

Field 1: Suicide prevention for children and youth (7 projects)

Field 2: Analysis and approach towards high-risk groups for suicide (4 projects)

Field 3: Suicide countermeasures using big data, AI, etc. (5 projects)

- Click [here](#) for the FY2023 Report on Commissioned Research Results (16 projects)
- Click [here](#) for the FY2023 Final Report on Commissioned Research (5 completed projects)
- Click [here](#) for the Post Evaluation (General Comments) for the research projects adopted in FY2022 (completed in FY2023)

5. [Applications Now Open] Training and opinion exchange meetings for support groups for those bereaved by suicide

Starting in 2022, JSCP has been holding training sessions and opinion exchange meetings for support groups for those bereaved by suicide, with the aim of providing a platform for groups supporting those bereaved by suicide across the country to exchange opinions and gather insights that can aid in their activities. This year, the event will be held online on Saturday, February 1, 2025, with the theme “Challenges for Private Organizations in Supporting Those Bereaved by Suicide: Based on the Contents of the Revised Guide.”

On the day of the event, group discussions will be held on “collaboration between private organizations and local governments,” “securing and developing human resources,” and “effective public relations activities,” based on the contents of the "[Comprehensive Support Guide for Those Bereaved by Suicide \(Revised Edition\)](#)" published by JSCP in September 2024. Through this training, we hope to help enhance the future activities of all participants. For program details and applications, please see the JSCP website below. The application deadline is Friday, January 24. We look forward to your participation.

- Click [here](#) to see an overview of the training

6. [Conference] The Japanese Society of Comprehensive Suicide Countermeasures held the “2024 Autumn Lecture”

On November 27, 2024, the Japanese Society of Comprehensive Suicide Countermeasures hosted the “2024 Autumn Lecture—Considering the Difficulties of Family” online, with 468 participants, including society members and the general public. JSCP sponsored this lecture together with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. On the day of the event, psychiatrist Dr. Takeshi Tamura (Director of the Tamura Takeshi Laboratory) gave a lecture entitled “Family Conflicts and Suicide: From the Frontline of Mental Health care,” and Mr. Keisuke Fukumoto (Director of the Asunaro Support Station of the Social Welfare Corporation Hakujuji Association Forest School) gave a lecture entitled “From the Frontline of Support After the Age of 18 for Children and Youth Raised in Social Care.” Mr. Tamura presented specific examples of support and emphasized the importance of building a “bond of reassurance” in suicide prevention. Mr. Fukumoto presented actual support cases and spoke about the environment surrounding children and the support they receive.

The second half of the session was a discussion and Q&A session, moderated by Mayumi Oka (Project Associate Professor at the Research Center for Medical and Health Data Science, The Institute of Statistical Mathematics; Executive Director of the Japanese Society of Comprehensive Suicide Countermeasures), with comments provided by Takemi Mori (Professor at Konan Women’s University) and Yurika Watanabe (Representative Director of General Incorporate Association Kusanone Mutual Support Project, Executive Director of the Japanese Society of Comprehensive Suicide Countermeasures).

- For details of the report, please see the “[Event Report](#)” page of the 2024 Autumn Lecture of the Japanese Society of Comprehensive Suicide Countermeasures

■ 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/yamaderakaoru>

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