



## Newsletter Vol.43 (May 2025)

Japan Suicide Countermeasures  
Promotion Center



Thank you for subscribing to the newsletter of Japan Suicide Countermeasures Promotion Center (JSCP). This issue includes an interview with Takeshi Saito, Mayor of Edogawa City, Tokyo, a municipality taking a pioneering approach to community-based suicide countermeasures. It also features a presentation report from the 7th Annual Conference of the Japanese Society of Grief and Bereavement, as well as an interview with JSCP staff member (Yoshiaki Matsuda, Head of the Office for Local Support).

※This e-mail is sent to those who requested to receive this newsletter or provided us with the contact information through our activities. If you do not wish to receive further e-mails from us, please click [here](#) to unsubscribe.

### <Vol.43 Topics>

1. **[Coverage Report]** Interview with Takeshi Saito, Mayor of Edogawa City, Tokyo
  2. **[Presentation Report]** The 7th Annual Conference of the Japanese Society of Grief and Bereavement
  3. **[Interview with JSCP Staff]** Yoshiaki Matsuda, Head of the Office for Local Support, Department for Promoting Local Collaboration
  4. **[Reference Information]** The booklet “Why Do People Hurt Themselves? —10 Misconceptions About Self-Harm”
  5. **[Reference Information]** Registration Is Now Open for the 2025 Summer Lecture by the Japanese Society of Comprehensive Suicide Countermeasures
- 
1. **[Coverage Report]** Interview with Takeshi Saito, Mayor of Edogawa City, Tokyo  
**“Otsukaresama desu” —A simple greeting that saved a life: The origin of citywide comprehensive suicide countermeasures by Edogawa City**



**Takeshi Saito, Mayor of Edogawa City (at Edogawa City Office)**

Edogawa City in Tokyo is known as a municipality that takes a pioneering approach to suicide countermeasures. The city compiled the results of a survey and analysis of residents who died by suicide in a certain year. This survey found that more than 80% of the deceased had some form of contact with the city's consultation services for daily living support and similar needs prior to their death by suicide.

But why did the city decide to conduct such a survey and make the findings available to the public? When we spoke with Mayor Takeshi Saito, he shared a story that shaped his commitment to leading suicide countermeasures as the head of a local government. One day, a female staff member at a city-run bicycle parking facility greeted a resident with a simple “*Otsukaresama desu*”—a phrase that, as it turned out, touched the resident's heart and saved her life.

■ Click [here](#) to read the full article.

▼ Overall structure of the article

- Summary and results of the survey
  - Development of suicide countermeasures by Edogawa City
  - Interview with Takeshi Saito, Mayor of Edogawa City
- The survey results came as a “devastating shock”
- Citywide comprehensive efforts: It all started with a single letter
- “Suicide countermeasures are fundamental to community development”
- After the survey

※JSCP established a partnership agreement with Edogawa City regarding the analysis of suicide countermeasures data and related processes and collaborated on this analysis and related efforts.

## 2. [Presentation Report] JSCP staff member speaks at the 7th Annual Conference of the Japanese Society of Grief and Bereavement

On March 16, 2025, Mai Suganuma, Head of the JSCP Office for Suicide Bereaved Support, spoke at the 7th Annual Conference of the Japanese Society of Grief and Bereavement (hosted by the Japanese Society of Grief and Bereavement) held in Osaka City.

This annual conference is held to deepen understanding of experiences such as grief and bereavement, provide opportunities for academic exchange, including basic research and clinical practice, on support methods and systems for bereaved individuals, and promote the development of interdisciplinary and academic research in this field. The conference also seeks to make a broad contribution to society through the dissemination and practical application of specialized support, as well as through contributions to education. The conference was attended by approximately 210 participants, including personnel from the medical, welfare, and education fields, private organizations, and local governments from throughout Japan. A series of lectures and symposiums was featured.

One of the symposium's themes was “The Sudden Loss of a Minor Child.” In the first half, four speakers—Mai Suganuma (JSCP), Hiroko Sakashita (bereaved families group, Chiisana Inochi), Ikue Nishimine (ER and Trauma Center at Osaka City General Hospital), and Chiharu Inoue (Japan Organ Transplant Network)—gave presentations on situations commonly faced by bereaved families and the various approaches for support utilized in their respective fields.

Suganuma gave a presentation titled “The Current Situation of Child Suicide and Frameworks for Supporting Those Bereaved by Suicide in Japan.” She noted that in 2025, the number of suicides among elementary, junior high, and high school students reached a record high of 527 (a provisional figure at the time of the presentation; the finalized number, released on March 28, was 529). Her presentation also highlighted that nearly 60% of these deaths occur at home, meaning it is common for another child returning home from school or other places, or a family member, to be the first to discover the body. Suganuma

第7回日本グリーフ&ビリーブメント学会  
学術大会

ともに学ぶ、  
ともに語る、  
ともに生きる

日程 2025年3月15日土・16日  
※ライブ配信及びオンデマンド配信は行いません

会場 大阪市立総合医療センター 3階「さくらホール」  
〒534-0021 大阪府都島区都島本通2-13-22

特別講演 「子どものグリーフ ～院内学級・ホム先生からのメッセージ～」  
關島賢和 (昭和大学大学院 保健医療学研究所 准教授)

教育講演 「悲嘆理論再考～理論は粗い地図、臨床は未知の現地～」  
山本力 (岡山大学 名誉教授)

「支援者に求められること  
～グリーフケアマインド:共に探す・待つ・後援する～」 宮林幸江  
(日本グリーフケア協会 会長)

シンポジウム 「未成年の子どもの突然の死別」  
「子どものグリーフへの支援」  
「地域でのグリーフケアモデルの構築に向けて」

大会 長 多田雅重 大阪市立総合医療センター  
実行委員長 米虫圭子 京都府立大学  
主催 一般社団法人 日本グリーフ&ビリーブメント学会

お申し込みはホームページから  
<https://7th-js-gb.com>  
詳細はチラシを  
ご覧ください。  
こちらがQRです。QR

第7回学術大会実行委員会 株式会社 AGU SMILE info@7th-js-gb.com

further identified several related challenges faced by many parents, including the difficulty of expressing their pain or struggles to seek help, as well as a reluctance to tell their children the truth about the suicide by a family member, both stemming from misconceptions and stigmas surrounding suicide. Additionally, Suganuma pointed out that caution is required when using data, as listing “family issues” as a cause or motive for suicide can sometimes lead surviving family members or others to feel blamed. She then emphasized that, in supporting those bereaved by suicide, it is important not to assume that they are automatically in need of help. Instead, one should sincerely engage with each individual, respect their pace, and walk alongside them.

Other speakers discussed situations that are often experienced by families bereaved by the sudden death of a minor child. These included the psychological difficulty of accepting the reality of the loss due to its suddenness, the shock of being questioned by the police, the reluctance to submit one’s child for an autopsy or internal examination, and the challenge of reaching a family consensus regarding organ donation. Speakers introduced various support approaches, including establishing systems that can respond even amid staff turnover at medical institutions, respecting the bereaved family’s wishes regarding their final moments with the deceased child, and providing information effectively.

The second half of the symposium featured a panel discussion with symposium chairs Yoshiyasu Ito (Tsuruga Nursing University) and Noriko Setou (Fukushima Medical University), joined by the aforementioned speakers. Drawing on their unique perspectives, the panelists answered audience questions on topics such as how to establish connections with local governments and what kinds of support are available for those who provide care.

### 3. [Interview with JSCP Staff] Yoshiaki Matsuda, Head of the Office for Local Support, Department for Promoting Local Collaboration —Utilizing 37 years of teaching experience to facilitate smooth cooperation between schools and suicide countermeasures departments



#### <Profile> Yoshiaki Matsuda

Born in Tokyo in 1962 (his parents are from Tsuruoka City, Yamagata Prefecture). After graduating from a teacher training university, Matsuda became a mathematics teacher at junior high schools in Tokyo and worked there for 37 years. During his time in the education sector, Matsuda served as a supervisor, chief supervisor, and director of the guidance office on the boards of education in three wards, as well as a school administrator.

After retiring from his teaching position in 2022, Matsuda joined JSCP to help facilitate smooth cooperation between schools and suicide countermeasures departments. In addition to his work at JSCP, Matsuda is also involved in other work related to regional revitalization. (As population decline leads to the consolidation and closure of high schools in rural areas of Japan, more schools are beginning to recruit students from across the country. Matsuda provides advice and assistance in regard to student recruitment and school choice.)

#### —What are your basic duties as Head of the Office for Local Support?

**Matsuda)** When JSCP provides support to local communities, I serve as a liaison between prefectures and the [local suicide countermeasures promotion centers](#) established in ordinance-designated cities.

Japan is divided into five blocks, each of which has a permanent liaison office called the Concierge for Local Government. Opinions and inquiries received at these offices are handled by the Head of the Office for Local Support in each block. In FY2024, there were approximately 2,000 inquiries across all blocks.

Also, the Department for Promoting Local Collaboration offers various training sessions, including “New Employee Training” for local government staff newly assigned to suicide countermeasures departments; “Basic Training for Comprehensive Support of Living,” which helps staff plan projects and understand assistive technology; and “Intermediate and Advanced Training,” designed to equip staff to address specific issues in local support and practice. The department also holds information sessions related to individual projects. In operating the training and information sessions, the Head of the Office for Local Support serves as one of the lecturers and also creates training videos.

In recent years, the increase in the number of suicides among children and youth has become a serious problem. In response, Japan began a national project to set up [Child Suicide Crisis Response Teams](#) in prefectures and ordinance-designated cities in 2023. JSCP supports local governments in starting their own projects by holding online meetings with the people in charge and by visiting to hold on-site meetings.

■ Click [here](#) to read the full article.

▼ Other questions

- What kind of work do you usually do?
- You are mainly in charge of work related to promoting cooperation with schools. What kind of duties do you perform?
- What kind of work do you perform in your current position at the Office for Children and Youth Suicide Countermeasures?
- What are your thoughts on suicide countermeasures?

4. [Reference Information] Introduction of the booklet “Why Do People Hurt Themselves? —10 Misconceptions About Self-Harm”

The JSCP conducts the Innovative Research Program on Suicide Countermeasures, which is a commissioned research project that publicly recruits researchers in fields related to suicide countermeasures to promote evidence-based policymaking and research that contributes to social return. This section introduces a booklet titled “Why Do People Hurt Themselves? —10 Misconceptions About Self-Harm” (free download), which was published as a result of commissioned research in 2024 (Principal Investigator: Professor Masaru Takahashi, Ochanomizu University).

Self-harm, such as wrist cutting, is currently attracting attention as a social issue. However, there are several persistent misunderstandings surrounding self-harm. These misunderstandings sometimes prevent people from receiving appropriate support. This booklet explores 10 of the many misconceptions surrounding self-harm. These misconceptions are found not only among the general public but also among professionals who provide interpersonal support. By referencing relevant literature, the booklet aims to dispel these misunderstandings and promote appropriate support for individuals who engage in self-harm.

For example, the chapter titled “Is Self-Harm Aimed at Death?” explains that while both “self-harm” and “suicide” are acts of inflicting injury on oneself, they actually differ in their intent, methods, and anticipated outcomes. The booklet points out that “self-harm” is often used as a way to cope with painful emotions and survive in the short term. However, it is also believed that, in the long term, self-harm may increase the risk of suicide due to habituation to pain and fear. For this reason, the booklet stresses that “appropriate intervention in self-harm can contribute to suicide prevention.”

The booklet is primarily intended for people involved in the lives of individuals engaging in self-harm, including medical and educational professionals as well as parents. However, it is also written in an easy-to-understand manner for individuals who self-harm.



\*\*\*\*\*

**Principal Investigator:** Professor Masaru Takahashi (Human Sciences Division, Faculty of Core Research, Ochanomizu University)

**Research Project:** A Comprehensive Study on Understanding, Prevention, and Countermeasures for Suicide and Self-Harm Among High-Risk Delinquent Adolescents

**Research Results:** Booklet “Why Do People Hurt Themselves? —10 Misconceptions About Self-Harm”

■ For more information, click [here](#) to access the website where the booklet is available for free download.

## 5. [Reference Information] Registration Is Now Open for the 2025 Summer Lecture by the Japanese Society of Comprehensive Suicide Countermeasures

The Japanese Society of Comprehensive Suicide Countermeasures will hold the “2025 Summer Lecture—Insights into Suicide Countermeasures for Children Through Engagement with Children in Difficult Circumstances” online on Tuesday, June 10, 2025 (co-hosted by the Research Center for Medical and Health Data Science, The Institute of Statistical Mathematics, under the Research Organization of Information and Systems (planned); sponsored by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (planned) and JSCP).

At the lecture, Yumiko Watanabe, President of KIDSDOOR (a certified NPO), will deliver a talk titled “Insights into Suicide Countermeasures for Children Through Engagement with Children in Difficult Circumstances.” For many years, Watanabe has focused her attention on the harsh environments, including poverty and abuse, experienced by Japanese children. She has continually worked to create a society in which all children can have dreams and hopes. Countermeasures to address child suicide have become an urgent issue in recent years. When considering these countermeasures, it is important to comprehensively address issues such as the loneliness and social isolation faced by children, as well as changes in the family environment. Lecture attendees will learn about multifaceted and comprehensive approaches to protecting children’s mental health and preventing suicide, and explore prospective methods for addressing issues related to child suicide countermeasures.

The lecture will be moderated by Hiromi Shozu (Head of the JSCP Office for Local Support; Executive Director of the Japanese Society of Comprehensive Suicide Countermeasures). Following the lecture, commentator Mayumi Oka (Specially Appointed 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) will join for a discussion.

For details and registration instructions, please visit the event information page of the Japanese Society of Comprehensive Suicide Countermeasures. In addition to society members, anyone with an interest in suicide countermeasures is welcome to participate (participation is free of charge). The application deadline is Tuesday, June 3, 2025.

■ Click [here](#) for more information and registration.

**We’re looking for new JSCP staff to join us  
in working on suicide countermeasures.**

※Click [here](#) for more information.

■ 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, Public Relations Officer at JSCP)

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

Japan Suicide Countermeasures Promotion Center (JSCP)

Designated by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, General Incorporated Association

Public Relations Office [news@jscp.or.jp](mailto:news@jscp.or.jp)



[https://www.facebook.com/JSCP\\_press](https://www.facebook.com/JSCP_press)



[https://twitter.com/JSCP\\_press](https://twitter.com/JSCP_press)

[https://twitter.com/JSCP\\_www](https://twitter.com/JSCP_www)