



# *Mental Health 2020 – Proposal for Tomorrow*

## *5 Perspectives on Mental Health Policy*



### **Our Vision for Mental Health Policy**

Based on meetings and hearings conducted throughout Health and Global Policy Institute's (HGPI) Mental Health Policy Project in FY2019, we have drafted *Mental Health 2020 – Proposal for Tomorrow* to achieve better mental healthcare policy in Japan. Our proposal addresses the current circumstances and issues in mental health in Japan from five perspectives and presents multiple policy recommendations from each perspective. When drafting it, we emphasized the inclusion of as many perspectives as possible. Moving forward, we will continue issuing statements and proposals to contribute to improving quality of life (QOL) for those most affected by gathering opinions for *Mental Health 2020 – Proposal for Tomorrow* from an even wider range of stakeholders, by sharpening our focus on specific agendas, and by paying close attention to international trends and innovative practices from abroad.

The World Health Organization defines mental health as “a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.” In other words, it is not defined by the presence or absence of any specific disorder. Rather, it should be perceived as a subjective concept of how we want to live our lives as social creatures interacting in society. In that sense, every one of us is a beneficiary of mental health policy, from those of us who require continuous support for mental disorders or disabilities from experts in medicine, healthcare, or welfare, to those of us who find everyday living to be a minor yet constant struggle.

For mental health policy to contribute to improving QOL for the parties most affected - in other words, every living person - the first step will be to wipe away stereotypes and prejudices towards mental disorders. Then, we must become more sensitive to subtle changes in our own mental health and learn how to be considerate towards the difficulties others may be facing in their lives, no matter how great or small those difficulties may be. In addition, we must build an environment that helps those who need professional support to access healthcare and welfare systems on their own terms while taking steps to continually evaluate and improve mental health systems based on scientific evidence. Within that effort, we have high expectations for coordination between specialists with various perspectives to establish a care system that can provide the necessary services at the necessary times. It will also be absolutely essential for service providers to listen to the voices of users while making continuous improvements to mental health systems without being overly-reliant on existing systems. At the same time, policy evidence must be gathered and research and development must be promoted so that both beneficiaries and specialists have the latest information and are able to choose the best type of support among various options. Finally, a framework that allows multi-stakeholders to unite, hold discussions, and elevate their voices is needed to sustain efforts to improve mental health and QOL for all.

# 5 Perspectives on Mental Health Policy and Policy Recommendations

## Perspective 1

**Expand policies that raise mental health literacy in society and promote the activities of those most affected.**

- ① Promote the activities of people with mental health disorders and those close to them to improve mental health literacy for all of society.
- ② Improve every individual's ability to respond to mental health issues over the life course by expanding education on mental health in primary and secondary education and by reinforcing support services.
- ③ Promote peer support activities to encourage self-determination among people with mental disorders.



## Perspective 2

**Establish systems for providing care that are integrated into communities, compatible with everyday life, and meet the needs of people with mental disorders.**

- ① Enhance inpatient care systems to fully meet the needs of people with mental disorders while providing care in a way that upholds their dignity and respects their rights.
- ② Enrich systems for providing outpatient care with community engagement and multi-disciplinary cooperation.
- ③ Promote cooperation between healthcare and welfare services and ensure the Integrated Community Care System has the capacity to respond to mental disorders.



## Perspective 3

**Build an infrastructure for community living that provides places to live, places to work, and places to belong.**

- ① Ensure that people with mental disorders can plot their own life courses, including those who wish to consider their medium- and long-term career development.
- ② Empower people with mental disorders to objectively grasp their own psychological states and allow them the flexibility to adjust their daily lives accordingly.  
Unite housing support organizations, people with mental disorders, and mental health specialists to take local housing conditions into account and establish environments that are agreeable to both borrowers and lenders.



## Perspective 4

**Create systems for gathering the data and information needed for evidence-based policy-making and policy evaluation.**

- ① Combine existing systems for data management and research for the more effective promotion of research that aims to discover the causes of mental disorders.
- ② Build a platform for gathering comprehensive data and information that emphasizes patient empowerment and unites all fields related to mental health, including welfare services.



## Perspective 5

**Establish an environment that allows for multi-stakeholders to engage in continuous discussions on mental health policy.**

- ① Ensure that all policies and projects are implemented and evaluated from the perspectives of people with mental disorders by including them in all discussion forums.
- ② Enact a Basic Act for mental health that emphasizes the perspectives of people with mental disorders and promotes the creation of comprehensive mental health policies for prevention, treatment, and welfare.



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