

Title: MUSIC THERAPY WITH TRAUMA  
—WORK WITH THE SURVIVORS OF THE GREAT EAST JAPAN EARTHQUAKE AND  
TSUNAMI—

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The Great East Japan Earthquake happened at 2:46 pm on Friday, March 11<sup>th</sup> 2011. It was of a 9.0 magnitude which was the most powerful earthquake ever measured in Japan. More than 18,000 people are dead and still missing. Three prefectures in the Tohoku (North-eastern) region of Japan, Miyagi, Iwate, and Fukushima, have been most seriously devastated.

Many people have lost their homes; some towns and villages have been completely swept away and ruined, to which quite a few residents cannot return due to fear of aftershocks, tsunami and radioactive contamination. Therefore, these survivors reside in the temporary housing supplied by the government. And they have been suffering from these changes of environment, unpredictable fear and anxiety for their future life, loss of family members and friends, etc.

Since then, we, a group of music therapists, established the “Tohoku Music Therapy Project” and have been providing music therapy services. The founding members are Kuninori Chida (President, MT), Yoshie Sasaki(MT), Kazuko Mii(MT), Yasuhiro Sawase(Secretary) and myself as the Advisor.

The aims of this project are to provide regular music therapy services for the survivors of the affected areas, to enhance awareness towards the needs of psychological care through music in the society, and also to support local music therapists both financially and psychologically, so that clinicians who are also survivors of the earthquake can be taken care of.

Sing-along, instrumental, movement activities with music, physical activities and verbal sharing have been clinically implemented according to the needs of the clients. Their needs and clinical output have changed through the phases and levels of trauma and grief process.

This presentation will illustrate how this project has been helpful to improve the survivors’ psychological state as well as to re-establish the sense of community through music-making. Also the cultural issues of “therapy” and “trauma” in music therapy in Japan will be discussed.

#### References

Chida, K. (2012). Sanriku no Umi ni Hibike Furusato no Koe (Songs of our home, Resonate with the Sanriku Ocean), Chiryō no Koe Journal No.13, Vol.1, Tokyo:Seiwa Publishers.

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