



HOW TO GET RID OF THE STIGMA AROUND MENTAL HEALTH IN JAPAN

RESEARCH MOTIVE

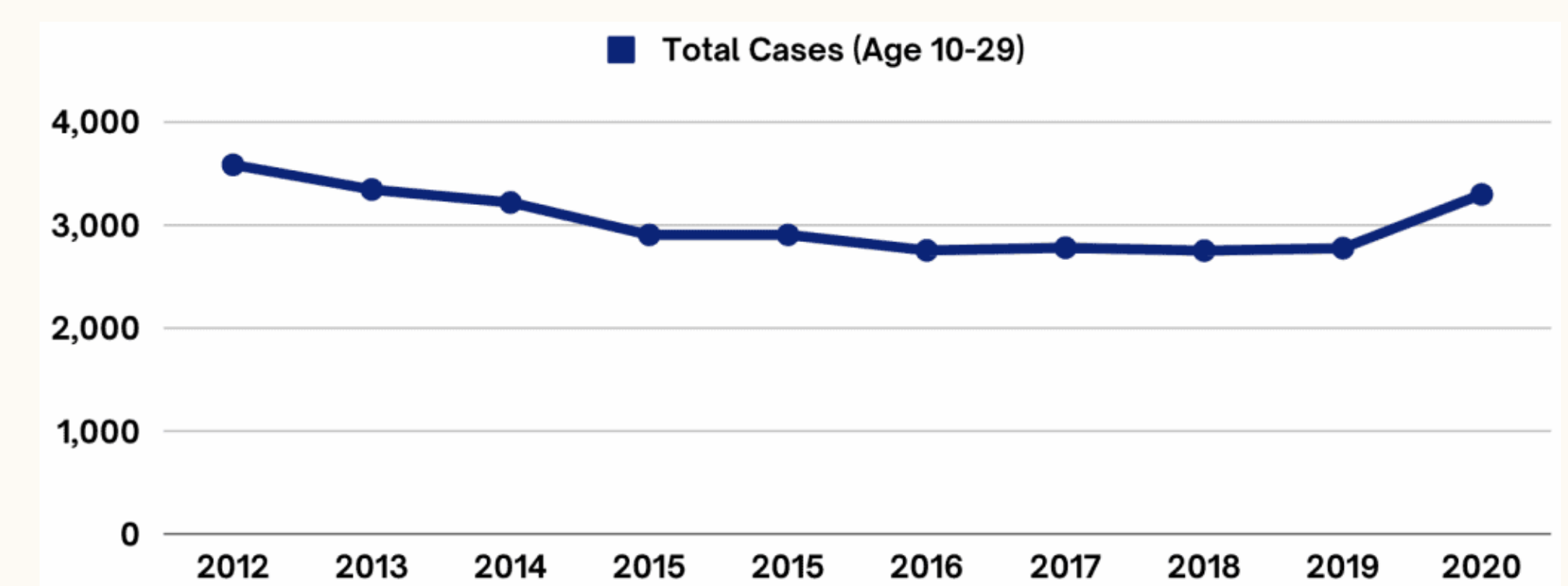
We have always heard from the news that the suicide rate in Japan is higher than any other developed country. We believe that one of the reasons for this is due to people not being able to talk about their mental illnesses openly with anyone or even go to the doctor to be diagnosed. This results from the stigma around mental health and the widespread belief that mental illness does not require treatment. Therefore, to fix this situation and be able to support people who have mental illnesses, the stigma around mental health in Japan must be decreased.

AGE GROUP	TOP THREE CAUSES OF DEATH
Overall	Cancer/heart disease/old age
10-14	Cancer/suicide/accident
15-19	Suicide/accident/cancer
20-24	Suicide/accident/cancer
25-29	Suicide/cancer/accident
30-34	Suicide/cancer/accident
35-39	Suicide/cancer/heart disease
40-44	Cancer/suicide/heart disease
45-49	Cancer/suicide/heart disease

Created by Nippon.com based on data from the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare.

CURRENT SITUATION

- **1 in 12** Japanese elementary school children, and **1 in 4** Japanese high school children suffer from depression.
- There is a **rise in suicide rates** among those under the age of 20.
- Causes of depression include learned patterns of **negative thinking**, which can stem from bullying or academic problems, low self-esteem, stressful life events, and more.
- Only **6 %** of Japanese people are reported to receive counseling in 2020.
- Students who committed suicide blamed **pressure from school** as the main source of their problems.



Suicide data and trends in Japan. TOKYO MENTAL HEALTH. (2022, April 1). <https://www.tokyoementalhealth.com/suicide-data-and-trends-in-japan/>

CULTURAL & HISTORICAL FACTORS

- **Honne and Tatemae** → makes it hard to open up
- **Seppuku** → seen as a way to take responsibility, and is therefore perceived the same way as suicide
- **Collective thinking** → places a target on students who don't fit in
- **Selflessness** → enduring pain without opening up
- Japanese people think mental illnesses do not require treatment
- The stigma prevented many people from seeking treatment and has also oppressed those who suffer from mental illness.

INITIATIVES TAKEN

- The Japanese Society of Psychiatry and Neurology changed the term for the disorder, "Seishin Bunretsu Byo" ("mind-split-disease"), into "Togo Shitcho Sho" ("integration disorder") in 2002 → limited effect
- Japanese officials have attempted to open up public discussion about mental health → unsuccessful
- One NGO, Futoko Shimbun, encourages students who are bullied to stay home from school → indicates a deep discomfort with mental health issues

OUR IDEA

What we can do:

Encourage positive portrayals of mental health on social media.

If we use various media platforms, we can increase people's understanding of mental health. By doing so, it can have a strong influence on how people perceive mental health.

What schools can do:

Provide easier access to Counseling Services.

This might encourage people to talk to their school counselor.

Provide Mental Health Education.

This can increase awareness and understanding, leading to greater empathy towards people with mental illnesses.

What the government can do:

Invest in mental health services.

Governments can invest in healthcare and education, conduct research, and collect data to better understand the causes and risk factors of mental illness.



HOW TO ACHIEVE OUR IDEA

- **Whose help do we need?**
 - Citizens
 - The government
 - Schools
 - Mental health services
- **What resources do we need?**
 - Finances
 - An online platform with influence

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