



# Education to Enhance the Mental Health of Japanese Students



In the 1990s, Rwanda experienced a major tragedy: many people suffered from mental illness, leading to various mental health issues within the country.

To address this, Rwanda places a strong emphasis on mental health education



## Mental Health Education



In our 総合探究 class, international students from the Global South who are enrolled in the Graduate School of Environmental Sciences at Hokkaido University visited our school. We have been studying their respective countries' cultures and the challenges they face, and engaged in discussions for a year.

This is Gloria Kamwezi from Rwanda

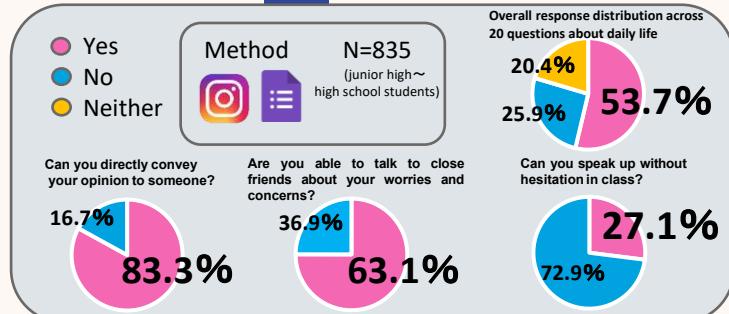
## Is Japan's mental health education sufficient? We can learn from the Global South!

	employed people	students	elementary school	junior high school	high school	unemployed people
2024	ALL 8,092	ALL 1,077	ALL 15	ALL 163	ALL 351	ALL 10,800
	MALE 6,331	MALE 591	MALE 9	MALE 64	MALE 166	MALE 6,604
	FEMALE 1,761	FEMALE 486	FEMALE 6	FEMALE 99	FEMALE 185	FEMALE 4,196
2023	ALL 8,858	ALL 1,019	ALL 13	ALL 153	ALL 347	ALL 11,466
	MALE 7,063	MALE 572	MALE 5	MALE 73	MALE 181	MALE 6,827
	FEMALE 1,795	FEMALE 447	FEMALE 8	FEMALE 80	FEMALE 166	FEMALE 4,639

Year-on-Year Comparison of Suicides by Occupation  
Source: Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (2025)

Despite being a developed country, Japan has seen an increase in youth suicides, raising concerns about the quality of mental health education.

The reason is that many causes of suicide—such as family or school problems—are difficult for young people to talk about, making simple communication often insufficient.



Japanese students have their opinions and can convey them to close friends, but not to others.

Based on these findings, we created a card game that helps students develop communication skills by discussing and sharing ideas in groups.

## こころの対話カード

This card game is an activity that encourages conversation using

- シチュエーションカード
- きもちカード
- リアクションカード

Players take turns drawing cards from the center pile. The person who draws, shares their own experiences or thoughts based on the card's content, while others respond using reaction cards. This is repeated several times.

Finally, all participants say in unison,

“スッキリしたね。”

(Speaking in unison symbolizes uniting everyone's feelings!)

Through this activity, students can build new relationships and feel more comfortable sharing their feelings.

We hope this will help reduce youth suicide in Japan and support young people's healthy growth.



## Future Outlook

To improve this initiative, we plan to consult with our school counselor. We then intend to propose it to our principal and expand it to other schools, hoping to contribute to reducing youth suicide in Japan.