

Holding of the Symposium on the “Support of Children Who Lost Their Families in Traffic Accidents”

The Ninth Traffic Safety Basic Plan (adopted on March 31, 2011 by the Central Traffic Safety Measures Council) lists the “promotion of the support of victims” as one of the pillars of traffic safety measures in order to promote the support of victims of traffic accidents and their families and bereaved families (hereinafter, victims of traffic accidents).

Under the circumstances, the Cabinet Office promotes the “projects to support victims of traffic accidents” (hereinafter, “support projects”) since 2003 which is designed to enable victims of traffic accidents to recover from deep sorrows and painful experiences, to reestablish themselves and to protect the rights and benefits of the victims of traffic accidents.

In support projects, information has been provided to the victims of traffic accidents from a variety of perspectives. From 2012, the focus has been shifted to children who lost their families in traffic accidents in order to summarize opinions on necessary supports and challenges and to provide information not only to children who lost their families in traffic accidents, but also to benefactors around them and people engaged in support activities.

From 2013 symposia have been held at which the general public can attend the lectures. At Osaka in 2014 lectures were provided by specialists in psychological support for children that have lost family members due to a traffic accident, and a panel discussion was held on the theme "Losing family due to a traffic accident during childhood" with panelists that were surviving family members that experienced loss of family due to a traffic accident during their childhood.

The impressions of the participants included "the firsthand voice of those affected in particular made an impression on me. The circumstances and environment of each individual is different, so again I felt that it is necessary to respond case by case", and "I feel that there is so much I didn't know about support for victims, and so much more that I should know", reinforcing the necessity of support for the victims of traffic accidents.

内閣府 平成26年度交通事故被害者サポート事業


交通事故で家族を亡くした 子供の支援に関するシンポジウム

交通事故で家族を亡くした子供を支援することを目的に、
必要な支援や課題等の意見を集約し、家族を亡くした子供のみならず、
その周囲にいる保護者や支援に携わる方等に対して、情報を発信します

〔日時〕 平成27年2月8日（日）
13:00～16:30

〔会場〕 梅田クリスタルホール
（梅田センタービルB1階）
大阪市北区中崎西2丁目4番12号

主催：内閣府
協力：独立行政法人自動車事故対策機構/
公益財団法人交通遺児育英会
事務局：日本PMIコンサルティング株式会社



Keynote Address by Associate Professor Masahiro Iwakiri of Osaka Kyoiku University
“Providing Care in the Event of Sudden Death of Family”

[Outline of the keynote address of Associate Professor Iwakiri]

- What is grief
- Understanding of death according to age
- Response to grief
- Complex grief
- Psychological care of grief



Associate Professor Iwakiri discussed the following from a specialist standpoint.

- “Grief” indicates various emotions and actions caused by loss of someone important in one’s life, and in particular the reaction to the loss is referred to as “grief reaction”
- “Grief reaction” can include a feeling of unreality (a feeling of denial of reality), paralysis of feeling (feelings are gone), grieving and moaning (feelings of anger and indignation), despair (being depressed and unable to think), or feelings of responsibility (feelings of blaming oneself)
- It is important to calmly listen to what the child has to say, and it is necessary to know that the way of thinking of family members differ, and the way of thinking of children also differs

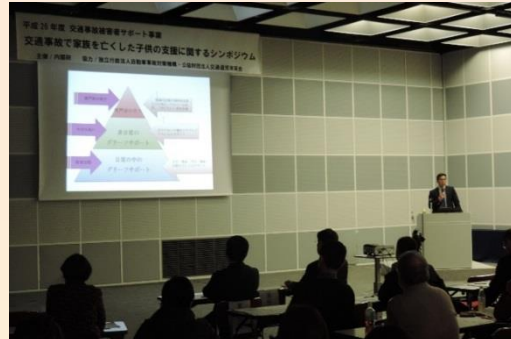
Lecture by Ikumi Inoue, Director of the National Conference of the Bereaved Seeking Severe Punishment for Drunken and Hit-and-run Crimes
“As a Parent of a Child that has Lost a Family Member”



Mr. Inoue stated the following.

- In order to support a child that has lost a family member, it is necessary to listen to and respect the wishes of the child. Thereafter it is necessary for the adults to recognize and take into consideration the wishes of the child, in important situations in the social life of the child
- In order to support a child that has many problems as a result of an accident, places where they can make friends that are in the same situation, and people that are completely unconnected to family or school coming close to the child are important. Also it is necessary to continue this support.

Lecture by Masahiro Nishida, Representative of the specified non-profit corporation Grief Support Station for Children “Support for Children that have Lost a Family Member”



Mr. Nishida stated the following.

- Deaths can be a first person (one’s own death), second person (family), or third person (a distant person) death. It is important for the person providing support to make contact at a distance about half that of a second person, not too near and not too far
- The goal is to support the person suffering grief and separation so that they can carefully feel their own feelings, and respond to their new life
- The “Grief Support Station for Children” provides a venue for learning support, where children with the same experience can play and talk, and when necessary a specialist can be provided

Panel Discussion " Losing family due to a traffic accident during childhood"

Coordinator Associate Professor Masahiro Iwakiri

Panelists 5 persons (surviving family members that lost a family member in their childhood due to a traffic accident 3 persons, Ikumi Inoue, Director of the National Conference of the Bereaved Seeking Severe Punishment for Drunken and Hit-and-run Crimes, and Masahiro Nishida, Representative of the specified non-profit corporation Grief Support Station for Children)



Three of the panelists were surviving family members of victims (during their childhood they lost a family member due to a traffic accident). They spoke about their experience of losing an important family member, their difficulties, and events that helped them during this difficult time. Next, Ikumi Inoue, Director of the National Conference of the Bereaved Seeking Severe Punishment for Drunken and Hit-and-run Crimes stated his impressions from the standpoint of a parent. Masahiro Nishida, Representative of the specified non-profit corporation Grief Support Station for Children described his own experience of becoming a traffic accident orphan, and finally there were questions and answers moderated by Associate Professor Masahiro Iwakiri.

The story of a person that lost family due to a traffic accident in their childhood (male)

Five years ago when I was a junior high school student my father died in a motorcycle accident. I wanted to be the strength to my mother, but far from encouraging my mother on the contrary it was my mother who encouraged me. My mother did not show grief on her face, and I am grateful that my mother and relatives completely processed father's accident. What troubled me in the response of those around me was being asked by my teacher and friends about my father, when I was not in the mood to talk about him. In the family we frequently talked like friends after the accident, so I think I was able to carry on without bearing a deep wound in my heart. Economic support is necessary for children. As a result of a grant I was able to go to university, for which I am very grateful. I also think counseling and a place where you can talk to people in the same situation are necessary. It is great to receive this support.

The story of a person that lost family due to a traffic accident in their childhood (female)

On Christmas night 1999, a car driven by a drunk driver collided with the front of a car in which my younger sister was riding. I was at University in Kyoto, and I was informed about the accident by telephone from my mother in Shimane. When I returned to Shimane, it was really difficult for me to be told "be strong for your sister" or "help your mother and father". For a child that has lost a family member, I think it is important to be taught about the emotions that arise when you lose an important person, the changes to your body, and the specific grief process. For me, rather than immediately after my younger sister died, it was after a while when I had a tough time. I attended a psychotherapist, and I contacted people that were in the same situation as me. I was at an age in which I could take my own actions, but a smaller child does not have that option. If a small child has the opportunity to listen to what a specialist has to say, that would lighten their heart, and surely make daily life easier.

The story of a person that lost family due to a traffic accident in their childhood (female)

In 1984, my father fell from an embankment and impacted a bridge girder at a sharp curve, and died. At that time my older sister was 5 years old, I was 3 years old, and my younger brother was just 2 months old. Even now I have strong memories of my father. I was very sad at the loss of my father. At kindergarten, I could not display the drawing of my mother on Father's Day, the school teacher and my friends asked about money out of curiosity. It is really a pity that those people around a child that had lost a parent were so lacking in understanding. I think what is important for a child that has lost a parent is opportunities to make friends with other bereaved children. From my childhood days I entered the drawing and calligraphy competitions held by the National Agency for Automotive Safety and Victims' Aid, and I know that the organizers always enjoyed our exhibits. It is heartening for bereaved children and their families when unrelated people take joy and pleasure in our growth. Also, I think it is good that they provide grants that do not have to be returned. A child that has lost a family member has been deeply wounded, but on that account can become stronger and grow a little bit more. Receiving the support of the grant was really a help.

[Information on the topic is available on the website of the government]

The "Projects to support victims of traffic accidents" is available on:

<http://www8.cao.go.jp/koutu/sien/index.html>