

Practice of a Work Assistance Program using Farming for Persons with Mental Disabilities.

Senri Matsumoto¹, Daisuke Yamaguchi¹, Yohji Matsui¹, Taeko Takahashi¹, Ken Hotta¹, Dai Chiba¹, Aiko Ohgi³, Hideo Minakata²

¹*Mental Care Center Azumi, Ikeda Town, Nagano Pref., Japan*, ²*Azumi General Hospital, Ikeda Town, Nagano Pref., Japan*, ³*Kariya Hospital, Kariya City, Aichi Pref, Japan*

Introduction/Objective

Getting a job is a serious problem for persons with mental disabilities. "Mental Care Center Azumi" is a day-care center located in the Japanese countryside specializing in psychiatric rehabilitation. In such a region, in addition to a chronic lack of jobs, the global recession has caused a decrease in employment. We considered farming to be an appropriate means of vocational rehabilitation, because each client can work at his own pace. By taking advantage of the regional conditions of our center, a work assistance program using farming was implemented as an introduction to working. Work comprised of thinning out apple blossoms and leaves. The purpose of this report is to explain this work assistance program.

Report

We made arrangements with the local agricultural cooperation association and farm owners, and began work training programs for clients at our center there. Also, we recommended part-time farming jobs to our clients as an introduction to working. With the implementation of this assistance program, plans for vocational rehabilitation for clients were created and the working hours and period were discussed with the farm owners. Support was provided by visiting the training and work locations.

Results/Discussion

In 2008, nine clients participated in the work training, of which three attempted part-time work, and two could successfully complete one month. The farm owner recognized their stable work, and plans to employ the clients next year. Up to now, the clients had experienced many failures, but this time, they could work at their own pace, and could be supported by the staff from our center. Through this program and positive experiences, the clients could gain self-confidence in their skills.

Conclusion

Finding part-time farm work for the clients was possible by taking advantage of the regional conditions. As a result, the clients could gain self-confidence in their skills.

Contribution to the practice base of occupational therapy

Creation of plans for vocational rehabilitation for each client was based on an assessment of working ability and daily living. An analysis of work process was used in the workplace.