

# **Takarazuka City in which we can live in own way as it is**

Efforts of community building to cuddle close to sexual minorities

November 30, 2015

Currently, we are seeking a society where gender diversity is respected. In April of this year, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Technology (MEXT), issued a new policy statement, *“On the Detailed Implementation of Support for Youth with Gender Identity Disorders.”* This directive makes clear that it is necessary to fully address the problems and anxieties facing all youth members of the sexual minority population. It also calls for raised awareness of the necessity for the promotion of understanding toward and providing assistance to sexual minorities on a nation-wide scale.

Here in Takarazuka, we are working toward a society where gender diversity is understood and where all citizens can live as they choose.

## **COURSE OF ACTION:**

### **Community Building Based on Respect for Human Rights**

All people will be respected as individuals.

Each individual will be free to peacefully live in an egalitarian society.

- ◆ Ignorance gives birth to prejudice. Our ideal community begins with proper knowledge and comprehension.
- ◆ The dissemination of relevant information will also take place within the framework of the public education system.
- ◆ We will seek the creation of work places free from prejudice and communities where people can work free from fear.

### **Community Building Taking Sexual Minorities into Consideration**

- ◆ We will seek the creation of a community where people can be themselves, be accepted as themselves and live happily.
- ◆ We will understand that there are special challenges faced by every community.
- ◆ We will seek to further the understanding of diverse genders and family structures.
- ◆ We will seek to eliminate prejudice regarding the nature of personal happiness.

## **CONCRETE MEASURES**

Various efforts are being made to raise awareness on an individual level, which will lead to more effective concrete measures.

### **Overall Initiatives**

#### **Promoting Public Awareness and Understanding:**

1. Public lectures targeting the general public will be held.
2. More comprehensive development efforts will be implemented targeting the following levels:
  - ◆ **Civic:**  
private citizens, local and regional activists, neighborhood councils, community development councils
  - ◆ **Business:**  
employers and employees
  - ◆ **Medical and Social Welfare:**  
health care providers, social welfare policy makers, workers at social welfare institutions, Welfare volunteers and Child Welfare volunteers
  - ◆ **City Employees:**  
(all staff targeted)
    - In two years (from 2016), all city employees will receive inservice training regarding sexual minority issues.
    - Employee opinion surveys regarding awareness of sexual minority issues will be conducted.
    - Public awareness leaflets will be published and distributed.
    - Public awareness cards will be created and distributed.
    - These issues will be designated as one of the responsibilities of the leader of the Public Gender Equality Ordinance.

#### **Outreach Activities:**

- Rainbow pin badges and stickers will be made and be displayed by all employees.
- Rainbow stickers etc., will be created and displayed in public offices.
- Posters will be displayed in town offices, public institutions, and featured in the town's public relations magazine.
- A home page will be implemented  
(a sexual minority support page will be created).

- Signage for toilets in public facilities will be improved  
(e.g. “All-Gender Restroom” rather than “Multi-Purpose Toilet”)

#### **Assistance Activities:**

- A telephone helpline will be established, which is open two times per week.  
Support and counseling will be available for anyone from children through adults.

#### **Educational and Childcare Initiatives**

Targeting K-12 educators, nursery school teachers and childcare workers, we will work to create an environment where children can easily receive needed consultation and support through the following measures:

#### **Promoting Awareness and Understanding:**

- Leaflets about sexual minority issues, specifically targeted for educators and childcare workers will be created and distributed.
- Training workshops on sexual minority issues will be held for all staff members.
- In-service training will be established to increase understanding and awareness of these issues among all new employees.
- Leaflets and DVDs will be utilized to implement training at each public nursery school and K-12 school.

#### **Outreach Activities:**

- Posters will be displayed in each K-12 school.
- Rainbow pin badges and stickers will be distributed.
- Information cards for the LGBT helpline will be distributed to each student / child.

#### **Other:**

- Lessons for deepening awareness and understanding of sexual minority issues will be created and implemented.
- Support systems will be arranged to address these issues within the framework of each school’s individual support structure.
- Measures will be taken to increase coordination between nursery and K-12 schools to better serve the needs of sexual minority children.
- We will seek to encourage similar efforts among private nursery and K-12 schools.
- Picture Books and Children’s literature concerning sexual minority issues will be distributed to K-12 school libraries.

### **At City Hospitals**

Same-sex couples:

- Can register their partners as power of attorney for medical decisions.
- Being designated as power of attorney will allow them to sign consent forms for crucial decisions such as surgery.
- With the patient's approval, their same-sex partner can also receive information from medical doctors regarding the patient's condition.

### **Creating an Atmosphere Where Same-Sex Partners are Respected**

By creating guidelines for how same-sex couples should be treated, we hope to alleviate some of the extra burdens that sexual minorities face. For example:

- Establishing equal access to municipal housing for sexual minorities.
- Working to persuade local real estate agents to allow same-sex couples equal opportunities in private housing.
- Working to persuade private hospitals to establish the same protections as those provided in public hospitals.

### **Listening to the Voices of the Sexual Minority Community**

- For input on further initiatives, we are listening to the voices of the sexual minority community.

*"If only there were places I could talk openly and get advice..."*

*"If only there were a place where I could live with peace of mind..."*

*"If only there were someplace I could turn to when I'm subjected to discrimination..."*

### **Listening to the Opinions of Specialists**

- For input on further initiatives, we will be also consulting and receiving advice from outside specialists (lawyers and other professionals with relevant knowledge and experience).