



## **Research on Support for Persons with Mental Disability to Make Transition to Regular Employment**

**(Research Report No.108) Summary**

### **【Key Words】**

Persons with Mental Disabilities, Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities, working for short hours

### **【Usage of This Report】**

Since 2008, Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW) has been promoting Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities, where person with mental disability can start from working for short hours and gradually lengthen it depending on situation of the job or workplace, in order to make transition to regular employment. This research shows results of the survey on Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities and hearing survey of companies or supporting organizations and cases of support applied total package during Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities, and proposes the effective support. This report is expected to be practical data when making use of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities effectively.

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**Japan Organization for Employment of the Elderly, Persons with Disabilities and Job Seekers**

**National Institute of Vocational Rehabilitation**

## **1. Authors (in the order of chapters that they wrote)**

Shirokane Toshiki, Research Manager, National Institute of Vocational Rehabilitation

Mori Seiichi, Researcher, National Institute of Vocational Rehabilitation

Shimajoh Kyoko, Researcher, National Institute of Vocational Rehabilitation

Murayama Namiko, Researcher, National Institute of Vocational Rehabilitation

## **2. Research period**

2010 to 2011

## **3. Composition of the research report**

Chapter 1. Purpose of research

Chapter 2. Present employment status and employment support for persons with mental disabilities

Chapter 3. Usage status survey on step-up employment program for persons with mental disabilities

Chapter 4. Hearing survey of companies and related organizations (public employment security office, local vocational rehabilitation centers for persons with disabilities, employment and life support centers for persons with disabilities) on usage of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities

Chapter 5. Use of tools for persons with disabilities to settle into workplace and to make transition to regular employment -based on cases where total package are used-

The final chapter

Appendix

## **4. Background and purpose of the research**

While employment of persons with mental disabilities is promoting, about one third (1/3) of the persons with mental disabilities who found jobs were unemployed within 3 months (according to research report No.95 “A study on the employment conditions, etc. to promote employment of persons with mental disabilities”). Many of them may have difficulty in working for 20 hours or more per a week, which is subject to the system of the employment rate, due to being overstressed or fatigue, which are characteristics of mental disabilities. Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW) have adopted and promoted Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities since 2010. In Step-Up Employment, persons with mental disabilities start with short hours, which are gradually extended in line with how well the person is adapting to the workplace, enabling a smooth transition to regular employment. This research was conducted to explore the effective promotion of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities, and the support for persons with mental disabilities to smoothly make transition to regular employment and be settled in there.

## **5. Method**

- (1) Survey of companies and supporting organizations on Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities
- (2) Hearing survey to perceive detail of cases where Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities is used
- (3) Trial implementation of total package during Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities
- (4) Establishment of a committee

## **6. Summarized results of the study**

### **(1) Survey on Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities**

#### **a. Purpose and method**

Survey on the actual usage of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities was mailed to companies (total 969 respondents such as Japan Association of Employment of Persons with Severe Disabilities members offices, Special Subsidiary (In case that an employer establishes a subsidiary company which gives special consideration for employing persons with disabilities in order to promote and stabilize their employment, and fulfills certain requirements, the workers employed at the subsidiary can be deemed to be employed by the parent company for calculating the employment rate.) , and Vocational foster organization) and supporting organizations (246 employment and life support centers for persons with disabilities, 969 work transition support providers) to explore the way of effective use of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities and encouraging them to make transition to regular employment. The response rate was the following; companies 36.4%, employment and life support centers for persons with disabilities 64.2%, work transition support providers 40.2%.

#### **b. Result**

##### **(a) Level of perception and information source**

The rate of people who answered that “they largely know about the contents of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities” was; approximately 30% in companies, over 90% in Employment and Life Support centers for Persons with disabilities, less than 50% in Work Transition Support Providers (Figure 1). In addition, the most common answer about information resource among people who answered that “they largely know it” or “they have heard of it” was Public Employment Security Office in all subjected companies and organizations (Figure 2). It can be said that Public Employment Security Office has important role for spread of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities.



Figure1. Level of perception about Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities

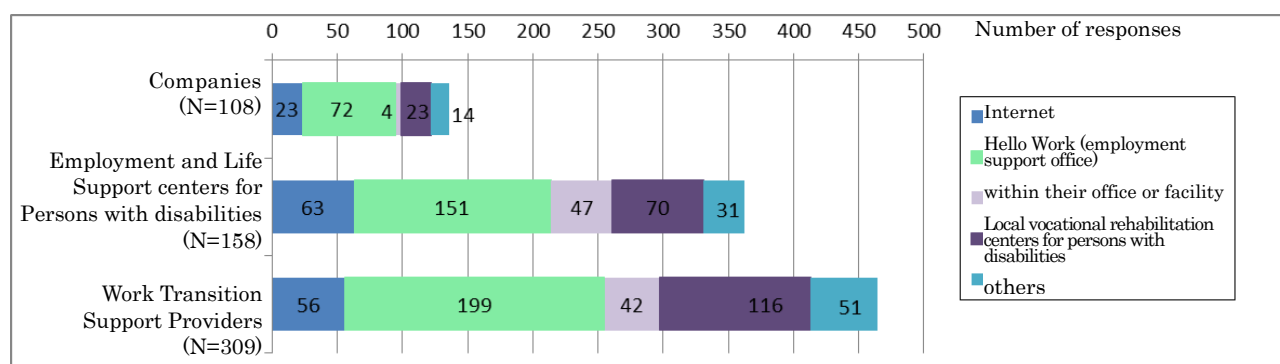


Figure 2. Information source of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities  
(multiple answers allowed)

### (b) Employment support for persons with disabilities applied in the past for new employment of persons with mental disabilities

The questionnaire asking what kind of employment support for persons with disabilities they have used was conducted against companies (91 companies) that have experience of hiring persons with mental disabilities, and supporting organizations (158 employment and life support centers for persons with disabilities, 176 work transition support providers) that have experience of support for hiring and Settling into the workplace of persons with mental disabilities. The most common answer was trial employment program among all subjected companies and organizations. This showed that trial employment program is highly applied as employment support for persons with disabilities of persons with mental disabilities. Over a trial employment period of three months, concerns about hiring persons with disabilities are alleviated for a smooth transition into employment. The second common assistance measure was support offered by Job Coaches. In order to assist persons with intellectual disabilities and persons with mental disabilities in smoothly adjusting to the workplace, the centers dispatch job coaches to workplaces to provide direct and professional support to such persons and their employers based on individual disability traits. The rate of people who have applied Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities was 39.9% in Employment and Life Support centers for Persons with disabilities, but 7.7% in companies and 13.6% in work transition support providers

(Figure 3).

Additionally, public employment security office has most frequently proposed to apply Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities among all subjected companies and organization (The rate was; 46.7% in companies, 61.7% in Employment and Life Support centers for Persons with disabilities, 45.7% in Work Transition Support Providers)

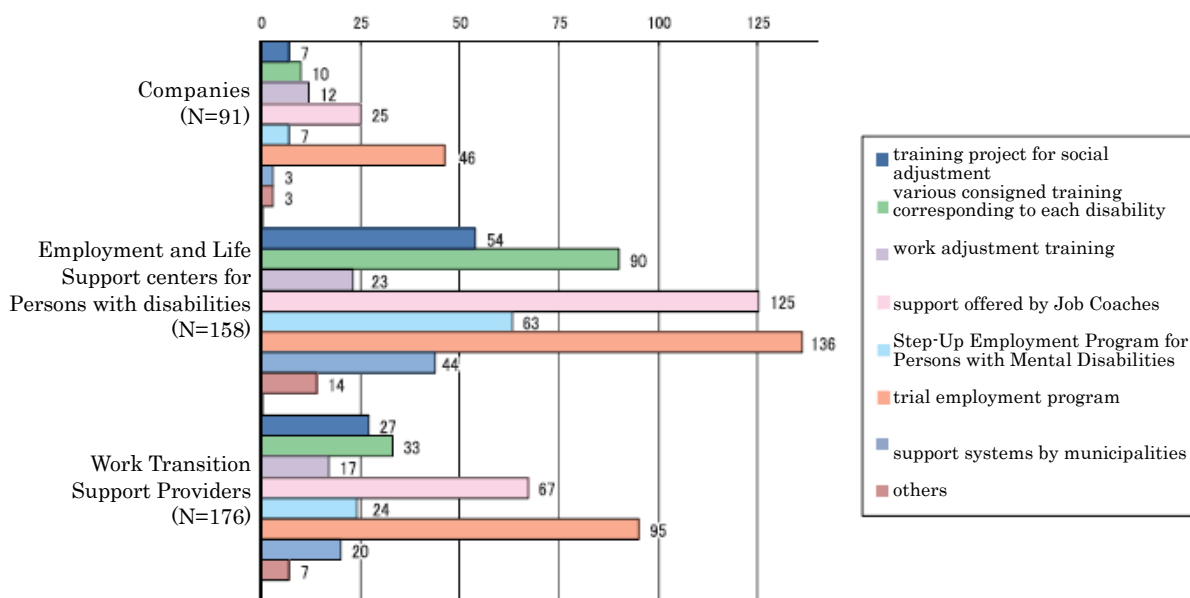


Figure3. Used employment support for persons with disabilities for new employment  
(multiple answers allowed)

### (c) Requirements for shifting into regular employment from Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities

The rate of people who shifted into regular employment, which we can perceive the condition after the termination of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities among answers of employment and life support centers for persons with disabilities and work transition support providers was about 60%. Requirement for regular employment include: cooperative support by number of organizations, support offered by Job Coaches, job-matching accuracy, matching with the required criteria from companies, a smooth relationship in workplace.

### (d) Future action for employment of persons with mental disabilities and usage of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities

About Companies, Only more than 20% of them answered that they are going to engage in new employment of persons with mental disabilities. However, 40% of them answered that it is unclear, and more than 30% of them answered that they have no plan to do it. About supporting organizations, most of employment and life support centers for persons with disabilities and less than 60% of work transition support providers answered that they are going to engage in new employment of (Figure 4).

When the above subjects answered that that they have plan to engage in new employment or supporting for it, question about intention for applying Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities was given. More than 90% of supporting organization answered that they have already decided to apply or discuss about it, and about companies, more than 70% of them positively answered that they would like to discuss about it (Figure 5).

In addition, the question of what do companies especially request to supporting organizations with respect to employment management of persons with mental disabilities was given. There were many answers that they request of supporting for being steady in workplace in the case of work maladjustment, and of supporting by visiting workplace after employment. According of these results, it can be inferred that companies has high latent needs for Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities engaged together with active support by supporting organizations.

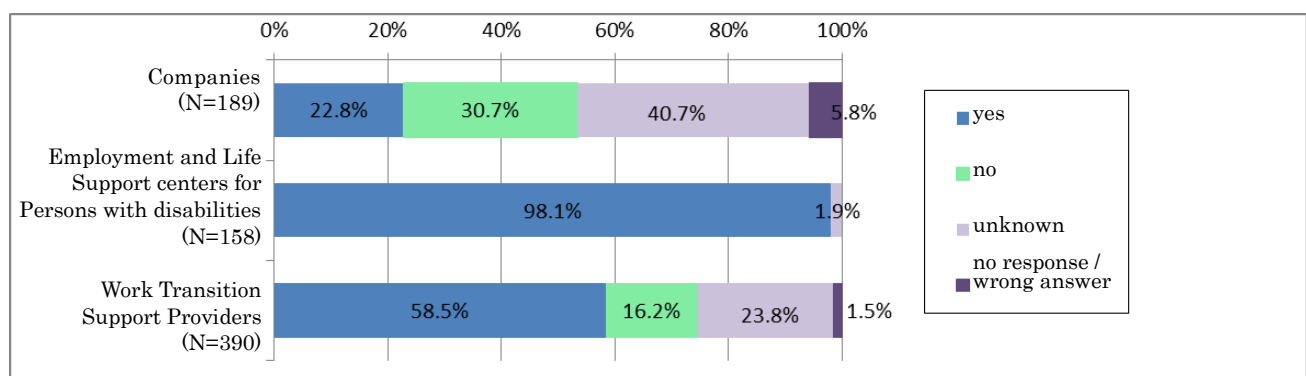


Figure4. intention on hiring persons with mental disabilities or support related to hiring

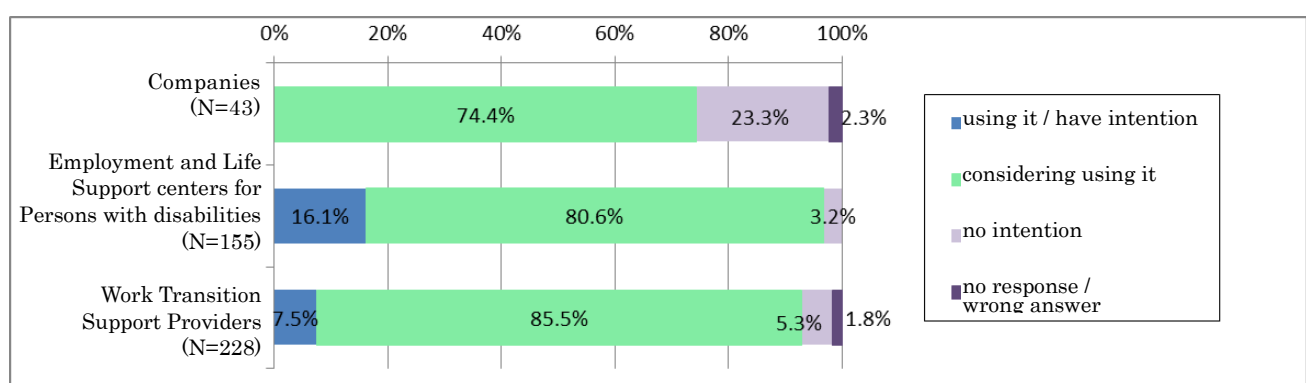


Figure 5. Intention to make use of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities

#### (e) Facilitating the use of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities

Question of what is needed to facilitate the application of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities was given and the answers were shown as follows; The answers from companies

as follows; “longer term payment of financial incentive”, “simplified procedure”, and “a continuous support after shifting into regular employment”. The answers from supporting organizations as follows; “simplified procedure” and “continuous supports after shifting into regular employment”. According to these results, the long term support after shifting into regular employment is desired along with the improvement of the system and convenience (Table 1).

Table 1. Necessary items for Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities to be more applicable system (multiple answers allowed)

	Companies (N=189)		Employment and life support centers for persons with disabilities (N=158)		Work transition support providers (N=390)	
Simplification of procedure that employers take	53	28.0%	107	67.7%	197	50.5%
Alleviation of requirements from subjected employers	23	12.2%	73	46.2%	130	33.3%
The system that person can get financial incentive for longer term (a maximum term of present Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities is 12 months)	62	32.8%	48	30.4%	133	34.1%
It should be available for shorter working hours (More than 10 hours per a week in present Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities)	14	7.4%	48	30.4%	106	27.2%
It should be available for shorter term (More than 3 months in present Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities)	21	11.1%	66	41.8%	116	29.7%
Continuous support including periodical visiting of workplace after shift into regular employment	43	22.8%	82	51.9%	190	48.7%
Others	11	5.8%	31	19.6%	37	9.5%

## (2) Hearing survey

### a. Purpose and method

A face-to-face hearing survey was conducted to collect information about:

1. The application condition of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities in companies
  2. The current status of support
  3. The adjustment for the specified weekly working hours of Step-up employees
  4. Impression of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities, and others
- for 8 companies, 10 public employment security office, 5 local vocational rehabilitation centers for persons with disabilities and 2 employment and life support centers for persons with disabilities, all of them have experience of the application of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities. As a result, 99 cases using it were collected. 92 cases were shown after identical cases found with some organizations excepted.

### b. Results

(a) Analysis for cases of the application of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities (the applied system before employment and outcome)

One third of the above 92 cases have an experience of the application of some system or similar ways before they started Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities. As their breakdown, Workplace practice, Various cosigned training appropriate to condition of persons with disabilities” ,“On the Job Training at corporations” (NOTE) , and others were shown, and all of them have role of practice before employment.

\*(Note) Conducted in local vocational rehabilitation centers for persons with disabilities. They would show their job performance at supporting organizations and their skills and suitability would be assessed.

About the outcomes after termination of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities, 58 cases (63.0%) shifted into regular employment, 5 cases (5.4%) terminated by expiration, and 20 cases (21.7%) retired at the middle of term. 28 of the above 58 cases shifted into regular employment with the condition of 20 or more working hours per a week, and 27 cases shifted with the condition of 20 or less working hours, and it almost means same number (Figure 6).

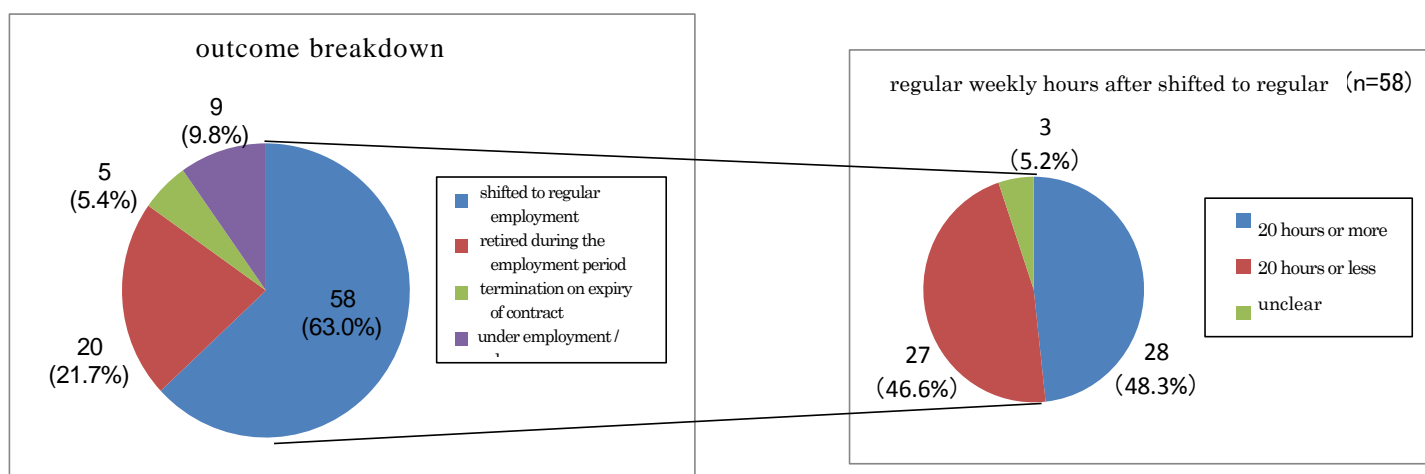


Figure 6. Breakdown of cases that outcome was comprehended after termination of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities

**(b) Impression on Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities, and others**

Impressions on Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities were collected from companies, public employment security office, local vocational rehabilitation centers for persons with disabilities, and employment and life support centers for persons with disabilities. According to them, the followings are described below.

1. Usefulness of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities and others.
2. Difference between Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities and trial



employment Program.

### 3. Cooperation with related organizations

As for usefulness of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities, while many said “It enables us to flexibly set working hours or terms” and “It enables us to judge about shift into regular employment in long term, even though fluctuation of physical condition are found.” were shown, some mentioned problems related to lower motivation for work and ambiguity in target setting in the case that 12 months term which is the longest term of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities. As for the difference between Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities and trial employment Program, there was a tendency that Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities is applied for people who cannot be judged whether they are able to shift into regular employment in short term from the view of person’s conditions such as “the person doesn’t have much experience of work” and “the person has a long absence of work”.

On the other hand, as difference according to company’s needs, there were many opinions that trial employment Program is applied when companies who don’t achieve employment rate desire a helpful employee. About cooperation with the related organizations, companies showed many opinions related to “usefulness of job coach” such as that the application of job coach made the system for coaching and counseling and it was helpful. Furthermore, there were opinions such as “Cooperation with medical organization” and “A building of relationship with supporting organizations that help them in case of trouble is important”. Supporting organizations showed opinions of “the effective division of roles between supporting organizations”, such as that local vocational rehabilitation centers for persons with disabilities mainly support for suggesting work and supporting organization judge a timing for extension of time and others. And “Judgment related to the possibility of extension of time and shifting according to the case conference among companies, supporting organization and the person is important.”

### c. Conclusion of hearing survey

According to hearing survey, the followings were indicated;

1. One third of cases who use Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities performed work place practice to obtain assessment for the person’s appropriate occupation and consent from people who work in the field.
2. In the event that employees under Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities become sick during the work period, long application period for a maximum of 12 months can provide more possibility to recover their employment with appropriate measure or support including flexible changes in working hours.
3. Explicit and meaningful support may be conducted by target setting of employment period or working hours that is appropriate to condition and performance of the subjected person.
4. Supports based on appropriate division of roles among companies and supporting organizations

make Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities more effective.

### **(3) Cases where total package is used**

#### **a. Purpose and method**

This research was conducted aiming to consider effective supports for stable employment for persons with mental disabilities through researched cases that “Makuhari Stress Fatigue Assessment Sheet (MSFAS)”, one of total package developed by our center as tools for promotion of work adjustment and settling, was applied along with Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities. With cooperation of employment and life support centers for persons with disabilities that participated in the above (1) actual condition survey, one person who had just shifted into regular employment from Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities and 2 persons who had been employed by Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities for 2 months were chosen as subjects, and supports were conducting with applying MSFAS.

#### **b. Outcomes of support**

Supporter collected information related to the subjected person's condition and environment where they were, and organized it and analyzed problems by applying self-awareness sheet and medical information sheet of MSFAS. Then, they shared such analyzed problem with the subjected person and the office, and discussed detailed solutions as necessary. Specifically, modification of health care table and introduction of journal were applied, and supporter utilized them together with the office person in charge. It can be considered that these approaches brought out the subjected person's strength and confidence, and lead to improvement of a feeling of self-efficacy and feelings of self-esteem, and also contribute to construct the support system in the office. One subjected person who had shifted into regular employment retired 7 months after start of regular employment because he/she wanted to change job. Other 2 persons in Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities shifted into regular employment after 12 months of period of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities finished, with the condition that one person works for 15 hours per a week, and the other person works for 20 hours per a week.

Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities should be utilized together with supports which establish infrastructure for continuous work, and MSFAS seems to be one of effective tools for it.

### **(4) Conclusion**

According to results of the actual condition survey of application of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities and hearing survey, the followings are derived about a key point of shift into regular employment from Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities and a measure for promotion of application.

**a. key point of shift into regular employment from Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities**

**- Active approach is important among related parties during employment period which is relatively long term for a maximum 12 months -**

It does not mean that starting employment from shorter working hours and longer period of such employment leads to the targeted regular employment. For shift into regular employment, it is especially important that the related parties (the subjected person, companies, supporting organization) could comprehend and adjust the subjected person's condition and needs including medical and living situation, and company's request.

In addition, utilization of practical work or others will enable us to judge availability for Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities, to improve effect of application of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities, and all of companies and employment and life support centers for persons with disabilities and work transition support providers place emphasis on continuous support after shift into regular employment including periodical visit to companies. It can be said from the above that the application of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities and active approach of the related parties during Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities are expected to improve the effect of supporting for Settling into the workplace after shift into regular employment.

**b. Measures for promoting Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities**

**- Enhancement on diffusion of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities along with employment and life support centers for persons with disabilities, with focusing on public employment security office -**

Public employment security office is important information source and proposer for all of offices, Employment and Life Support centers for Persons with disabilities and work transition support providers in application of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities. While offices and work transition support providers have low recognition degree, most of employment and life support centers for persons with disabilities have detail knowledge such as the content of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities. From this, it can be said that approach along with Employment and Life Support centers for Persons with disabilities, with focusing on Public Employment Security Office is effective for diffusion of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities.

For promotion of Step-Up Employment Program for Persons with Mental Disabilities, adequate explanation seems to be essential, mentioning that it is available for short working hours and the maximum term is 12 months, that it should be done along with employment, life support centers for persons with disabilities and public employment security office and that the long employment for maximum 12 months is available to adjust working condition as necessary.