

Ayako Aikawa, PhD

Ayako is currently a Professor of psychology and welfare department at Seigakuin University. She received her Ph.D. (anthropology) with a specialty in social work and peer support. She was involved in the establishment of the Japan Peer Staff Association in 2014 and is now the advisor. As a junior high school student, Ayako experienced bullying in school transfer and sought psychiatric care. After acquiring practical skills such as employment support, she went back to school earning a master's in social welfare studies. The focus involved the support of people with psychiatric disorders to lead full lives and included establishment of consultation support centers. She introduced peer staff and currently is involved in peer support research and peer supporter training courses in various parts of Japan. From August 2016 to January 2017, Ayako studied peer support under Professor Mark Salzer at Temple University in Philadelphia, PA.