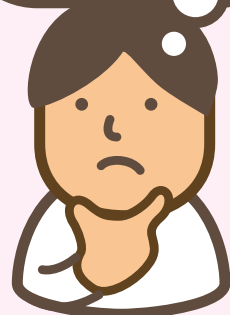


Human Rights Quiz



Let's try the quiz!

Sexual minority persons are often referred to as LGBT. It is said that the ratio of persons who identify as LGBT is almost equal to the ratio of left-handed persons in the Japanese population. Which of the following descriptions of LGBT is wrong? Select one.

L (Lesbian) Female homosexual

G (Gay) Male homosexual

B (Bisexual) Male and female heterosexuals

T (Transgender) ... Person whose sense of personal identity and gender does not correspond with his or her birth sex, including a person with gender identity disorder



Never discriminate against others, and never allow anyone else to discriminate against others

– Building a Human-Rights-Oriented Society –

The Constitution of Japan defines fundamental human rights as “eternal and inviolate rights” in Article 11, calls for respect of the “right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” in Article 13, and declares that “all of the people are equal under the law and there shall be no discrimination in political, economic or social relations because of race, creed, sex, social status or family origin” in Article 14.

In 1980, Sakai City declared itself a “Human Rights City” to openly state its commitment to working for the respect of fundamental human rights and the realization of a peaceful society – principles acknowledged in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Constitution of Japan. In 2007, the city put into effect the Sakai City Ordinance for Fostering Communities Respecting Peace and Human Rights with an aim to promote government-citizen cooperation and act globally towards achieving and maintaining international peace and resolving human rights issues.

In August 2016, a postcard was sent to a public facility in Saka City, which accused a person of making discriminatory

remarks about residents in Dowa communities, foreign residents, and people with physical disabilities in a parking lot of a commercial facility in the city.

In January 2017, an event was held in Sakai City in which citizens were invited to post messages on a bulletin board and among the messages, there was one that used discriminatory language to defame residents in Dowa communities and foreign residents.

We must be firmly determined not to engage in any form of discrimination ourselves, and not to allow such contemptible behavior from others. Let each of us have the correct knowledge and understanding of human rights and take action so that the human rights of all people are respected.

If you witness someone engaging in any act of discrimination, do not look the other way. Instead, face up to what is actually happening as if it were your own problem and tell the person that their behavior is wrong. By doing so, you can contribute to creating a society free of discrimination.



Answer to the human rights quiz **B**

B (Bisexual) refers to a person who is sexually attracted to both men and women.

There still is much prejudice against LGBT persons in society, and many are forced to live difficult lives. We should develop a better understanding of LGBT persons and create a society where all people are respected as equal human beings.

Published on March 31, 2017

Kokoro-no-Hibiki

Let a culture of human rights bloom from Sakai City!

Sakai City Human Rights Education Promotion Council Newsletter Vol. 38

“Kokoro-no-Hibiki” is issued annually by the Sakai City Human Rights Education Promotion Council (HREPC), targeting all residents of Sakai City, to promote their understanding of human rights as part of the Council’s educational activities.

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“My Human Rights Message”

– Award-winning entries –



About Yuri Yoshikawa



My home is the Kamamuro police substation and my father is a policeman working there.

A poster of Yuri Yoshikawa is posted on the bulletin board of the police substation. I learned that she went missing 13 years ago when she was a fourth-year elementary school student.

I eat and travel with my father, mother and sister. I study at school and play with my friends.

But Yuri Yoshikawa can't go to school and go out with her family. I think her father and mother are very sad.

When I asked about the poster of Yuri Yoshikawa, my father said, “Everyone has the right to live happily. We must create a society where no one feels sad.”

I will not be mean to my friends and speak ill of them so that everyone is happy at school.

I hope Yuri Yoshikawa will return to her beloved father and mother soon.

Human Rights of People with Disabilities



I think barrier-free environments are becoming widespread in society. For example, main railway stations are equipped with elevators and large shops provide parking spaces for wheelchair users near the entrances. Some public facilities and sightseeing spots admit holders of a disability certificate at discount fees. Today, people with disabilities have more freedom to go out.

Why did I choose “barrier-free” as the topic of my essay? Before writing this essay, I looked up the word “barrier-free” in a dictionary and found that “barrier-free” means removing obstacles that hinder elderly persons and persons with disabilities from living a civil life, and today, such obstacles include insufficient social systems, poor accessibility to information, and lack of awareness among the general public.

Born with cerebral palsy, my arms and legs are paralyzed and I go to school every day riding an electric wheelchair. I can study at the school in the district of my choice thanks to the assistance of the teachers in charge of the special-needs students and my friends. In this essay, I will discuss the true meaning of “barrier-free” from the viewpoint of a person with disability.

From my viewpoint, barrier-free environments are not sufficiently created in some places. To be specific, I can take the shortest way to the school by crossing a railroad, but the railroad is narrow and crowded with people and cars during rush hour. To avoid danger, I have to take a detour through an underground path. In the road leading to the station, there is a difference in the level between the sidewalk and the street and in some places, the

difference is very large. At some stations, the gap between the train and the platform is dangerously wide. Also, when I have visited certain facilities or tourist destinations, I often found that, despite having a good external appearance, roads were so uneven that wheelchair users and elderly persons had difficulty moving around.

Many persons with disabilities like me and elderly people need more barrier-free environments.

Generally, physical barrier-free environments are becoming widespread, as I wrote earlier.

Now, I would like to emphasize the necessity of developing a barrier-free mindset. For example, when I am doing something in a wheelchair, people around me often look at me curiously and I feel awkward being the center of attention and watched like that. In addition, there are things that can be naturally done by most people but that require much more effort for me to do, such as talking with someone face-to-face and communicating with others smoothly. The harder I try to get things right, the more difficult it becomes. Therefore, I hope people will not only see my external appearance, but also notice and understand how I feel inside and what I am not good at because this is a part of my personality. I believe many other people with disabilities feel the same way.

By “barrier-free mindset,” I mean having an open-minded attitude that respects each individual personality warmly.

Friends and Efforts



I am hearing impaired. Am I a special person?

I was a member of the soccer club when I was an elementary school student, so I joined the soccer club when entering junior high school to improve my skills. Soon after I joined the soccer club, a classmate from a different elementary school said with certainty, “You cannot play soccer because you cannot hear.” This remark shocked me greatly as I felt I was being ridiculed for my impairment.

But I didn't allow myself to be discouraged and I practiced soccer with the club members day after day.

One day, when I was playing in a practice match, the captain directed me to mark a player of the opposing team but I didn't notice the direction and eventually allowed the opposing team to score the goal. The captain was angry at me and said, “What did you do? I told you to mark him!” Until then I didn't know I had been given the direction and I was deeply ashamed of myself. But I didn't want to waste this experience and I endeavored to pay attention to what is going on around me as much as possible while playing. Still, I often failed to notice directions given to me and I was at a loss what to do. One day a teammate asked me, “How do you sign the letter ‘a’ in sign language?” At first I didn't

know what he meant but a moment later I was overwhelmed with pleasure.

Assisted by my teammates who acted as my ears, I practiced soccer every day, harder than anyone else, covered in dirt, whether it rained or snowed, never tiring of chasing balls along with them. I just wanted to demonstrate that even with a hearing impairment I could play soccer and meet the expectations of my teammates. As a result, I was selected as a member of the team A by the coach. I was so happy that I cried, “I did it!”

Thus, I demonstrated that anyone, even those with a hearing impairment, can achieve a goal by continuing to make efforts. Though my goal was a small one – becoming a regular member of the team – I felt great pleasure when I achieved my goal. I am not special and I am just an ordinary person striving persistently toward my goals.

I am now a high school student and I still play soccer as a member of the school's soccer club. I will continue playing soccer to demonstrate to children that even with a hearing impairment, anyone can be a soccer player. I want to become an adult who can encourage and support children who are in trouble by sharing my experience.

Fostering Gender-equality Awareness at Home



“You have a good husband!”

I am a working mother. As I leave home for work earlier than my husband, he clears the table after breakfast and takes the children to daycare center routinely. The above remark is said to me almost every time I talk about this family routine. In Japan, the number of families with both parents working has been increasing recently, backed by the government's policy to promote women in workplace. Despite the increase of working women, however, it seems that women are still mainly responsible for taking care of children and doing household work. Even working mothers accept the responsibility without question and few expect their husbands to be willing to share the responsibility. I was a full-time housewife until two years ago. I quit my company without hesitation before giving birth to my first child, and took on the entire responsibility for childcare and housekeeping. This was quite natural for me, as I had grown up in a family with a father who worked until late at night and a mother dedicated to household chores. When I decided to resume working, I sought a part-time job that would not pose an obstacle to my housekeeping duties and would not require my husband to share my household responsibilities.

Thus I managed to juggle work, household responsibilities and being a mother to three children. However, one day, I developed acute dizziness. Subsequently, my husband asked me to teach him housekeeping duties and gradually, I became less resistant to relying on my husband in fulfilling household responsibilities. In this way, we have come to cooperate with each other in household management. Now, I feel it is natural for us to share household and childcare responsibilities, because some housekeeping duties require physical strength, and I think it is wrong, considering that a child is a treasure

for both parents, that all the childcare responsibilities are left to the mother.

Of course, as a mother, I want to be directly involved in the growth of my children, and I am also aware that mothers cannot easily ask for the cooperation of their husbands in household work in a male-centered society where working long hours is taken for granted. By improving such situations, I think we can deepen the relationships between wife and husband and parent and child.

Today, mixed name lists are adopted in elementary schools and both male and female students learn how to cook *miso* soup and use a sewing machine in homemaking courses. On increasing occasions, female students are elected as representatives of their year groups, and the distinction between the roles of male students and those of female students is now being removed at schools.

In Japan, female-specific words were previously used to represent “nurse” and “nursery teacher,” but now they are replaced with gender-neutral words. As this case indicates, potential gender discrimination at workplace is being eliminated.

I hope that gender-equal education will prevail more and change society, so that when our children, both male and female, become adults, they can live fulfilling lives together, take the jobs they like, and play active roles in society. I hope future society will be a society where all people are respected for their individuality and recognized as valued members of society without having unjust restrictions imposed simply for being a man, woman or mother. Gender-equality awareness should be developed in the family in the first place. At my home, my daughter and son are equally assigned housekeeping responsibilities and they accept their respective responsibilities quite naturally.

Community Human Rights Promotion Committee Workshop

Every year between October and November a workshop on human rights is held in each of Sakai City's seven wards. The workshops are attended by members of the Community Human Rights Promotion Committee as well as many members of the general public.

* Who are the members of the **Community Human Rights Promotion Committee**? Members of the Community Human Rights Promotion Committee belong to the Human Rights Education Promotion Council. The members are recommended by community representatives of the Federation of Sakai City Residents' Association from among officials of community residents' joint associations, presidents of unit residents' associations, members of various organizations in school districts, and people who are enthusiastic about human rights education activities in individual school districts.

Human Rights of Children

Ms. Kayoko Ito, Associate Professor of Osaka Prefectural University, delivered a lecture titled "Preventing Child Abuse: What We Can Do" at Nishi Cultural Hall on October 25, at Higashi Ward Office on November 1, and at Minami Ward Office on November 22, 2016.

In the lecture, she discussed the present situation and problems surrounding families with children, the current availability of child abuse consultation services in Japan and factors that lead to child abuse, as well as causes of child abuse and contexts in which child abuse can occur. In conclusion, she emphasized the importance of creating a community and social environment where families with children are not left isolated.

Parents who abuse children are often socially isolated people. Child abuse results from a combination of various factors including less time shared with children, economic difficulty and stress, and the number of families in need of support is increasing. Children are defined as those under 18 in the Child Welfare Act. Child abuse is classified as physical abuse, including beating and kicking; neglect or failure to provide the necessities of comfortable life for a child; psychological abuse by verbal aggression; and sexual abuse; in the Child Abuse Prevention Act enacted in 2000.

Abuse has an adverse influence on a child's physical and



mental condition and behavior. Abused children can develop a sense of distrust toward people and become rebellious. An overwhelming majority of abusers are mothers, which indicates that mothers are under much stress due to the responsibilities of childcare. Against this backdrop, there is a growing recognition of the necessity of reforming the way men work so that childcare responsibilities will be shared between mothers and fathers in a manner that reduces mothers' stress. The more parents enjoy bringing up children, the less child abuse is likely to occur. This lecture is expected to accelerate efforts to build communities where no one is isolated and to help people develop more extensive human relationships.

Act on the Promotion of the Elimination of Buraku Discrimination Established

The Act on the Promotion of the Elimination of Buraku Discrimination was promulgated and enforced on December 16, 2016. This Act states that Buraku discrimination still exists today and stipulates that Buraku discrimination cannot be permitted under any circumstances and must be eliminated in line with the principles of the Constitution of Japan, which guarantees fundamental human rights for all citizens.

Another noteworthy point is that the term "Buraku Discrimination" is included in the name of the Act. Furthermore, the Act explicitly states its basic principle is to realize a society free from Buraku discrimination by seeking to improve the understanding of each citizen on the need to eliminate Buraku discrimination, thus requiring the State and local governments to enhance advisory mechanisms and conduct educational and awareness-raising activities for this purpose.

The Act also stipulates that the State shall conduct surveys on the actual situation of Buraku discrimination in collaboration with local governments. The enactment of this Act will encourage the State and local governments to take more positive measures towards the elimination of Buraku discrimination.

The Sakai City Ordinance on Promotion of Sign Language and Other Means of Communication for Persons with Disabilities will be enforced on April 1, 2017.

We Will Never Allow Hate Speech

Recently, discriminatory remarks against certain ethnic and national groups, referred to as 'hate speech,' are gaining greater social attention. Such remarks can incite fear and hatred among the general public, and also violate human dignity and nurture a sense of discrimination.

Hate speech, which has been receiving wider coverage in the mass media and on the Internet, has become a serious social problem.

Against this backdrop, the Act on Promotion of Efforts to Eliminate Unfair Discriminatory Speech and Behavior against Persons Originating from Outside Japan was enforced on June 3, 2016. Obviously, no one, from any background, deserves to be subjected to hate speech.

We should work together to build a society where differences are mutually respected and everyone's human rights are respected.

This Ordinance is designed to deepen public understanding of sign language and encourage its dissemination by defining it as a communication tool, and aims to facilitate the use of a wide range of ways for persons with disabilities to collect information and communicate with others, such as through sign language, voice translation, captioning, Braille, tactile sign language, finger Braille and simple expression.

Part 1: Comprehensive Workshop

Things I Learned from Children in the War

– The latest report on Syria and Afghanistan –

On August 26, 2016, a Comprehensive Workshop was held, in which Mr. Fumikazu Nishitani, a freelance journalist, delivered a lecture titled "Things I Learned from Children in the War – The latest report on Syria and Afghanistan –."

Mr. Nishitani showed a video of Afghanistan and Syria that he himself had recorded, and he spoke about the current situation in these countries. Emphasizing that once a war starts, people are forced to live in misery, Mr. Nishitani reminded the audience of the importance of peace.



Actual situation in Afghanistan

I visit Afghanistan every year. Once a war starts, people are forced to live in misery. Today, I will talk about things I learned about the lives of Afghani people and the environment surrounding them when I visited the country five and half years ago. In Afghanistan, one out of every six children is reported to die before they become one year old, and about 50% of children are illiterate. In this country, women suffer serious gender discrimination. Due to poverty, many families think that education is not necessary for girls.

Actual situation in Syria

For the past two years, the Islamic State has been

bombed in more than 15,000 air raids by developed countries such as the US, France, Russia, and the UK, and its neighboring country, Turkey. While Japan is not directly involved in the air raids, this does not mean that Japan is not connected to what is happening there, because Japan offers financial support to fight terrorism. In this sense, we are all part of the problem.

There seems to be a prevailing notion that Islam is a horrible religion and that all Muslims are terrorists, but this notion is wrong. Like Christianity, Islam values peace, and the ratio of terrorists to the entire Muslim population is negligible. An overwhelming majority of Muslims hate terrorism, and strongly oppose war.

Part 2: Sectional meetings

In the second part of the workshop, five sectional meetings were held, discussing (1) the Dowry issue; (2) the human rights of women; (3) the human rights of persons with disabilities; (4) the human rights of foreign residents; and (5) the human rights of children.

Heated discussions took place in these meetings, which dealt with, respectively, "The realities of the Dowry issue in Sakai City," "About Sakai Safe City Program," "Eliminating discrimination against persons with disabilities: reasonable sensitivity needed," "The current situation of foreign nationals in our community: promoting mutual assistance among neighbors" and "What constitutes child abuse?"



Sectional meeting on the Dowry issue



Sectional meeting on the human rights of children



Sectional meeting on the human rights of women



Sectional meeting on the human rights of persons with disabilities



Sectional meeting on the human rights of foreign residents

Mongolia – A Country That Is Not as Familiar as We Think

On December 10, 2016, the Citizens' Forum for Human Rights Protection was held, in which the participants of the IYS Study Tour to Mongolia reported what they had seen and learned in the country.



FY 2016 Study Tour to Mongolia

Dates August 10 (Wed.) to 20 (Sat.), 2016

Report

■ General information about Mongolia

Mongolia has a land area about four times as large as Japan, while its population is about one third of Osaka Prefecture's. The capital is Ulan Bator.

For many Japanese, Mongolia is associated with vast grasslands, nomads living with cattle, and *ger* (portable yurts). Nearly thirty years have passed since Mongolia renounced socialism, however, very little is known to us about the current realities of this country.

■ Mongolia today

Upon arrival in Ulan Bator, we were impressed at the sight of rows of high-rise buildings, European-style houses and modern condominiums. While traveling in the country, we frequently saw cars stuck in traffic jams, high-rise buildings under construction, and dense smog, all of which are symbols of rapid urban development.

Currently, around 50% of Mongolia's population of about 3 million lives in Ulan Bator. We learned that rapid urban development has given rise to serious social problems, such as delays in infrastructure development, accelerated environmental destruction, and a widening economic disparity among citizens. Only a short distance away from the urban area, we met people with hard lives, who had abandoned their nomadic lifestyles and moved to suburban areas to seek jobs.

When travelling in the countryside, however, we saw vast expanses of grassland and people living traditional nomadic lives – the traditional image of Mongolia. We were deeply impressed by the vitality of nomadic families who work together to survive in a harsh natural environment while preserving their traditional culture. However, the lives of these people are also affected by modernization and the introduction of capitalism.

■ Restoration of the natural environment and environmental protection activities

In the past, indigenous wild horses called *takhi* roamed Mongolia, but they became extinct in the country due to changes to the environment and their habitat due to reclamation and other artificial interventions. In Hustai, home to takhi horses, a project was launched to restore the natural environment and reintroduce takhi, which had been lent to foreign countries, by releasing them into the wild. The project was completed successfully. Here, efforts are continuing to protect the natural habitat of takhi horses.

■ Nomadic people we met (1)

We visited an elementary school for children of local and nomadic families in a village in a rural area of Sergelen. As we played with the children, we found many pieces of rubbish left around the school premises. People living with nature, including Mongolians, respect the earth and know they are protected by nature. Traditionally, these people have depended on the blessings of nature in all aspects of their lives, including clothing, foods and housing, and any waste from resources they needed was returned to nature, which in turn helped to fertilize the earth. Against the backdrop of lifestyle modernization, however, waste is no longer regarded as something useful, and can even cause environmental destruction. It is true that capitalism has brought material affluence and convenience, but people have not been educated sufficiently on the risks that can accompany a capitalistic lifestyle.

We taught children the danger of leaving rubbish uncollected by means of a picture-card show and then picked up the rubbish together with them. The children enjoyed collecting the rubbish, which soon filled many bags. We hope they will make it a routine to collect rubbish and keep the school premises clean.

■ Nomadic people we met (2)

We visited a *ger*, a portable home used by nomadic people. To welcome us, the nomad people butchered their sheep in front of us and cooked the meat for us.

They slaughtered the sheep very quickly to minimize its suffering without spilling a drop of blood on the earth for which they have much respect. This sight taught us the important fact that we sustain our lives by taking the lives of other animals and plants. It was a very valuable experience.

■ Goal of the International Youth Sakai

International Youth Sakai will promote international exchange and contribution activities to provide opportunities and experiences for learning, thereby fostering mutual understanding to better cater to the needs of an ever-globalizing modern society. We will share lessons learned overseas with our community members to contribute to building a society where peace and human rights are respected.



Naohiro Kanamaru Chair

Please get involved in our activities!

What is the Sakai City Human Rights Education Promotion Council (HREPC)?

The Human Rights Education Promotion Council is a civic organization that was established in July 1979 with the aim of creating a bright, comfortable society, free from all forms of discrimination, not least Buraku discrimination. Through its educational activities, the HREPC drives a grass-roots human rights campaign aimed at building a peaceful and prosperous society where the human rights of all people are respected.



Member organizations and groups

International Youth Sakai
Sakai City Education Association
Sakai City Women's Group for Social Rehabilitation
Sakai City Association for Sound Growth of Children
Sakai City Support Group for Foreign Residents' Education
Federation of Sakai City Residents' Association
Sakai City Social Education Committee
Sakai City Women's Association
Sakai City Federation of Private Kindergartens
NPO Sakai Federation of Disabled People's Organizations
Sakai City Liaison Council of Instructors for Youth
Sakai City Human Rights Education and Research Society
Sakai City Agricultural Cooperative
Sakai City PTA Federation
Sakai City Association of Childcare Organizations
Sakai City Welfare Association for Single-Mother Families and Widows
NPO Sakai Federation of Private Educational and Childcare Institutions
Sakai City Federation of Child Welfare Commissioners
Sakai Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Sakai City Association of Principals of Municipal Schools
Sakai City Federation of Senior Residents' Clubs
District Committee of the Sakai City Human Rights Commissioners' Association
Sakai District Committee of Administrative Counselors
Sakai City Liaison Council of Probation Officers
Sakai City Council of Social Welfare
Osaka Prefectural Association of Vocational Schools
Sakai Branch, Osaka Prefectural Headquarters of Liberal Dowa Association
Principals' Association of Osaka Prefectural Schools in 8 zones of the 4th School District
Semboku Sumai Center, West Japan Branch, UR Community Inc.
Sakai Branch, Osaka Prefectural Federation of the Buraku Liberation League
Business Members Committee, Sakai City Human Rights Education Promotion Council
Religious Groups Committee, Sakai City Human Rights Education Promotion



Directors of the Council

Chair Naohiro Kanamaru
(Business Members Committee of the Council)
Vice Chair Teruo Kubo (Federation of Sakai City Residents' Associations)
Vice Chair Noriko Yamaguchi (Sakai City Women's Association)
Vice Chair Nobumitsu Sugawara (Sakai City PTA Federation)
Vice Chair Tadashi Shiramoto
(Sakai City Association of Childcare Organizations)
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Treasurer Mitsuko Ogura
(District Committee of the Sakai City Human Rights Commissioners' Association)



Ward Residents' Festival



Citizens' Forum for Human Rights Protection



Comprehensive Workshop



Street educational activities during Human Rights Week