Topics: Recent topics in public health in Japan 2026

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Current status and future prospects of assessment for employment choice support for people with disabilities in Japan

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Abstract

To promote decent work —meaning work that is meaningful and human—for people with disabilities (PWDs), Japan implemented employment choice support (ECS) in fiscal year 2025. ECS objectively assesses the employment capabilities and aptitudes of PWDs, identifies their strengths and challenges, and organizes the necessary support and accommodations required for employment.

The Assessment Sheets for Work Support was developed to ensure the quality assurance of assessments in ECS. Specifically, the assessment sheets for work support involves the joint collection and organization by the employment support worker (supporter) and the PWD of three types of information: the PWD's "employment-related hopes and needs," their "current status regarding work performance, occupational life, and interpersonal relationships," and the "desirable environment for continued employment." The supporter and PWD obtain an appropriate grasp of the PWD's strengths, potential for growth, and challenges related to employment, and consider the necessary support and accommodations that are required for employment.

On the other hand, the physical and psychological fluctuations of PWDs make assessment difficult. Thus, we have developed a Supplementary Assessment Tool that monitors and visualizes fluctuations in a PWD's conditions by cross-referencing them with the status of physical and human support. This tool can be used as a supplementary tool for the Assessment Sheets for Work Support.

Both the Assessment Sheets for Work Support and the Supplementary Assessment Tool are expected to provide a certain degree of effectiveness based on a human rights-based approach. Supporters must also become proficient in how to utilize both tools. We are currently developing a training program for conducting assessments using both tools.

keywords: people with disabilities, Employment Choice Support, assessment, tool

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I. Introduction

Everyone in the world has the right to decent work under conditions that ensure freedom, fairness, safety, and human dignity [1]. People with disabilities (PWDs) are no exception, and the aim of the International Labor Organization (ILO) is defined as, "enabling PWDs to secure suitable employment, to maintain it, and to advance in their occupation, thereby promoting their integration or reintegration into society."

There are 11.6 million PWDs (9.2%) in Japan, and their employment is broadly categorized into competitive employment and sheltered employment. In 2022, part of the "Law for Comprehensive Support for the Daily Life and Social Life of PWDs" was amended to promote diverse employment support. As part of this amendment, "Employment Choice Support (ECS)" was established to provide more tailored assistance aligned with the individual wishes

and abilities of each PWDs. This law primarily focuses on supporting PWDs in making choices regarding employment opportunities and work arrangements that align with their personal preferences, work capabilities, aptitudes, and other relevant factors [2].

Receiving ECS broadens the range of employment options for PWDs. However, as this support is generally provided for only one month, it requires highly skilled professionals who are engaged in employment support (hereafter, supporter). Support providers in Japan hold a variety of qualifications (e.g., social worker, licensed psychologist, occupational therapist, etc.), and various training programs for human resource development are implemented. However, disparities in knowledge and skills have been observed [3].

Among supporter skills, assessment serves as the entry point for employment support [4] and must be conducted accurately [5]. However, Japanese supporters have been criticized for lacking expertise and technical skills in assessments [6]. Therefore, to standardize the quality of assessments, a standardized tool was developed in Japan [7]. However, the fluctuating nature of disabilities—with varying periods of physical and psychological well-being and periods of poor health—makes assessment difficult and complicates the adjustment of work environments to accommodate these fluctuations. Accordingly, it is necessary to obtain a grasp of the overall picture using the national standard assessment sheet, while simultaneously monitoring and visualizing fluctuations in a PWD's condition, alongside the status of physical and human support. By sharing the visualized results with relevant organizations and agencies, environmental adjustments can be made in response to fluctuations in conditions.

This paper introduces standard assessment sheets and complementary monitoring tools.

II. Assessment sheets for work support: national standard assessment sheet

As of June 1, 2024, the number of PWDs employed by private companies in Japan stood at 677,461.5 persons estimated based on the employment rate calculation method, not an actual headcount), which marks the 21st consecutive year of record highs [8]. In Japan, the Act on Employment Promotion for PWDs requires employers to hire PWDs at a rate equal to or exceeding a specified percentage of their regular employees (the statutory employment rate, which for private companies will increase from 2.3% to 2.5% in April 2025). Due to a gradual increase in the statutory employment rate, the number of PWDs employed has increased steadily.

While the number of employed PWDs continues to rise, the challenge of workplace retention remains a concern. For example, according to a report by the Japan Organization for Employment of the Elderly, Persons with Disabilities and Job Seekers (hereinafter, referred to as "JEED") [9], among PWDs who found employment through public employment security offices between July and August 2015, the percentage who were continuing to work at the same workplace one year later was 60.8% for persons with physical disabilities, 68.0% for persons with intellectual disabilities, and only 49.3% for persons with mental disabilities. To address these workplace retention challenges, it is necessary to establish an environment where job seekers can undergo vocational assessments prior to employment. These assessments should help identify: an environment where job seekers can leverage their strengths; the knowledge and skills they need to acquire to compensate for their weaknesses; areas requiring improvement; and, the support and accommodations they need to request from supervisors and colleagues at their workplace [10-12]. This paper defines assessment as "conducting an objective evaluation of a PWD's work capacity and aptitude, while collaborating with the PWD to clarify their employment-related needs, strengths, and occupational challenges, and organizing the necessary support and accommodations to meet those needs" [2].

To support the implementation of such assessments, the National Institute of Vocational Rehabilitation has developed an "Assessment Sheets for Work Support" (hereinafter, this sheet) under a three-year plan starting in April 2020. This sheet has been available on its website since March 2023[13]. The development process for this sheet was as follows. Under the supervision of a research committee composed of experts well-versed in employment support for PWDs, a prototype was created by an evaluation tool development review team comprising disability vocational counselors whose core duties included vocational assessment. In creating this prototype, we utilized responses to questions such as "What behaviors and attitudes are most frequently assessed in employment support?"; "What behaviors and attitudes are checked when hiring PWDs?"; and, "What issues hinder continued employment?", obtained from a questionnaire survey targeting employment support organizations for PWDs and companies employing PWDs nationwide. The prototype version of the created sheet was tested at 15 employment support agencies. Based on the results of the usability survey, revisions were made, leading to its completion. Furthermore, the implementation manual for the ECS program, which has been in effect since October 2025, introduces this sheet as an assessment tool [14]. Among employment support agencies participating in the

ECS model project, 45.9% responded that they plan to use this sheet after commencing ECS [15].

I would like to touch upon the background that necessitated this sheet in ECS. Employment support for PWDs in Japan is implemented through the coordination of two measures: vocational rehabilitation, which is an employment policy for PWDs, and employment-related disability welfare services, which are welfare policies for PWDs. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare launched the "Project Team for Strengthening Collaboration between Employment and Welfare Services for PWDs" in July 2019. Taking a medium- to long-term perspective, the team is identifying key challenges for further enhancing and strengthening employment support services, while discussing issues that are necessary for future deliberations. According to the report of the Study Group on Strengthening Coordination of Employment and Welfare Measures for PWDs [16], which compiled the results of that discussion, "There is a concern that determining which welfare or employment services are appropriate for PWDs may be left to the discretion of individual staff members at the local level. Consequently, there may be cases where the employment capabilities or potential for general employment of PWDs are not fully understood by the PWDs themselves or their support providers, and they are not being connected to appropriate services." Based on this awareness of the issue, experts conducted discussions regarding the appropriate approach to assessment. As a result, the purpose of assessment was clarified as follows: "It is conducted to provide services that are acceptable to the PWDs, based on their needs, with the goal of achieving general employment"; "It is important to clarify not only the PWDs' abilities, but also what environmental support is necessary"; and, "Sharing the assessment process and results with the PWDs helps them deepen their self-understanding, and serves as a tool for considering the necessary support." Furthermore, as a method for achieving these objectives, the report states that "in addition to interviews with the PWDs and gathering information from relevant organizations, standard tools should be utilized." It specifies that "as a means of sharing information among stakeholders during assessment, the use of standard assessment tools developed by JEED is considered to be feasible."

In December 2022, the year following the review committee report, the "Act to Partially Amend the Law for Comprehensive Support for the Daily Life and Social Life of PWDs and Other Related Acts" was enacted, establishing ECS utilizing employment assessment methodologies. Employment Choice Support involves objectively assessing the employment capabilities and aptitudes of PWDs, identifying their strengths and challenges, and organizing the necessary support and accommodations required for employment.

Specifically, in collaboration with the PWDs, we will provide information to them, assess their situation by utilizing work settings and other contexts, conduct case conferences with other agencies, and prepare assessment results. The results are then fed back to the PWDs, while working with them to consider future work arrangements and, as necessary, coordinating with employers and other relevant parties. Within this employment choice support process, this worksheet can serve as a tool to help the PWDs collaboratively organize their work abilities and aptitudes, needs and strengths, environmental factors that are conducive to effectiveness, occupational challenges, and support and accommodations that are required for employment.

1. Structure and usage of the employment support assessment sheet

This sheet is used to collect and organize three types of information, jointly by the supporter and the PWD: "desires and needs regarding employment"; "current status regarding work performance, occupational life, and interpersonal relationships related to employment"; and, "desired environment for continued employment" and "desired environment for sustained employment." It is intended to be used by employment supporters and PWDs to collaboratively gather and organize these three types of information. This process enables both to appropriately understand a PWD's strengths, potential for growth, and challenges related to employment, thereby facilitating a consideration of the necessary support and accommodations for securing employment. Please note that this sheet is not intended to evaluate the PWD's ability to work or the likelihood of employment, or to assign them to specific services. Its purpose is to consider the support and accommodations that can help unlock the PWD's potential. Therefore, it differs in purpose from the assessment tools used for evaluating work-related disabilities [14,17,18], and is classified as an assessment tool for developing vocational rehabilitation plans [19-22].

The core concept of this sheet focuses on the interaction between the PWD and the environment. The assessment does not determine the extent of knowledge or skills possessed by the subject or whether they meet the standards required by the company. This is because the extent to which "capabilities" such as knowledge and skills are utilized in the workplace is significantly influenced by the environment in which a PWD works.

This tool consists of three types of assessment sheets and an assessment results sheet that aggregates the results of these assessments. Since the sheets are created as Microsoft Excel files, bringing tablet devices or laptops to individual interview settings allows for smooth record-keeping and on-the-spot reference to assessment results.

The first sheet used is Sheet I, which is designed to iden-

tify employment-related preferences and needs. In Sheet I, we identify the PWDs' employment preferences and needs by gathering information about their past work experience and desired working conditions. Supporters ask PWDs the questions listed on the sheet to gather information about their employment-related hopes and needs. The questionnaire consists of 33 items across 10 domains: employment history, employment preferences, motivation and purpose for working, job search activities, job type and job content, working conditions and commuting for general employment, workplace environment, reasonable accommodations, strengths, and support services.

The next sheet to be used is Sheet II, which is for grasping the basic requirements for employment. In Sheet II, to specifically assess the current status regarding work performance, occupational life, and interpersonal relationships for employment purposes, information is collected not only from the PWD, but also from observations of the PWD's adaptation during work situations and workplace training, information provided by family and related institutions, and information from other checklists, work samples, and tests. The assessment items consist of 44 items across three domains: task performance, occupational life, and interpersonal relationships. Among the assessment items, 17 were identified in a corporate survey of 10,000 companies [23], where over 50% of responding companies (2,960 companies) indicated that they "checked or emphasized" these items when hiring PWDs. These items are therefore designated as "recommended items" for use in the assessment of all candidates. In addition, among the other items, 27 were designated as "optional items" for assessment based on the candidate's circumstances. This designation applies to items where the combined percentage of companies responding "checked/emphasized" and "checked/varies by candidate" when hiring persons with disabilities reached 50% or higher. Which assessment items should be used for a particular PWD is determined through mutual discussion between the supporter and the PWD. The supporter proposes the items to be used after comprehensively considering the PWD's wishes, needs, strengths, challenges, disability characteristics, and other factors. The detailed assessment method for Sheet II will be described later.

The third sheet used is Sheet III, which is for examining the "environment for continued employment." In Sheet III, based on the PWD's current disability status and fundamental employment circumstances, we consider what kind of environment (such as support systems) needs to be established in advance, anticipating potential future factors that could hinder continued employment (e.g., changes in supervisors or colleagues who support the subject). The items for identifying factors that may hinder continued employment

were developed based on the "factors hindering continued employment" identified in the aforementioned corporate survey [24]. The items cover 10 domains that may hinder continued employment: "Adaptation to Job Duties" "Setting or Changing Work Conditions"; "Getting Colleagues to Understand and Accommodate the Disability"; "Workplace Facilities and Equipment"; "Understanding and Following Workplace Rules and Instructions"; "Adaptive Behavior and Attitude at Work"; "Physical Condition, Fatigue/Stress, Anxiety, Emotional Control, etc."; "Symptom Worsening/Relapse, Secondary Disabilities"; "Family Support, Changes in Home Environment, Relationships with Friends, etc."; and, "Workplace Relationships."

The final "Assessment Results Sheet" automatically displays the main assessment results entered on the three sheets, from I to III above. In addition, it includes a "Comprehensive Collaborative Findings" section that is primarily for entering overall observations, including the PWD's motivation for employment and the PWD's understanding of their own characteristics. The Collaborative Findings Section should primarily document the strengths and challenges of the PWD, as well as the necessary support and accommodations required to address these challenges, as jointly confirmed by the PWD and their supporter. Reviewing this section allows confirmation of what the PWD needs to do, and what support and accommodations they need to request from the workplace to realize their hopes and needs. The information collected and organized in the above sheets is intended to be shared amongst the support providers involved in employment support for the PWD, with the consent of the PWD, and to be utilized in developing specific support plans through case conferences and similar meetings.

2. Key focus areas in assessment using the employment support assessment sheet

There are 3 key points in conducting assessments utilizing this sheet: the collaborative evaluation method; the interaction between the PWD and their environment; and the mechanism for focusing on strengths. Here, we explain each of these key points while detailing the assessment methods for Sheet II: "Fundamental matters for employment."

First, I will explain the first key point: the "collaborative evaluation method." The evaluation conducted in Sheet II corresponds to a functional evaluation. Functional assessment covers domains such as occupational skills, endurance, communication skills, mobility skills, and physical and mental state management [24]. In such functional assessments, the subject's perspective was formerly only considered in self-reported activity limitations. However, in recent years, examples have begun to emerge within the field of

vocational rehabilitation where a person-centered approach has been introduced. This approach centers the perspective of the PWD as a fundamental organizing principle, respecting their preferences, needs, and values, and provides services that resonate with them, based on the philosophy of shared decision-making [25]. Joint decision-making is a two-way process in which stakeholders share information about available options and their potential benefits and risks, and discuss preferences to reach an agreed-upon decision [26]. The assessment using this sheet also adopts a collaborative evaluation approach as a two-way process where PWDs and supporters engage in discussion. The collaborative assessment method refers to a process where, rather than supporters unilaterally evaluating PWDs, both PWDs and supporters clarify and share specific information, which serves as the basis for evaluation (such as what behaviors were observed in which situations during work tasks or workplace training). This shared information is then used to align their understanding of the current situation.

The collaborative assessment procedure involves the PWD first selecting one of four evaluation levels—"A: Can do/Have," "B: Can mostly do/Have," "C: Cannot do/Have (much)," or "?: No experience/Unconfirmed/Unknown"—for each item based on their experience in work settings, workplace training, daily life, etc., indicating "to what extent they can do or have it." As a basis for judgment during evaluation, we provide benchmarks for the action levels corresponding to each of the A, B, and C evaluation stages. For example, regarding the item "Performs work according to specified procedures," the following benchmarks are provided: A: Can perform work according to specified procedures B: Can generally perform work according to specified procedures when given specific instructions; and C: Cannot perform work according to specified procedures

even when given specific instructions (Hereafter, the evaluation conducted at this stage shall be referred to as "self-assessment.") One purpose of conducting self-assessment before collaborative evaluation is to enable supporters to understand the status of the PWD's self-understanding. When describing the subject's situation in assessing the exercise of work capacity, it is necessary to integrate two types of perceptions: the subject's own perception and an expert's perception [27,28]. Therefore, separate from the collaborative assessment, the subject's self-understanding must be ascertained. When there is a discrepancy between the objective assessment made by the supporter and the self-assessment by the PWD, both parties should share the rationale behind their respective evaluations. This process facilitates alignment regarding the current situation and serves as an opportunity to deepen both the PWD's self-understanding and the supporter's understanding of the individual. Furthermore, establishing a self-assessment stage prior to collaborative assessment is expected to mitigate the risk of supporters unilaterally imposing evaluations on PWDs during the collaborative assessment process. In cooperative assessment, the first step is to evaluate the extent to which individuals can perform each task in situations where individualized support and accommodations tailored to the circumstances of the PWD are not provided. The evaluation conducted at this stage is hereinafter referred to as the "no-support evaluation." Only when the evaluation without support results in a B or C rating will the extent to which support and accommodations could improve the PWD's performance be assessed. The evaluation conducted at this stage is hereinafter referred to as the "evaluation with support." By treating assessments with and without support as separate processes, employers can clearly identify what specific support and accommodation are required.
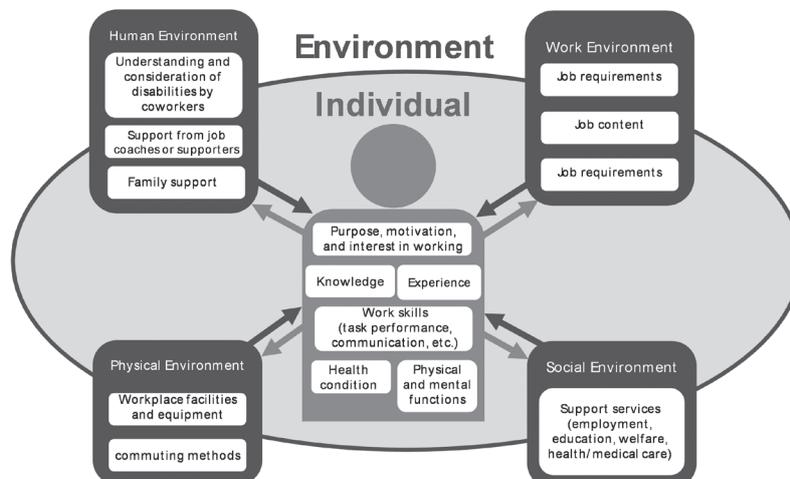

Figure.1　Perspective of Person-Environment Interaction

Next, we will explain the evaluation from the perspective of the second key point: "the interaction between the individual and their environment." "Functional assessment" refers to the biopsychosocial approach of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), which views work impairment not as an individual characteristic, but as the result of the interaction between an individual's health condition and work requirements or other factors [27-28]. Individuals and their environment are in a mutually influential relationship. As shown in Figure 1, the extent to which a subject can demonstrate their abilities in the workplace is influenced not only by personal factors such as physical and cognitive functions and health status, but also by environmental factors such as "what kind of support and accommodations are available in the workplace." To accurately assess a PWD's potential and broaden their employment options, it is essential to consider perspectives such as: "What kind of environment best brings out the PWD's strengths?" and "What kind of support or accommodations are needed to minimize the emergence of their weaknesses?" Furthermore, to properly examine such interactions between a PWD and their environment,

it is essential to assess not only the workplace where the PWD wishes to work, but also their living environments, such as their home. This sheet provides options for each item, to indicate which assessment method was used: "Interview-based questioning," "Information gathering from stakeholders," "Work samples," "Scenario method (work setting)," "Workplace training," "Testing," or "Other." Check the applicable option to record its use; then record the details of the evaluated tasks or training, and for practical training, the period, location, and work content in the free text field. In addition, when gathering information from relevant parties, record the source of the information and its content. In the "Support and Accommodations Provided" field, document in writing the details of the support and accommodations implemented during the evaluation, as well as the results indicating whether these measures improved the individual's ability to perform effectively. In addition, we document not only the support and considerations provided by others, but also the efforts the individual made themselves to demonstrate their abilities. By creating a format that records the context of the interactions between the individual and their environment as written text, we enabled

Note. The check box in the upper-left corner indicates whether an item was selected for assessment. "R-10" indicates the item number, and "R" indicates that this item is a recommended item. The radio buttons on each row from ① to ③ represent the assessment results for each assessment. This item was assessed as a client strength and therefore the checkbox placed under the notation "Strength" is checked. In the "Methods of assessment" field, the applicable method of information gathering conducted for the assessment is checked, and the details are provided in the free description column. The evidence for the assessment and the content of support and accommodation discussed in the cooperative assessment were expressed in the free text.

Figure.2 Example of completing Sheet II "Basic Items for Employment" of the Assessment Sheets for Work Support

assessments from the perspective of individual-environment interaction. This allows us to address questions such as: What kind of environment (including job duties, etc.) brings out the strengths of the PWD; what kind of support and accommodations are needed to create an environment where difficulties are less likely to surface; and, what kind of learning and experiences are necessary for the PWD to work in their desired environment?

Finally, I will explain the third key point: the "mechanism for focusing on strengths." In assessments using this sheet, to encourage the discovery of strengths, a separate strengths evaluation is conducted during collaborative assessment, distinct from the ABC evaluation described above. Specifically, if an listed item represents a strength that can serve as a "selling point for employment," it is evaluated as "S: Strength" and a mark is placed in the designated checkbox. The ICF perspective incorporated into this sheet enables the identification of areas of strength, not just occupational limitations [30]. In the "Reason for Evaluation (including Strengths)" field, enter the reasons and objective information that led to the determination of the evaluation stage in narrative form. If the items listed in that section can be highlighted as strengths for the PWD, inputting specific details regarding the strengths and the environmental conditions under which they are effectively utilized allows the context-dependence of the strengths to be captured [29].

To help visualize the key points of this sheet, Figure 2 shows an example of how to fill out Sheet II.

III. Supplementary assessment tool: Monitoring and visualizing tool

In addition to the Assessment Sheet for Work Support mentioned in the preceding section, we considered that monitoring and visualizing the fluctuations in the individual's condition, alongside the status of physical and human

support would complement the assessment sheet and contribute to visualizing the overall picture, including the individual's environment. In recent years, numerous smartphone applications (hereinafter referred to as apps) have been created and their effectiveness has been confirmed. Such an app's self-monitoring function is considered useful for monitoring by cross-referencing fluctuations in the condition of a PWD with the support environment (physical and human support conditions, etc.). Currently, over 80% of the population uses smartphones. Considering that future employment support will target generations that are highly receptive to apps, developing an app that allows users to input their status via their readily available mobile phones is regarded to be useful.

Therefore, we received funding from the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare's Scientific Research Grants, and developed an application to monitor and visualize the fluctuations in the conditions of PWDs (periods of physical and psychological well-being versus periods of poor health), by cross-referencing them with their support environment (physical and human support conditions, etc.). This app is a tool that allow individuals with disabilities seeking employment and their support providers to input fluctuations in the individual's condition and changes in the support environment following the initial interview. During subsequent regular interviews, this information is displayed via graphs and other visual aids, enabling consideration of the necessary support tailored to changes over time. This paper introduces the development process of this app.

(Ethical Considerations) Approved by the Ethics Review Committee of the National Institute of Public Health (Approval Numbers NIPH-IBRA#23002, NIPH-IBRA#24027)

1. Organizing the app input fields

Items related to assessment were extracted from existing assessment tools for persons with disabilities (PWDs) and intractable disease patients, as well as from literature
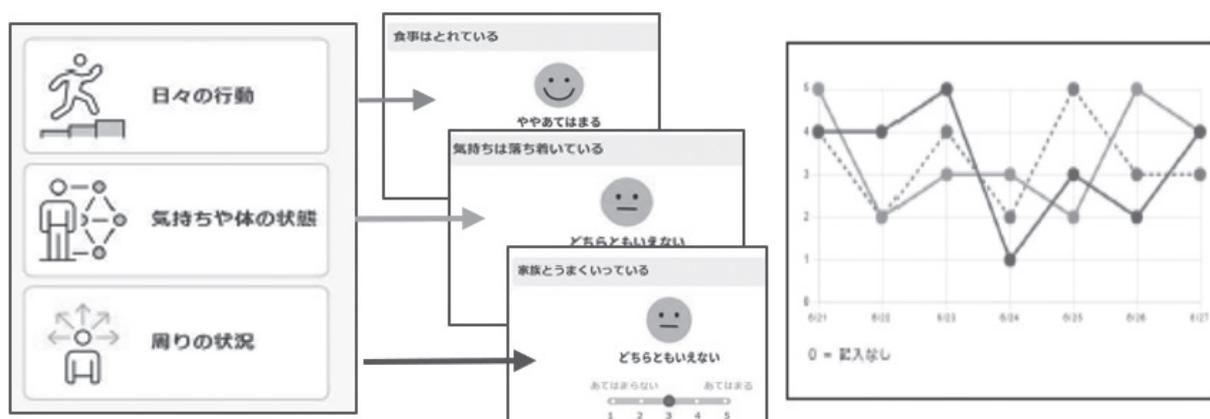

Figure 3. Overview of Wraiifu

Table 1. App input items

Daily Activity	Health Condition	Environment
Having meals	Feel calm	Support from family members
Having sleep	Concentration	Medication at work
Daily rhythms	Physical symptoms	Atmosphere at worksite
Dressing	Sensory/physical restriction	Burden of tasks
Health management		Lay out at work
Money management		Furniture/devices at work
Housework		Working/break time
Transfer		Relationship with friends/community
Communication		
Compliance		
Task completion		
Leisure		

on employment support. Next, we selected and categorized the items that required monitoring and visualization. This resulted in 15 items under "Work-Related Daily Activities," 4 items under "Physical and Mental Symptoms Affecting Work Life," and 14 items under "Home and Work Environments That May Affect Work Life or Symptoms" (Table 1). An image of the app is shown in Figure 3.

2. Verification of the validity of app input field candidates

We verified the validity of the organized app input field candidates with 11 PWDs and 27 support providers. The gender breakdown of the PWD was 4 females and 7 males. By age group, there were 4 in their 20s, 4 in their 30s, and 3 in their 40s. By disability type, there were 2 with intellectual disabilities, 3 with physical disabilities, 1 with developmental disabilities, and 5 with mental disabilities (multiple responses allowed). Support staff affiliations included 20 from employment transition support centers and 7 from disability employment and life support centers. Their average number of years of experience was 8.71 years. Qualifications held included 18 Certified Psychiatric Social Workers, 7 Certified Care Workers, and 4 Licensed Psychologists, among others.

The opinions obtained were as follows.

(1) Input Items

To accommodate the individual circumstances of each PWD, a vast number of items would be required, increasing the burden of input. By adding a "Notes" feature to each item, individuality is maintained. For example, individuality can be maintained by recording specific actions, sicj as "Go to bed at 11 PM" or "Avoid social media before bed" in the notes under the sub-item, "Getting Enough Sleep."

(2) Input Item Structure

Input item structure was classified into daily activities, emotional state and physical condition, and environment, in accordance with the biopsychosocial model [31]. This aligns with the bio-psycho-social model's perspective that the circumstances of persons with disabilities are interrelated and interact in complex ways.

(3) Overall Feedback on the App

1) Prerequisites

To make users feel that use is "for their own benefit," the "reason for using the app (reason for working)" should be prominently displayed at startup.

Furthermore, to make compliance easier to maintain operations should be simplified and the number of items should be limited..

2) Self-assessment

Since evaluation criteria vary from person to person, the criteria should be determined by the supporter and the PWD at the start of app use. The self-assessment input screen uses words, numbers, and facial expressions to ensure clarity and approachability. Self-assessment output is displayed as easy-to-understand graphs, enabling the output of items for behavior, physical/mental state, and environment (a total of three graphs are displayed within a single frame).

When there is a discrepancy between the self-assessment and the supporter's assessment, reconciling them promotes mutual understanding. This app also helps deepen mutual understanding by reconciling self-assessments with peer evaluations.

3) Frequency and duration of input

Frequent input should be avoided, by setting a specific time once a day to ensure continuity without burden. Considering that the period of ECS is one month, the period of use is estimated to be approximately one month. Even after ECS concludes and the PWD transitions to regular employment, employment transition support, or sheltered employment, follow-up can be continued as needed.

3. App Trial and Evaluation

Based on the above considerations, we developed a prototype of the App, "Waraifu" and had it tested by PWDs who are seeking employment and their supporters. We then investigated its authenticity and usability through questionnaires and interviews [32].

(1) Results for PWDs

The research participants were PWDs referred from employment transition support providers, disability employment and life support centers, and regional disability vocational centers who expressed an interest in trying the app during the 2023 Survey.

1) Shift in Authenticity

We investigated changes in authenticity before and after the trial period, as shown in Table 2. Authenticity is to "live obediently based on one's own intentions and feelings," while "being responsible for one's their life choices and taking full responsibility for the consequences that come with them." In workplaces where authenticity is felt, employees can lead to highly productive work that is carried out with motivation and enthusiasm [33]. The responses of the 36 participants were scored, and a paired t-test was conducted to examine the correlation between pre- and post-test scores.

"I often feel down when comparing myself to others" showed a statistically significant decrease (P<0.05), while "I can always stay true to myself" showed a statistically significant increase (p<0.01). In addition, the number of respondents who answered "I can always be myself" showed an increasing trend (p<0.01).

2) App Usability

When asked about the app's usability after use, responses such as "The text size in the app was easy to read" and "The app's colors were easy on the eyes" indicated that it was a well-crafted application.

3) Free Answers

In compiling the free answers, they were categorized into [Advantages], [Need to Strengthen Collaboration with Supporters], and [Need for Functional Improvements].

[Advantages] included [Functional Usability] such as "The color changing to gray after input is very easy to understand," [Understanding One's Own Condition] such as "It's easy to identify areas for reflection and improvement

Table 2　Authenticity (Japanese version) [34]

Always able to be myself
Possessing an unshakable sense of self
Can show my true self even in front of others
Often feel down comparing myself to others
Can do what I want to do
Have something that makes me feel, "This is me"
Never lose sight of who I am

because you can see the trend over the past 7 days," and [Sharing with Supporters] such as "Even people with chronic conditions who don't want to communicate directly can share information easily."

[The need to strengthen collaboration with supporters] included comments such as: "It would be nice to receive personalized advice on the site or via email," and "It would be helpful to know when to take the measurements (whether that evening, the next morning, or some other time)."

[Functional Improvements Needed] included additions such as operation, question structure, free-form entry, graph display, and editing functions.

4) Interviews

In interviewing participants regarding their opinions following the trial period, the following feedback was obtained:

"I realized that pushing myself too hard leads to feeling down the next day" [gained self-understanding]; "After having dreams of past tough times, I made a point to talk to someone about them" [reevaluated health and lifestyle], and "I showed my graph to my doctor and explained the fluctuations" [gained understanding from others].

(2) Results for Supporters [34]

A total of 14 individuals participated. Their affiliations were "Employment Transition Support Providers for 85.7% of participants." Number of years of employment support experience was 71.4% "Approximately 5 to 9 years" for 71.4%. Regarding the PWDs who were provided with support for app input, their age group was "In their 20s" for 50.0%, while their disability certificate category was "Mental disability" for 64.3%.

1) App Usage Status

Supporters assisted with app input 5 times or fewer in 57.1% of cases. In addition, supporters conducted consultations with PWDs using graphs 1 time or fewer in 57.1% of cases.

Regarding free-form responses about app input, answers included support such as "reminding PWDs not to forget to enter data," "offering advice about evaluations," and "taking time to assist with the initial download and usage instructions." In addition, the following responses were obtained: "When the PWDs were getting enough sleep but experiencing fluctuations in their physical condition, we explored what might be causing it with them" "When graphs for cleanliness and personal grooming declined, it often indicated that problems had arisen within the home"; and, "We could listen to the PWDs' feelings, which were not apparent during training sessions."

2) Usability of the "Waraifu" App

Regarding general usability, two respondents (14.3%) answered "applies" to the items: "I think this app is unnecessarily complex," while one respondent (7.1%) answered

"does not apply" to the item, "This app is simple and easy to use." Since scores for the other items were also generally positive, it can be considered that the app's usability has received a certain level of positive evaluation. On the other hand, 10 respondents (71.4%) answered "applies" to the item, "This app requires someone to assist the PWD," suggesting that supporters perceive the app as "easy for supporters to use, but potentially difficult for PWDs to use independently." Furthermore, regarding specific usability, it can be said that it generally received positive evaluations.

3) Effects of Using "Waraifu"

Regarding the effects of using Waraifu, positive evaluations were in the majority for the items: "It helped PWDs understand their own condition and mood swings" and "It helped PWDs share their condition and mood swings with supporters and other relevant parties." On the other hand, opinions were divided regarding the items, "the app helped PWDs manage their own condition and fluctuations" and "the app helped prepare PWDs' work environments."

Based on the results from both studies, while it is beneficial for PWDs to "obtain information" in some way, it cannot be said at this point that it is beneficial in terms of effects leading to some kind of "action" by the PWDs.

4) Free-Answers

[User Interface]

Areas needing improvement include the ability to set the data output period and the presence of a correction function. Advantages include ease of operation and the visualization of status through graphs, making it easier to ask why when graphs fluctuate.

[Number of Input items]

Since there are many input items, it would be helpful to have a feature where only the selected items are displayed.

[Incentivization/Motivation Boosting]

I felt it would be better if there were some kind of token (login bonus, input achievement coins).

4. Discussion

(1) The Rresults for PWDs

The app's usability felt well-crafted and easy for users to utilize. However, areas requiring improvement were also observed. The fact that [understanding one's own condition] and [sharing with supporters] were cited as advantages of this app indicates that it functioned effectively for its intended purpose. This advantage stems from the fact that interactions with the support staff proved effective, from the stage of determining input items and evaluation criteria to confirmation of the input results.

This app was designed to help users understand their own tendencies through self-monitoring, apply this understanding to self-care, and further utilize it for self-advocacy.

We believe that these outcomes: [Gained deeper self-understanding] [Reevaluated health and lifestyle], and [Received understanding from others], indicate that users have effectively utilized this app.

(2) The Results for Supporters

The specific UI/UX aspects, such as screen and item visibility and operability, received relatively high ratings. On the other hand, it is considered necessary to establish a support system tailored to each PWDs' specific disability characteristics and IT literacy. In addition, there are cases where the graph display function is not being fully utilized, and challenges have emerged regarding follow-up support and technical improvements.

While some effectiveness was reported in "understanding the PWD's own state and fluctuations," it was suggested that this may not necessarily prove beneficial when it comes to the stage of translating it into behavioral changes such as "effectively managing fluctuations" or "adjusting the work environment," or into organizational support. It is considered important not only to visualize information using apps, but also to have a clear vision of how supporters and stakeholders will utilize that information, along with mechanisms to support the PWD's motivation and actions.

IV. Implications

The above Sections have introduced the Standard Assessment Sheet and Supplementary Assessment Tool in Japan for strengthening decent work. Using the Standard Assessment Sheet and Supplementary Assessment Tool facilitates the sharing of changes over time and supports collaborative work with PWDs. However, it is necessary to explore effective methods for collaborative work more fully.

Furthermore, since the beginning of this century, the United Nations, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Program, the World Health Organization, and other organizations have been undertaking initiatives based on a human rights-based approach. For example, the United Nations declares that "the human rights-based approach (HRBA) is a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights. It seeks to analyze inequalities that lie at the heart of development problems and redress discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power that impede the progress of development and often result in groups of people being left behind." In addition, they also mention that, "the HRBA requires human rights principles (universality, indivisibility, equality and non-discrimination, participation, and accountability)" [35]. Using the Standard Assessment Sheet

and Supplementary Assessment Tool introduced in this section to collaborate with PWDs, as well as supporting employment based on their authenticity, can also be considered part of a human rights-based approach. In addition to assessing the needs for employment support for PWDs, it is also necessary to strengthen the perspective on human rights.

To strengthen the collaborative work between PWDs and their supporters, it is also necessary for supporters to master use of the tools. We are currently developing a training program for conducting assessments using both the Standard Assessment Sheet and the Supplementary Assessment Tool [36]. We hope that through repeated revisions to our training program, our employment support based on human rights and collaborative work will contribute to upholding the authenticity of PWDs.

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＜解説＞

日本における障害者就労選択支援制度施行に伴う
アセスメントの現状と今後の展望

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抄録

　障害者のディーセント・ワーク，つまり働きがいのある人間らしい仕事を促進すべく日本では2025 年度より就労選択支援が施行された．労選択支援では，障害者本人が就労能力や適性を客観的に評価するとともに，本人の強みや課題を明らかにし，就労に当たって必要な支援や配慮を整理する．就労選択支援におけるアセスメントの質保証に向け，就労支援のためのアセスメントシートが，開発された．具体的には就労支援のためのアセスメントシート障害者の「就労に関する希望・ニーズ」「就労に関する作業遂行・職業生活・対人関係に関する現状」「就労継続のための望ましい環境」という3 種類の情報を就労支援者（以下「支援者」）と対象者が協同で収集，整理する．支援者と対象者が対象者のストレングス（長所）や成長可能性，就労するうえでの課題等を適切に理解し，就職に向けた必要な支援や配慮を検討する．

　一方で，障害者の身体面・心理の変調があることでアセスメントが難しくなっている．国の標準的なアセスメントシートで全体像を把握するとともに，障害者の状態の波と物理的・人的支援状況を突合させてモニタリングし，可視化するツールを合わせて開発した．

　標準的なアセスメントシートと補完ツール両者とも一定の効果は見込まれ，人権に基づくアプローチにも貢献し得る．支援者が活用方法について習熟することも必要となる．現在，両者を併用してアセスメントを実施するための研修プログラムを開発している．

キーワード：障害者，就労選択支援，アセスメント，ツール