

May

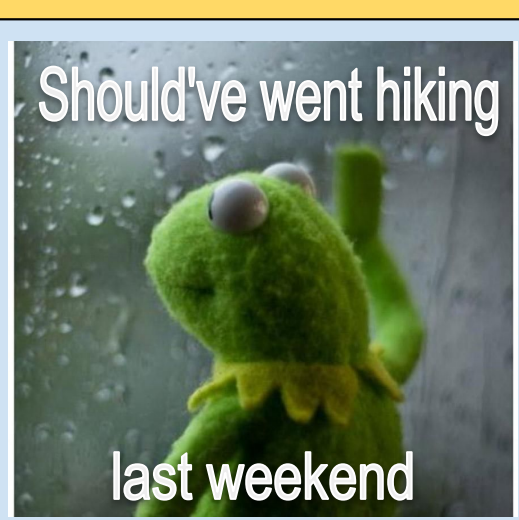
June

- 3rd - Showa Day
- 4th - Greenery Day
- 5th - Children's Day
- 12th - AJET Information Session

The Shiga Situation



The Calm Before the Storm



The weather has been fantastic recently with warm, bright, clear days aplenty. The new school year is underway and the end of another JET year is right around the corner. Tsuyu, the rainy season, is right around the corner, too. It's easy to forget that June brings heavy rains and leads right into the hot and muggy summers we all know and love/loathe. Outdoor activities are an unattractive prospect when faced with torrential downpours, so make the most of the mild, breezy days while they last. Likewise, the calm of spring can often lead to a stressful summer for those planning to leave if they haven't been proactive. I'm sure I'm not the only one to have seen JETs of old frantically packing their things the very night before they have to move out. Don't let that be you! Throwing away/recycling/giving away/selling old items ahead of time will reduce your stress load later, regardless of when you're leaving. What's more, we've all heard the horror stories of JETs who've left (or received) their apartments in such a state that the apartments were unfit to live in. A thorough spring cleaning will make sure you're not the monster in future JET horror stories.

For your health!

The access codes to the mental health resources provided by CLAIR are updated every year. Your schools should have provided you with the access information required, but in case you didn't receive it, I've included the new access codes here along with a short description of each of the services and their availability. Each of the following CLAIR services will connect you to certified mental health professionals. When trying to use any of these services, CLAIR may ask for your JET number and other information to verify that you're a current JET participant, but they want to make sure you know that they do not store any personally identifiable information or inform your workplace that you've used any of these services. CLAIR only retains general, anonymous information about the nature and number of counselling sessions to identify trends across all participants. This information is valid Apr. 1st 2021 - Mar. 31st 2022

Webmail Counselling:

When to use this service - If you want to organize your thoughts by writing an account of the issues you're facing and you can wait up to 3 business days for a response.

Access: <https://www.kokoro-soudan.net/en/> (English)
Login Password : jet2021mental

Skype Counselling:

When to use this service - If you want to speak face to face with someone about the issues you're facing and you are able to wait to do so.

Sessions can be either 20 or 40 minutes long and must be reserved in advance. Available Monday-Friday (excluding holidays) from 9:30am-9:30pm. (Up to 7 sessions per year)

Access: <https://www.fismec.co.jp/hiroba/en/secure/> (English)
Login Password : jet2021mental

Telephone Counselling:

When to use this service - If you want to speak anonymously to a counsellor over the phone without having to commit to an appointment.

This service is available twice a month (up from once a month last year). There is a limit of one call per day, but no annual limit. You can call for counselling on the 10th or 20th of each month and if the 10th or 20th falls on a Sunday or National Holiday, it will instead be available the nearest Saturday before then.

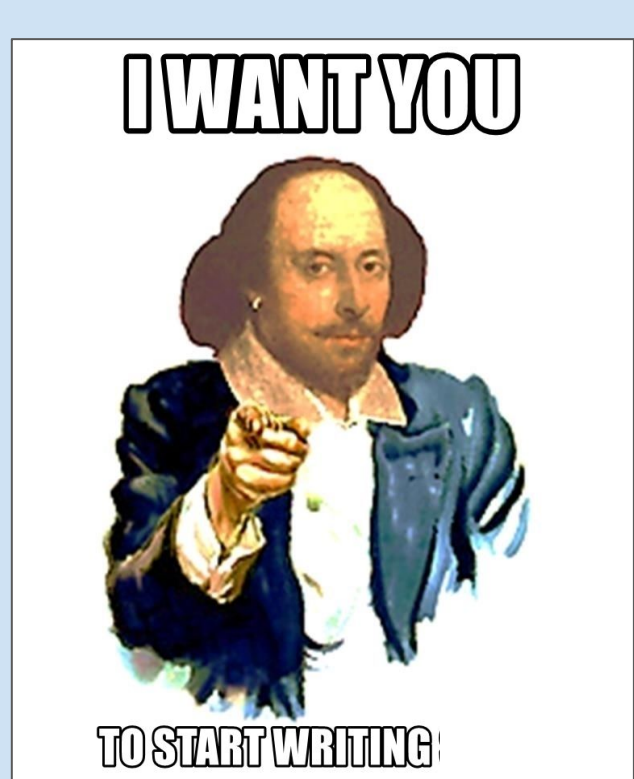
Call: 0120-810-803 (toll-free)

Vaccinations

The public has finally started to receive COVID-19 vaccinations across Japan. Previously only healthcare workers were eligible for the vaccines, but now that has been expanded to cover Japan's sizeable elderly population. Recent news reports that the government plans to provide two doses for all of those currently eligible by the end of July. It will likely be some time yet before any ALTs are able to be vaccinated, but at least progress is being made!

Jet Essays

Everyone's favorite writing assignment is coming up soon. Requests for JET essays will be out at the start of May and are something that all JETs are required to complete. They will be due before the end of June, so you can get a head start by taking some time now to brainstorm your topic. These essays are really a great way to put into words some of your experiences in Shiga, so give it some thought!



A New Wave

A new wave of COVID-19 infections is crashing over Japan. It's been reported that the percentage of all new cases that are due to the British variant is on the rise in Japan's most populous regions. This is concerning due to the variants transmission rate that's almost a third greater than the original virus'. One research institute predicted that the variant would account for almost all cases in Osaka by the end of May. With this in mind and Shiga's proximity to Osaka, be sure to keep your guard up and be mindful of your exposure over the Golden Week holidays. It can be tiring a year into this pandemic, but with the arrival of vaccines, there's an end, however far off, in sight.

Shiga AJET is Recruiting!



Shiga AJET will soon be recruiting a new team for the 2021-2022 JET year. They'll be hosting an information session on May 12th (more details forthcoming). They're on the lookout for new members who are interested in becoming more active in the local community. Joining ShigaAJET is one of the best ways to have make a positive impact on the JET experience in Shiga. Do you have any ideas for how to build a stronger sense of community amongst JETs? Do you have any ideas for cool socially distanced events or activities? If so, ShigaAJET wants you! Not only is joining a great way to give back to the community, but volunteering your time to develop and foster a community always looks great on a resume. If you're on the fence, why not join the information session to find out more. May 12th, be there or be square.

Mental Health Survey & New Discord!

Kily Buta completed a mental health assessment and needs survey as part of her Master's of Public Health. The PAs have been able to make use of the results to address what has been identified as needs in the community. First off, to increase trust in the various mental health resources, I've included (hopefully) a clearer explanation of the CLAIR mental health services here. More detailed descriptions will be added to the ShigaJETs website as well soon.

Emilie has also created a fantastic new Discord server for us all to use and the invite has just been sent out via email. Hopefully, this will help promote more communication and build us up as a community during these tough times. This should be an awesome new space for all of us, so I hope to see you all in the chats!

Cool Biz

It's going to get hot, really hot. You know this, I know this, Japanese society knows this. And so, they've implemented cool biz, the time of year when everyone can let loose, shed their ties, unbutton that top button and leave their long sleeve shirts in their closets. 'Can' is the key word though, as you'll inexplicably still see people suited up through the sweltering summer heat.

Generally, the cool biz season seems to run from May - October but to make sure you're not the only one dressed down at work, it's best to double check when it's cool to start cool biz'ing with your supervisor.

