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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## [Adjusting to the New Normal: COVID-19 & Mental Health](#)

In this Free Webinar, Experts Offer Insights into the Psychological Impact of Living in a COVID-19 World in Japan and the U.S., and How We Can Best Transition to this New Way of Life

Wednesday, October 20, 7-8:15 pm EDT



**New York, NY (October 8, 2021)**—With vaccination rates increasing, businesses re-opening and countries loosening restrictions, people are slowly emerging from their homes and resuming their daily lives after over one and half years of a global pandemic. While vaccinations have helped to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and substantially reduced the severity, COVID and COVID variants continue to infect those across the globe with no end in sight. Many of us need to mentally prepare for a new normal, as we recognize that life is not the same as it was in the past. Additionally, the pandemic has created uncertainty in nearly every aspect of daily life and has taken a toll on our mental wellbeing. What effect has the pandemic had on mental health? What are some healthy ways to cope with coronavirus-related anxiety? In this webinar, mental health experts share their insights into the psychological impact of living in a COVID-19 world in Japan and the United States, and how we can best transition to this new way of life.

**Agenda:**

7-8:15 pm EDT      Discussion and Q&A

**Admission:** This is a free event, with advance registration required. Please register [here](#), Box Office at 212-715-1258 or email [boxoffice@japansociety.org](mailto:boxoffice@japansociety.org). Registrants will receive a link to access the live webinar one day before the event.

**Participant Bios:**

**Tom Froese** is a cognitive scientist with a background in computer science and complex systems. He investigates the interactive basis of life and mind with a variety of methods, including evolutionary robotics, agent-based modeling, sensory substitution interfaces, artificial neural networks, and virtual reality. He is particularly known for his contributions to the field of artificial life and to the enactive approach to cognitive science. One of the central questions that guides Froese's research is: how are agents transformed by the interactions in which they participate with others? He explores this question across various scales of analysis, including the origins of life, the origins of social awareness, the origins of symbolic communication, and the origins of large-scale social organization. Another important aspect of Froese's research is to reveal the essential role of tools and technology, and of environmental mediation more generally, in facilitating these qualitative transitions in the complexity of life and mind. As a paradigmatic case study, he studies how the use of human-computer interfaces has the potential to transform the user's perceptual experience, which has implications for the science of consciousness.

**Jeremy Hunter, Ph.D.** is the great-grandson of a sumo wrestler. He serves as the Founding Director of the Executive Mind Leadership Institute as well as Associate Professor of Practice at the Peter F. Drucker Graduate School of Management. He is also a co-founder and partner of Transform LLC in Tokyo, Japan. For nearly two decades, he has helped leaders transform themselves while retaining their humanity in the face of monumental change and challenge. He created and teaches The Executive Mind, a series of demanding and transformative executive education programs. They are dedicated to Drucker's assertion that "You cannot manage other people unless you manage yourself first." He also co-leads the Leading Mindfully Executive Education program at the University of Virginia's Darden School of Business and teaches the Mindfulness for Effective Leadership Executive Education track at the Weatherhead School of Management at Case Western Reserve University. He has designed and led leadership development programs for a wide variety of organizations, including Fortune 200 aerospace, Fortune 50 banking and finance, accounting, the arts and civic non-profits. Program impacts have led to both positive professional, personal and financial outcomes for participants. Hunter has been featured in the Wall Street Journal, The Economist, The Financial Times, the Los Angeles Times and National Public Radio's Morning Edition. He has been voted Professor of the Year eight times. His work is informed by the experience of living day-to-day for 17 years with a potentially terminal illness. When faced with the need for life-saving surgery more than a dozen former students came forward as organ donors. Dr. Hunter received his Ph.D. from University of Chicago, under the direction of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, author of Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience. He also holds a degree in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, and in East Asian Studies from Wittenberg University.

**Kaori Itokazu** is a counselor at Ganjuu Wellbeing Service. She has been working at OIST since 2015 and provides services in Japanese and English. She is originally from Okinawa but obtained her training and counselor license (LPC) in Denver, Colorado. Prior to her current role, she was a mental health clinician at Asian Pacific Development Center in Denver and mainly worked with Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders population including newly resettled refugees. She has worked with diverse populations from different cultures in both settings. Kaori holds a MA in Counseling Psychology Counselor Education from

University of Colorado Denver and a BS in Psychology from University of Maryland University College. She lives with her husband, her mother, and a 2-year-old son in Naha, Okinawa.

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### **About the Business & Policy Program**

The Business & Policy Program hosts public and invitation-only programs for the international business and policy community about the people and issues that define U.S.-Japan relations in a regional and global context. Formerly known as the Corporate Program, the Business & Policy Program offers unparalleled access to international business and policy leaders and in-depth networking opportunities for the senior executives, policymakers, academics, journalists, and other opinion leaders comprising the Program member audience. Each year, more than 4,000 executives participate in conferences, lectures, symposia, and receptions recognized as invaluable for helping Americans, Japanese, and others from Asia and around the world better grasp the financial, business, and policy challenges that affect Japan and the U.S.

### **About Japan Society**

Japan Society is the premier organization connecting Japanese arts, culture, business, and society with audiences in New York and around the world. At Japan Society, we are inspired by the Japanese concept of *kizuna* (絆)—forging deep connections to bind people together. We are committed to telling the story of Japan while strengthening connections within New York City and building new bridges beyond. In over 100 years of work, we've inspired generations by establishing ourselves as pioneers in supporting international exchanges in arts and culture, business and policy, as well as education between Japan and the U.S. We strive to convene important conversations on topics that bind our two countries together, champion the next generation of innovative creators, promote mutual understanding, and serve as a trusted guide for people everywhere who seek to appreciate the rich complexities and abundance of Japan more fully. From our New York headquarters, a landmark building designed by architect Junzo Yoshimura that opened to the public in 1971, we look forward to the years ahead, which will be defined by our digital and ideational impact through the *kizuna* that we build. Our future can only be enhanced by learning from our peers and engaging with our audiences, both near and afar.

This year, Japan Society is celebrating our heritage through the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our landmark building with the launch of a new distinct modern logo and visual identity. The “JS” monogram is created via overlapping, interconnected lines and shapes, reinforcing the idea of *kizuna* and that Japan Society acts as a platform that connects across, cultures, people, and time.

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