



## Lifewise becomes a lifeline

**Being a mum is a big responsibility. And this responsibility becomes particularly challenging when your child has Down syndrome. For 16 years, Makasini Tulimaiau looked after her child Rose the best way she knew how, relying on carer support to help her and her daughter.**

Although this can be a good option for some families, it really didn't work for them. Makasini didn't feel she was getting enough of a break and found herself constantly worrying. Rose was unhappy and withdrawn.

"Rose would go out for the day with people from different companies," recalls Makasini. "She would only agree to go once, and it was obvious that she wasn't happy. After that first outing, she would shut herself in her bedroom if she knew they were coming."

This started to take its toll on Makasini. Coping with recent family bereavements and struggling to keep up with the level of care needed by Rose, she experienced a period of depression. "When that door closes, we all suffer as parents. We love our children, but we have so much to do, it can feel like a job. There aren't any sick days though; it's a 24/7 job."

All that changed when Makasini accessed Lifewise's Individualised Funding (I F) support and met Michelle Smith, Lifewise Disability Support Manager.

"Lifewise became a lifeline. It was so easy. Having a host that understood what I was going through and was there to guide me through everything; it made such a difference. That's what Lifewise does. I



The Lifewise Disability Team at the inaugural Disability Awareness Day on 13 April 2019. From left: Makasini Tulimaiau, Hon Carmel Sepuloni, Mary Lal, Michelle Smith, Natalie Claxton.

wish more people knew they could access this type of support," says Makasini.

Accessing I F can be quite simple. [see box]. Lifewise provides guidance so that people feel confident to use the support they've been given. Prior to finding Lifewise, Makasini's only down time was through carer support offering a half to a full day of 'time out' for Makasini, with limited time choices and flexibility. This also meant that Rose would spend that time with someone she didn't know.

"Now, having the freedom to choose who cares for Rose has really transformed our quality of life," says Makasini. "Rose's aunties divide that carer time and every day I can see Rose is happier. She knows that she can go out on the weekends, comfortable with people she knows. She is relaxed and so am I."

"Sometimes, when you have a special needs child, they become their disability and so do you. I didn't want that for Rose. I wanted her - and me - to feel normal," she says.

For 16 years, Makasini couldn't do the normal things like other young mothers. "I couldn't feel myself, and that played a

big role in me being depressed. That's changed now."

Lifewise has now appointed Makasini as their first Pasifika Liaison, working with their Individualised Funding clients.

Michelle Smith says, "The reality is that I can do my best to try and understand how Pasifika peoples see the world, but it will never be the same as talking with someone who already thinks similarly. Makasini lives with her daughter Rose so she understands the very real struggles that families experience trying to access support."

For Pasifika families, having support and advice from someone like Makasini can make what is often a difficult decision much easier. "When I speak to people, the barrier comes down," says Makasini. "I can see their relief that here is someone who has faced the same challenges and understands."

Makasini says that having that option to give back has given her purpose in her life and restored her confidence in herself. "Lifewise is helping me to help my people. I enjoy sharing the knowledge Lifewise has given me."

*Aditya Kundalkar  
Communications Lifewise Trust*



Makasini with her daughter Rose.

### What is Individualised Funding?

Individualised Funding (I F) enables people living with a disability to directly manage their disability supports. Lifewise works alongside people to establish individually tailored support, including a choice of caregivers as well as days and times suitable to their lifestyle. We work with families to make sure they have choice and assist them throughout.

*To know more, call 09 623 6569  
to speak with Michelle or email  
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## LEGAL MATTERS

### The Importance of Health and Safety

**Health and safety has become more relevant after the attacks in Christchurch and Sri Lanka that have heightened our awareness of random acts of violence.**



Police are visiting all churches throughout New Zealand to check on our faith communities, to hear any concerns and to prompt us to have conversations about safety. It is a timely reminder for us to work together and take care of one another.

The Methodist Church of New Zealand website provides information about Caring for Our People Manaakitia ā Tātou Tāngata: The people called Methodist accept the challenge to do our utmost to Care for Our People Manaakitia ā Tātou Tāngata: ethically, morally, spiritually and legally. Through our active commitment to ensuring our parishioners, our employees, our volunteers, our Presbyters, Deacons and Lay Ministry, our clients and tenants, etc...

Our People ā Tātou Tāngata, are safe, we will continuously look for opportunities to improve our methods and ways whilst still holding fast to our Methodist ethos.

The website provides information on processes for incident reporting, asbestos management, and emergency response plans that churches should explore to care for

our people. We have a duty of care to provide safety measures at our churches and Church-owned buildings.

New Zealand's health and safety legislation covers places where we spend time when we are not at home. Legislation affects everyone and all organisations including Churches and Church-owned buildings. Churches engage many people to further their mission, whether as employees, ministers, or volunteers. Church attendees fulfil many different roles and, in some way, all these roles and places are governed by The Health and Safety at Work Act 2015. The provisions of the Act apply to a person or organisation

conducting any business or undertaking, whether it is conducted for profit or gain. The only exemption is for a group that is fully voluntary (i.e. has no employees).

The health and safety legislation challenges us to balance the risks we take when we reach out to those in need and fulfil the Christian mandate while ensuring all participants in this process are safe and healthy - to clothe the naked, feed the hungry, visit the sick and those who are in prison, and welcome the stranger (New Testament, Matthew 25).

It is no surprise that organisations which invest in health and safety and have a leading safety culture are usually those organisations that are succeeding and thriving. People like to work for organisations which are committed to the wellbeing of their people.

Many organisations see health and safety standards existing solely as a compliance obstacle. However, viewing these fundamental processes as an inconvenience which doesn't add any real value or deliver any tangible returns, could be a major oversight, not just in terms of your legal and moral obligations, but in terms of economic growth. The costs of lost productivity, replacement, retraining and increased insurance

*Ruby Manukia-Schaumkel*

premiums can increase the direct cost of an incident to an organisation. The potential costs of accident, injury or death quickly add up when you consider compensation, litigation and rehabilitation costs.

A survey on the state of Workplace Health and Safety in New Zealand, conducted by Thomson Reuter's Safeguard publication, assessed the impact the legislation has had, finding that it has steered many business owners towards the advantageous direction of seeing health and safety as more than just compliance.

The research established that organisations which take a serious look at the risks their work creates are able to eliminate or minimise those risks, and also to obtain significant improvements in staff engagement, innovation and productivity.

Building a healthy, secure and safe culture and environment to procure the benefits is just as important as ensuring that adequate training and knowledge on health and safety measures exists in an organisation.

Let's help make health and safety a priority for the Methodist Church of New Zealand Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa in 2019.