

# ASPIRATIONAL JOURNEY

## TO CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

### Jessica Steadman

NGĀI TE RANGI | NGĀTI TAUITI

I grew up mostly in Taupō with my mum and three brothers. At school I think I was a good student and enjoyed learning, but I left at the beginning of 7th form, which is Year 13, to work and so I studied by correspondence.

My intention was to go to university but a brief stay in Australia and becoming pregnant delayed that. Instead I studied towards a Youth Work Certificate, a nice pathway to university. When my daughter Willow was six months old, I did my first paper. I was 20 at the time and afterwards I enrolled at the University of Waikato, moving from the Tauranga to Hamilton campus with Willow to study full-time.

Clinical psychology appealed to me as a career because of the depth of training and variety within the profession. I obtained a Bachelors of Social Sciences degree with a double major in psychology and tikanga Māori, a Certificate in Sociology, and a Bachelors of Social Sciences (Honours, First Class) in psychology.

Each semester I did five or six papers (the maximum allowed), a wide range that helped me get the most out of my undergraduate studies and I attended summer school. Now I'm studying towards a Doctor of Clinical Psychology qualification and 2018 will be my final year.

#### Kia Ora Hauora

Kia Ora Hauora was helpful for finding scholarships and looking up other health professions' areas of expertise. It was also motivational. There's a demand for Māori health professionals and it was inspiring seeing other Māori student profiles as well as those who've graduated.

When things got tough juggling parenthood, volunteering, working and studying, I'd remind myself why I was doing it all. I'd break large tasks (such as

assignments, readings or writing my dissertation) into smaller tasks, and at the start of each week, I wrote lists of what I needed to achieve and prioritised tasks. I also reached for support from my whānau, friends and the university staff.

Self-care was important and spending quality time with my daughter. Although money was tight, it wasn't until my fourth year that I applied for scholarships and got a couple. I've since received scholarships from the universities I've attended, Māori Education Trust, Hauora Health Scholarship and Vic Davis Memorial Trust.

#### Importance of Māori Health Professionals

Māori health professionals can create positive change in our current system, not just for Māori but all people. Health is best treated holistically, which Māori have always understood.

Increasing awareness of the different health careers and the value Māori bring to these roles is also important. This awareness should start in school, but Māori need help with barriers such as access to courses and finances.

*“ Māori health professionals can create positive change ”*

#### Future Aspirations

I'm excited to have my final year internship at Lakes DHB. The multidisciplinary team at the Infant, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services works well together and holistically. My goal is to make a positive difference in people's lives and continue conducting research that adds to the current body of psychological knowledge.

