

# RELATIONSHIP

## BUILDING KEY FOR

# MĀORI MUMS

## Maia Wharekura

NGĀTI KAHUNGUNU | NGĀTI RAKAIPAACA

I grew up in Rotorua with my sister, mum and family. At high school I had no interest in health or science at all. After I left school I had a couple of gap years working in a café and Lotto shop. I liked creating customer relationships at work and wondered what other jobs could give me that satisfaction. After looking online at professional relationships in jobs, I came across health and midwifery.

### Secret beginnings

I didn't actually tell my family I wanted to be a midwife. I didn't want to get their hopes up and kept it a secret in case I didn't get in. But once I got in, they were gob smacked because nobody studies health in my whānau. Moving away from my family to Auckland was a struggle in my first year. I have no whānau here in Auckland, but I made friends at AUT and have built a support network around me.

### Scholarship support

You can't maintain a job while you're studying midwifery so it's a struggle financially not to have any income. The Pu Ora Matatini scholarship has allowed me some financial security so

I can stay in the programme. The guidance and support that you get within Pu Ora Matatini from fellow students, midwives and lecturers is also important for your success.

### Culturally sensitive care

We need more Māori midwives who can offer the best care that is culturally sensitive and appropriate. Being able to communicate with

Māori mothers is important because I feel like there is a lot of judgment in the maternity system. When I was a first-year student I was with a first-time mum who hadn't been given quality of care and was quite guarded. I spent an hour with her getting to know one another and by the end of it, she gave me some really positive feedback. Making a difference in their care is important.

*“ I didn't tell my family I wanted to be a midwife ”*

### Kia Ora Hauora

In my first year I registered with Kia Ora Hauora. They've been in the background as a support network throughout my entire degree. Even as a third-year student I still get emails from them asking how I am. They work in collaboration with Ngā Māia ki Tāmaki Makaurau which is the Māori Midwifery Association in Auckland and fund crucial things like membership fees.

### Future Plans

Next year I hope to get into the new graduate programme at Counties Manukau and learn more about midwifery in a hospital setting. The programme runs for a year and a half and you can experience three different types of settings. The first is birthing and assessment which is compulsory for three months, then there's the post-natal ward at Middlemore Hospital and also a three-month placement of your choosing. It can be the Papakura or Botany Maternity Unit or with the community midwives which is what I hope to do.

