

COMBINING SCIENCE, ART AND A CREATIVE SPIRIT

Tori Bensemam

TAINUI | NGĀTI MANIAPOTO

Tori was born and bred in Whanganui, she attended Wanganui High School, St Georges and St Johns Hill. She studied and graduated from Otago Polytechnic, Dunedin as an Occupational Therapist.

Whānau influences

My mum and dad are both police officers. They work extremely hard and help people every day. Their jobs are at times very stressful and involve lots of shift work. I have them to thank for my work ethic.

Choosing occupational therapy

Occupational therapy gives balance in my life. The client-focused philosophy of OT resonated with me and the more I learnt the more I loved it. It is more than just helping someone to move again. It's giving them back meaning and purpose in their daily activities.



Career journey

After high school, I took a year off, travelled and worked. I had to make sure further study was really what I wanted to do. So, I went to Otago Polytechnic to complete a three-year Bachelor's Degree in Occupational Therapy. It was hard, there were long nights in the library, tough assessments and I was a long way from home. Despite all that, it was never unmanageable.

Part of the degree are placements in different specialities around the motu. I got to work in mental health, physical health, acute rehab, and in schools. The work only confirmed that I'd chosen the right career. I walked out of Otago with my degree and a job in my home town of Whanganui.

Kia Ora Hauora

I registered with KOH at university. They helped me to network with other health professionals in the area and promoted and helped with scholarship applications. It's worthwhile checking them out, they can help with resource services and support. What KOH offer is personalised and perfect for anyone looking to move into health.

Focus in tough times

Being amongst like-minded people helps keep you focused. Your friends in the library doing the same thing as you are; putting your head down and just getting on with it. It's motivating and supportive when you do it together.

Best part of the job

The reward, seeing people get back to their occupations. You know you've done a good job when they no longer need you. Just about all health jobs can travel and that's what I did.

I came to work in Canada after two-years as a practitioner in New Zealand. It has been tough getting registration in Canada, so I'm working as an Occupational Therapist's assistant until my registration comes through. New Zealand health workers are highly regarded and it doesn't take too much to get a job.

Further study

I would love to work on my masters. I plan on studying biculturalism and occupational therapy in New Zealand.

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