

Looking after families throughout lockdown



The Covid-19 lockdown was a very difficult time for many South Auckland families and our services were needed more than ever. As an essential service, Iosis staff had to move rapidly to ensure families could continue to access our services.

The first initiative was our 'lockdown drive-through', where staff stayed in their cars and were each issued IT equipment so they could work remotely. At the same time, we transitioned all Iosis services from face-to-face to online. Our staff continued to counsel clients, run group sessions, deliver programmes and provide social work services in this way.

Furthermore, a remote 'Family Violence Intervention (FVI) Coalition Table' was set up with other agencies to deal with high and moderate risk cases and determine which agency would best be able to support the family.

The Coalition was led by the Police, who worked through any police call-outs from the previous day that hadn't already been referred directly to an agency. The team met online every day and divided up the call-outs between them - or if they knew of a more appropriate agency, they committed to referring the case.

Teina Mita, Team Leader for Counselling and Men's services, was the Iosis representative in the Coalition. He says that lockdown was a particularly tough time for families – read more on page 3. 📍

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CEO's message

“Since our last newsletter, the world has certainly changed in ways we could never have imagined. I'm incredibly grateful to our amazing staff, all of whom went above and beyond the call of duty to continue to transform family life for good.



Tunumafono Tracey-Leigh Peters

Lockdown and the ensuing weeks have been very challenging for many of the families we work with, some of whom are struggling to provide the basic necessities of life. Family violence has

increased by 20% during this time¹, which has put more strain on our already busy services.

Fortunately, our staff was able to move quickly and harness technology to continue to meet with clients in need and work with them to overcome these challenges.

On the plus side, we've found new ways to connect with our clients and other agencies, which will enable us to increase our reach with clients who can't always engage face-to-face.

We ask God to give strength and courage to our staff and to the families we work with, so that they can continue to overcome the challenges of this uncertain time. Kia kaha, kia maia, kia manawa ... be strong, be brave, be steadfast.

Tunumafono Tracey-Leigh Peters
CEO

¹ <https://www.nz.co.nz/news/national/415553/domestic-violence-calls-to-police-increase-in-lockdown>

Alpha Trust: helping us to help families for over 10 years

Alpha Trust has been a loyal supporter of Iosis for the past 10 years and their generosity has played a huge role in enabling our work to continue during this time.

This year, the Trust has been wound up and a significant donation made to Iosis in the process.

“As a not-for-profit organisation, one of our greatest challenges is assurance of funding,” says Iosis CEO, Tunumafono Tracey-Leigh Peters.

“The loyal, regular support by the Alpha Trust has therefore made a huge difference. Naturally, we're sad to see them wind up the Trust, but we are so grateful for this significant final donation.” ©

Prayer needs

- We pray for the many Iosis families who have faced considerable challenges during lockdown and that, with God's grace, they'll find the strength and ability to overcome these. We also pray for our loyal staff for their incredible service during this difficult time.

Learnings from lockdown

– Teina Mita & Heidi Austin-Crawford

Teina Mita, Team Leader for Counselling and Men’s services, says that the extra stress of lockdown has been a huge issue for many families.

“There was a marked increase in financial issues and family violence. Stress due to being confined to lockdown was noticeable and several couples separated during this time.”



Teina Mita

Heidi Austin-Crawford, Manager of SWIS (Social Workers in Schools) and MASSIS, also noticed significant changes. “Children, young people and their whānau are feeling really anxious about what’s happening in the world right now and not knowing how to deal with it. It’s a traumatic event, and the ramifications will continue for much longer than I think we all realise.”

Heidi says that during a crisis situation, people move to more urgent basic needs, like food, warmth, shelter and love. “Many clients needed more help to provide food for their families. Money became tight and job losses started to have an impact. Many children and young people who would normally eat at school through KidsCan or Breakfast Club weren’t able to.”

The losis team were amazing and worked in many different ways to engage and support children, young people and their whānau, says Heidi. “As

well as phone calls, our team used Skype and Zoom to continue sessions. We also added several apps to our phones so that we could connect with kids in ways they’re more used to.”

They both agree that having to quickly understand new technology was a steep learning curve. “Our service has always relied on seeing our clients face-to-face,” explains Teina. “Relying on the phone, Zoom or other media could be challenging at times. On the upside, less reliance on face-to-face contact means we can be more accessible to clients and staff in the future.” ☺



Heidi Austin-Crawford

Follow us on Facebook

The Covid-19 crisis has reminded us of the importance of having a range of ways to keep in touch.

Please follow us on Facebook – it’s a great way to keep up-to-date with what’s happening. Simply search for losis on Facebook and follow or ‘like’ our page. ☺



Stay current with what is happening at losis.
‘Like’ our Facebook page www.facebook.com/losisLtd

Meet Eloise, Iosis Social Worker

“It’s a joy to hear the stories of the children and families at St Anne’s and to work with them,” says Eloise, an Iosis social worker based at St Anne’s Catholic School in Manurewa.



Eloise was inspired to become a Social Worker as a result of her own experience. “I saw the Social Worker at my high school and she was amazing. She was so helpful and had such a positive impact on me.” When she left school, she worked with her parents in Bangladesh for a year, before completing a Bachelor of Social Work at Auckland University.

“Because the language was a barrier, it taught me the importance of non-verbal

communication,” she says. “Playing games and sport with children is a positive and powerful way of engaging with them.”

She says her role as a school social worker has three key areas: engaging with and getting to know the children, running programmes to deal with particular issues, and one-on-one work with individual children.

“I’ve found in my work that giving people time, a listening ear, can really help – when someone feels heard, they feel valued and that in itself can make a big difference,” says Eloise. “I have always loved kids and I love what I do.” ☺

Farewell to Glenis Reardon

A fond farewell and huge thank you to Glenis Reardon, our long-serving finance assistant, who is retiring after 10 years at Iosis.

Glenis is looking forward to spending more time with her grandchildren, travelling around New Zealand and catching up with friends. She joined us from corporate roles, and says Iosis has a very different culture and environment, but she’s absolutely loved it.

“Iosis has been a wonderful place to work,” she says. “It has been so rewarding working for an organisation that does so much good and helps

families overcome such significant challenges.

I will miss everyone but am looking forward to having a bit more time on my hands. Lockdown has been a gentle introduction.” ☺

