



Building a Strengths-Based and Outcome Focus at LifeLinks: What We have Achieved on Our Journey So Far

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Presentation Focus



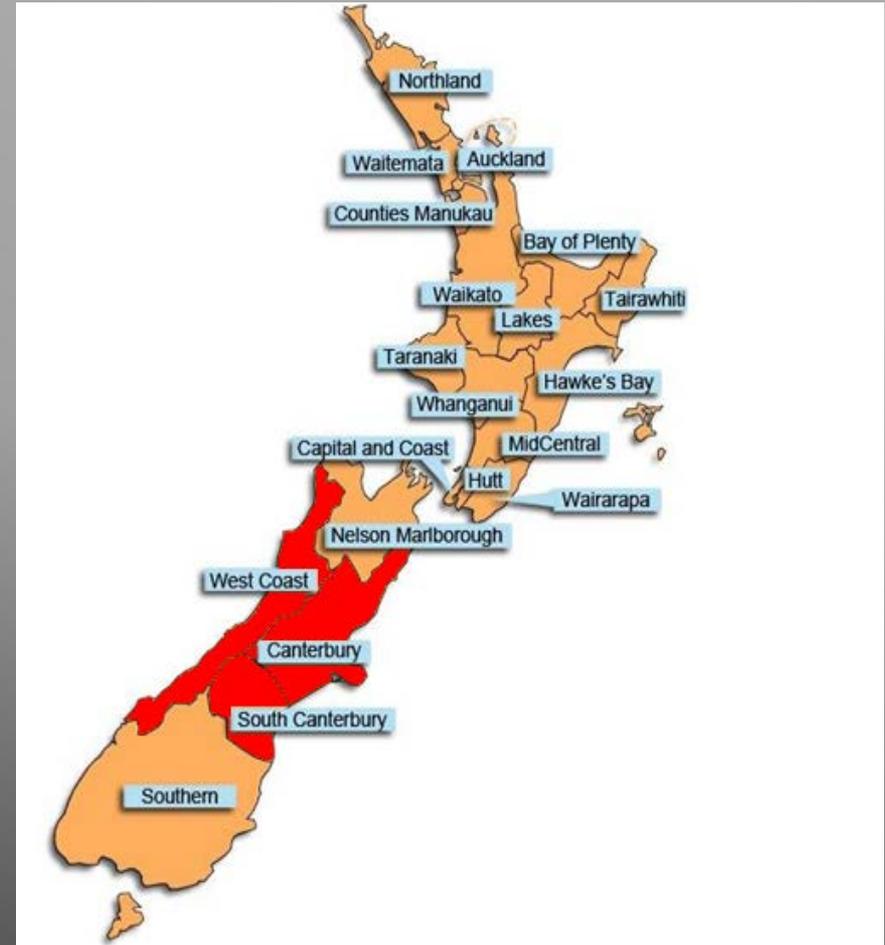
Why and how did LifeLinks shift from a 'deficit-focused' to a 'strengths-based' practice approach?

How has LifeLinks tackled the increasing demand for demonstrating outcomes?

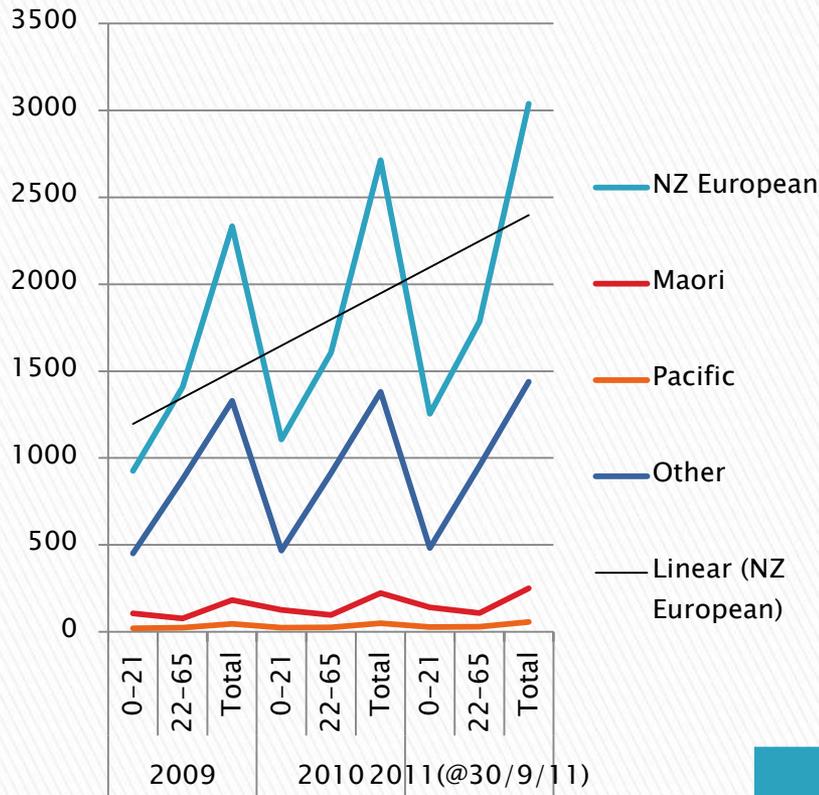
A brief introduction to LifeLinks ...

Contracted by MoH to deliver NASC services to people with disabilities (0-65 years)

- ▶ Private company operating since 1995
- ▶ Service coverage:
 - Canterbury & West Coast
- ▶ 47 staff



Tangata Whaiora Demographics:



Those with experience of disability

- ▶ 4,763 accessed services
- ▶ Age
 - 40% 0-21 years
 - 60% 22-65 years
- ▶ Ethnic Groups
 - 63% European
 - 5% Maori
 - 1% Pacific Peoples
 - 30% Other

Steady increase in numbers accessing service

Tangata whaiora clients in receipt of mental health support services: Christchurch - 1,500

Where did we start?

Reflecting on the 'deficit' approach

- ▶ Research has found that a 'deficit' approach in human services ...
 - Leads to excessive 'medicalising', 'pathologising,' labelling & placement in segregated types of service
 - Denies the diverse experiences of people
 - Excludes opportunity to identify and draw on people's insights, learnings and capabilities
 - Lacks efficacy & has not resulted in social betterment

What messages did the regulatory environment offer?

- ▶ Diversity valued:
Person-centred &
person-directed
- ▶ Trend to
personalisation
- ▶ Holistic & wellbeing
- ▶ Outcomes



Key messages from disabled people in the research

- ▶ “People-centred, wellbeing approach with wrap-around services“
- ▶ “Speak out during planning on decisions about their lives”
- ▶ “People’s stories presented qualitatively”
- ▶ “Value & improve families/whānau/carers quality of life”
- ▶ “Provide information about services to enhance choice”
- ▶ “Move from culture of ‘ticking boxes’ to culture of performance for achieving best outcomes”

How did LifeLinks respond?

- ▶ Drew on the empirical & experiential evidence to develop ...
 - Person-centred tools
 - Strengths-based practice
- ▶ Developed a client opinion survey that enabled us to hear our clients' voices about
 - What's important in our service delivery for them
 - What outcomes they experienced

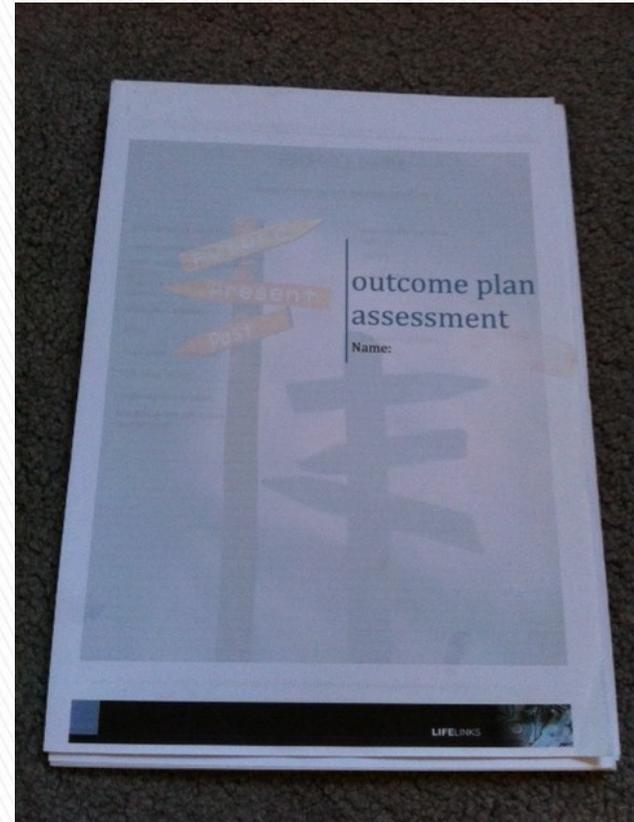
Person-centred principles

- ▶ Focus on the person and who they are
- ▶ Future orientation
- ▶ Shift from 'power over' to 'power with' approach
- ▶ Active involvement of 'natural' supports
- ▶ Clear value base of achieving genuine social inclusion and community participation



Putting theory into practice

- ▶ Person's own story in their language
- ▶ Wider wellbeing & life focus rather than exclusive focus on diagnosis
- ▶ 6-stage process
 - Listen to story
 - Develop future picture
 - Highlight strengths
 - Add supports to complement strengths/goals
 - Mobilise strengths/supports via plan of action
 - Review progress



LifeLinks' Outcome
Plan Assessment

Practice tool & process

Overview of contents of LifeLinks' Outcome Plan Assessment

My personal details	I manage my personal cares by ...
Those present at my planning meeting and their relationship to me	My general wellbeing is ...
My living situation	I have these disability-related costs
My current supports	This is what I do during the day ...
How I communicate	What spirituality means to me ...
My mobility	What culture means to me ...
My sensory functions	This is what I want my life to look like
I complete my household tasks by ...	My desired goals / outcomes

Example

This is what I do during the day ...

“I am involved in a variety of activities including developing and extending my vocational skills. These activities include: going out with my mother when she is in Christchurch; music; walking; watching Sky television; going out with staff and flat-mates on most weekends; cooking; going swimming.

I have one-to-one support to attend some social activities. I like trying new activities.”

This is what I would like to be doing during the day in 12 months ...

- “I want to have a holiday with my Mum
- My vocational goals are for me to learn new work skills
- I want to learn to email and Skype my family
- To be involved in cooking a complete meal once a week
- To become involved in the Special Olympics swimming group
- I would like to develop my technological skills”

Essence of the strengths-based approach

- ▶ Goal orientated
- ▶ Systematic assessment of strengths
- ▶ Look for resources in the environment to support goal attainment
- ▶ Clients – experts in their own lives

Incorporating a strengths based approach in practice

1. All families have strengths, unique & depend upon culture, background, beliefs, & socioeconomic status
2. Failure of a family to display competence must not be viewed as a deficit but rather as a failure in the system to create opportunities for the competency to be displayed or learned
3. Involves a shift away from the belief that experts should solve the families' problems & towards empowering families to master the challenges in their own lives
4. Goal of intervention – not "doing for people", but as strengthening the functioning of families -less dependent on professionals.
5. Requires acceptance but also valuing individual difference; a shift away from the use of treatment & towards using prevention models (Dunst, 1995)

Training is critical for building strengths-based practice

▶ Strengths-based language

- Person first
- No diagnostic labels
- Glass half full
- Reframe in resilience framework

deficit	strengths
consumer	Individual using services
Suffering from...	Living with ...
unrealistic	Has high expectations of self
hopeless	Unaware of opportunities
helpless	Unaware of capabilities
entitled	Aware of their rights
denial	Disagrees with diagnosis

Supported by ongoing practice forums

Deficit & Strengths Language

Training is critical for building strengths-based practice including

▶ Strengths-based questions

- Preferred futures questions
- Exceptions questions
- Scaling questions
- Problem-free questions
- Coping questions

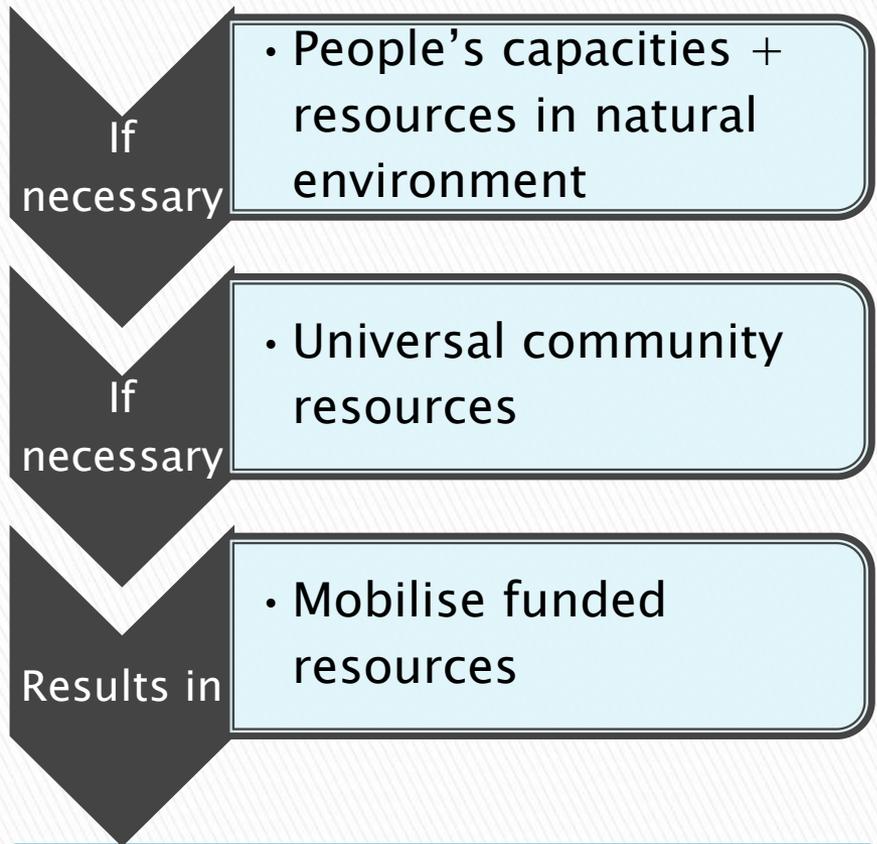
Surfacing resilience factors

- ▶ What will you see yourself doing differently when life is going well again?
- ▶ What are you doing differently when the issue is not so severe?
- ▶ Describe your experience on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is the worst life has been and 10 is the best it could be. Where are you now?
- ▶ Can you tell me about the things you enjoy doing?
- ▶ What are you doing to help you get through the day?

Examples

Training is critical for building strengths-based practice

- ▶ Facilitating self determination
 - 'power-with' approach
- ▶ Goal development
- ▶ Add resources in a strengths-based way
 - Mobilise services/resources to complement strengths



Supported by ongoing practice forms

Empowerment

Starting the shift to Results-Based Accountability at LifeLinks

- ▶ We wanted to know
 - What elements of LifeLinks' service best met the performance expectations of our clients?
 - What difference did LifeLinks' service make to clients' quality of life?

	QUANTITY	QUALITY
EFFORT	<u>What did we do?</u> How much service did we deliver?	<u>How well did we do it?</u> How well did we deliver service?
EFFECT	<u>Is anyone better off (#)?</u> How much change for the better did we produce	<u>Is anyone better off (%)?</u> What quality of change for the better did we produce?

LifeLinks' Client Opinion Survey Data

LifeLinks
Age Orange Metairie
A Division of Compensation Advisory Services Ltd

1. Did the LifeLinks' staff member assist you so you were clear about what they could do for you? Please tick one box.

Yes No

Comment: _____

2. Were we clear in all our communications with you? Please tick one box.

Yes No

Comment on ways we could improve our communications: _____

3. Did you feel your point of view was listened to by LifeLinks' staff? Please tick one box.

Yes No

Comment: _____

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4. Has the service you received from LifeLinks met your expectations? Please tick one box.

Yes No

Comment on what we could do better to meet your expectations: _____

5. Is there any way that LifeLinks can improve our service? Please tick one box.

Yes No

If yes, please comment: _____

6. Overall, how satisfied are you with the service you received from LifeLinks? Please tick one box.

Very satisfied Satisfied Unsure Unsatisfied Very Unsatisfied

Comments: _____

7. 'As a result of receiving the LifeLinks' service I deal more effectively with daily life.'
Reflecting on this statement, please tick the box that best reflects your experience.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Unsure Agree Strongly Agree

Comments: _____

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Learning from LifeLinks' Client Opinion Survey data:

RBA question – How well did we do?

- ▶ We now have 2–years quantitative survey data to populate the RBA framework:
 - Correlation between two indicators i.e. when LifeLinks meets clients' expectations, they report high levels of satisfaction

▶ Questions about service quality

- ▶ Overall, how satisfied are you with the service you received from LifeLinks?
- ▶ Has the service you received from LifeLinks met your expectations?



Learning from LifeLinks' Client Opinion Survey data: How well did we do?

- ▶ **Responsiveness:** Staff professionalism
 - Compassionate/empathetic
 - Active listening that enabled client-centred approach & managing expectations
 - Technical skill/knowledge
- ▶ **Accessibility/Availability**
 - Staff available to respond to questions & provide information
 - Communication that enhances understanding
- ▶ **Advice:** service that is helpful



What clients want from LifeLinks' service?

Qualitative data

LifeLinks' Client Opinion Survey data: What we are learning about outcomes?

7. 'As a result of receiving the LifeLinks' service I deal more effectively with daily life.'

Reflecting on this statement, please tick the box that best reflects your experience.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Unsure Agree Strongly Agree

Comments: _____

► Findings from the quantitative data

- Strongly Agree (44.6%)
- Agree (39.4%)
- Unsure (8.2%)
- Disagree (0.3%)
- Strongly Disagree (0.3%)

Survey Question

Consistent findings over
2 years of data collection

LifeLinks' Client Opinion Survey data: What we are learning about outcomes?

▶ Outcome categories predominating

- Personal comfort

- Social participation

- Economic participation

- ▶ “I have been able to get better health wise.”
- ▶ “Unable to cope with everyday life without your help.”
- ▶ “Far superior to living amongst rubbish and in squalor ... disease free & not a health risk.”
- ▶ “Service has really helped alleviate worry and stress.”
- ▶ “LifeLinks enabled me to have an independent life.”
- ▶ “Planned respite ... regular time out.”
- ▶ “LifeLinks enabled me to complete course”

Building a Strengths-Based & Outcome-Focused Agency Requires ...

- ▶ Support from senior management
- ▶ Evidence-based tools & practices
- ▶ Training
- ▶ Ongoing professional development opportunities
- ▶ Client feedback system for continuous improvement and measuring results

