

Meeting Notes from Tautoko Network Meeting

February 2024

Supporting those with disabilities in your organisation's volunteer team

It was great to have Susan from Hapai Access Card join us at this Tautoko Network session. Susan shared knowledge around accommodating disabled volunteers within our volunteer teams and gave examples of simple tweaks/modifications which enable engagement of those volunteers - and there was also some great sharing of the empowerment that this engagement gives to the volunteers themselves.

There are two models for disability - the Medical Model and the Social Model. Hapai Access Card bases what it does on utilising **The Social Model**.



Susan emphasised that 'health and safety trumps everything' and so there are things that need to be considered at the outset, such as - can a disabled volunteer evacuate your organisation's site if necessary? Raising our awareness about hazards which we may not ourselves see (such as, bags and power cords tucked under desks for those with a visual impairment, adding captions to training manuals for those with a hearing impairment, and audio to training videos for those with low vision), Susan noted that it really is sometimes just about thinking a bit differently about how we can accommodate people in our volunteer teams.

For more information on Hapai Access card, check out their website at www.hapaiaccesscard.org.nz. Susan also gave a shout out to another Volunteering Canterbury member organisation, [Techmate](#). Techmate is all about bridging the digital divide - and are sometimes able to assist community groups with accessing high resolution screens.

Remember: it's ok to ask at the outset, when interviewing a potential volunteer "are there any modifications required to enable you to do your job?". Disabled volunteers have often lived their lifetime with a disability and will often have already sorted out some 'work arounds' for what you may perceive as 'barriers'.