

Gilda's Club Greater Toronto

Dedicated to ensuring that all people impacted by cancer are empowered by knowledge, strengthened by action and sustained by the community

Zeba Tayabee, MSW, RSW, Toronto, Canada

Overview

Cancer Support Community

Gilda's Toronto is part of a global non-profit network of 175 locations that provides free comprehensive evidence-based and professionally led psychosocial oncology support. With central administration of a toll-free helpline, this community also creates educational and digital resources such as the Cancer Experience Registry and the Cancer Support Source, and engages in advocacy.

Psychosocial Oncology Support

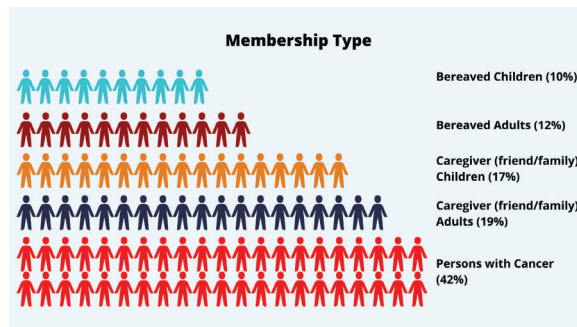
Since 2001, we have improved the quality of life for more than 12,000 people experiencing the fear and uncertainty of a cancer diagnosis – personally or for a loved one. We offer support to restore a sense of control, redefine hope, reduce stress and isolation during and after cancer treatment for improved quality of life.

Who We Serve

Adults, youth, and children whose lives are impacted by cancer-related stress.

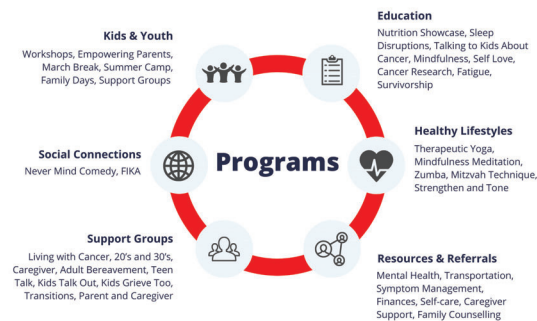
“While the medical system made sure I lived, it was Gilda's Greater Toronto who truly gave me my life back.”

— Colleen C., Young Adult Gilda's Toronto Member



Program Delivery Model

- Holistic approach to program and service delivery based on evidence and research to support cancer care
- Interested participants complete an intake and are assessed for cancer-related stress in different areas of their lives
- New members receive a personalized plan of supportive and educational programs for optimal psychosocial care
- Gilda's Toronto has over 20 years of evidence-based therapeutic programs delivered by volunteers and contract facilitators, each with exceptional cancer expertise in their areas of practice:
 - ⇒ Masters-prepared mental health professionals
 - ⇒ Trained experts in mind-body practices
 - ⇒ Skilled subject matter experts including health care and allied health professionals



“Gilda's [Toronto] gives you a safe space to collect yourself and heal at a time in life that can be so chaotic and traumatic [...] to be heard and understood when you feel isolated. A place to learn and grow in your new life.”

— Gilda's Toronto Member

COVID-19 and Virtual Programs

Gilda's Toronto pivoted all aspects of in-person program delivery to the virtual environment to continue to foster a community of mutual sharing, support, and expertise. Gradual steps were taken to create an infrastructure that would effectively nurture community while procedures were in place to deliver on our mission and make programs successful.



Our Impact

- Effective delivery of therapeutic programs led by trained mental health professionals based on 20+ years of evidence-based program delivery
- Provides 600+ programs annually, delivered by volunteers and contract facilitators, each with exceptional cancer expertise
- Innovative programs based on best practices: plant-based nutrition programs, support for family/ caregiver network, distress screening, Open to Options
- 43% increase in attendance for support groups from Fall 2020 to Fall 2021
- Between 2019 to 2020, 20% increase in new members that can possibly be attributed to virtual program delivery, new programs, impact of COVID-19
- Working with a collaborative network of interprofessional experts, community-based organizations to deliver appropriate and supportive services to our members