

## WELCOME TO YOUR ZOOM SUPPORT GROUP WITH GILDA'S CLUB SIMCOE MUSKOKA!

When people work together in groups to support each other and help themselves, a few guidelines have often been found to be very useful.



An Affiliate of the  
**CANCER SUPPORT COMMUNITY**

### 1. CONSIDERATIONS FOR VIRTUAL PROGRAMS

- i. **Meetings will start on time** – Please make every attempt to join the ‘waiting room’ of virtual program 5-10 minutes before group starts, so you are ready to begin at the set time of the program. If you join late, please don’t interrupt the conversation. Wait until there is a natural opening or the facilitator addresses you. Facilitators are unable to admit those who are 20 or more minutes late. *Please note that late admittance is up to the discretion of the Group Facilitator, and cannot be guaranteed.*
- ii. **Be mindful of your surroundings** – Spend a couple minutes before the meeting starts and find a comfortable spot in a quiet, private location where you won’t need to move or be disrupted/distracted. If you find sitting still difficult and/or otherwise uncomfortable, we suggest preparing some quiet “fidget” activities to utilize during the virtual group- for example, an adult colouring book, stress ball, journal to write in, etc. Kindly be dressed appropriately.
- iii. **Make yourself visible** - Try to position your camera to be at eye level for more direct engagement with other meeting participants. *You must have your camera on in order to participate in virtual Support or Networking groups, in accordance with PHIPA privacy regulations.*
- iv. **Find a spot with good lighting** - If possible, find a spot with natural lighting. If you have lights on, make sure they are not behind you and backlighting your face (putting it in shadow).
- v. **Confidentiality & privacy** - Help ensure a sense of group safety by making sure you are *in a non-public place, and behind closed doors where others in your household cannot see or hear the group conversation*. Participants should use headphones to ensure privacy and confidentiality. *You are not permitted to audio or video record any part of the group discussion; you are also not permitted to forward or otherwise share the group Zoom Link and/or Password, even to fellow GCSM Members.*
- vi. **Normal group expectations still apply:**
  - Please be intentional about the discussion
  - Be present for each other and not distracted by technology
  - One person should talk at a time, but please do engage in meaningful dialogue
  - Be respectful of the person speaking
  - Be mindful of time and ensure all attendees get a chance to be heard
  - Please be dressed appropriately
  - Do not consume alcohol or other mind-alerting substances immediately before or during group. Please do not eat during group, unless required for medical reasons. Drinking water, tea, or coffee is perfectly OK.

### 2. Language and Logistical Guidelines:

- **i. Let one person talk at a time:** Multiple conversations and side remarks distract from the group’s flow and focus. Allowing one person to have the floor lets everyone hear what is being said. It is important to allow the facilitator of the group to take the lead, so be mindful of giving the space for the facilitator to run the group.
- **ii. Speak for yourself:** It is important to recognize that while people affected by cancer have many similarities, there are also differences. Making “I statements”, rather than saying “you”, “we”, or “people” when you actually mean “I”, is a clearer way of expressing your own experience. Do not give advice unless it is asked for.
- **iii. Keep on focus:** Using the group for the purpose for which it is designed makes good use of everyone’s time, especially your own. Giving this 90 minutes focused attention includes:
  - Silence your phone and please do not checking emails or read texts during group (unless it’s an emergency)
  - No eating during group time or drinking alcoholic beverages

- Minimize outside distractions (animals, favorite background music, etc.)

When sharing personal information with group members it can feel painful to see someone else distracted by their phone.

Social visiting can be productive before or after group rather than during group; we encourage you to keep in contact with your fellow Members outside of group/ GCSM if you feel comfortable doing so.

- iv. Be honest: Group is a place where you can be frank and straight forward with your thoughts and feelings; there is no need to hide your personal experience from others or from yourself - most of the people in the group share similar feelings, and your facilitator is accustomed to facilitating such expressions.

### 3. **Respect Confidentiality:**

Please respect the privacy of every member at Gilda's Club Simcoe Muskoka, and ensure to find a quiet and private space in your home for our group time. If you have other individuals you are living with, headphones should be utilized to maintain a sense of privacy and confidentiality. Things discussed within the time and space of group programs should be kept private and should not be discussed with individuals not present in the group. The vast majority of members are aware of the importance of confidentiality. As a practical matter, however, Gilda's Club Simcoe Muskoka (GCSM) cannot enforce confidentiality among members.

### 4. **Attendance:**

Make a commitment to attend your Zoom program if you have registered. If you are unable to attend for some reason please let GCSM know at [program@gildasclubsm.org](mailto:program@gildasclubsm.org)

Regular attendance improves the overall experience for individual members of the group and the group as a whole. Group members who get to know and become interested in the lives of other group members tend to feel more satisfied with the group experience. This unique friendship is built on shared experiences and can serve as an antidote to unwanted aloneness.

### 5. **Facilitators:**

The role of the Professional Facilitator in programs is to bring the group together, ensure everyone has the ability to actively participate, and to provide additional resources and referrals (such as individual therapy) when needed within the Gilda's Club Simcoe Muskoka community. GCSM group facilitators are experienced in understanding how groups work effectively as well as the aims and goals of GCSM. Facilitators are professionally obligated to maintain confidentiality, except where required or allowed by law.

### **Technical Issues:**

1. We encourage you to download Zoom the day before your group, to allow ample time for long download times and/or technical issues.
2. Note your Zoom Support or Networking group will be password protected; the password will be sent to you via e-mail, with the zoom link.
3. If you cannot see or hear the other attendees on ZOOM, please check the lower left-hand corner for the mute and video buttons to make sure they aren't on. You may also want to check your computer's microphone/volume settings if you cannot hear others or they cannot hear you.
4. Your video **must** be on when you join the group
5. Please try to minimize or turn off background noise (i.e. music, voices in the background, water running, etc.).
6. Avoid excessive movement of your screen by keeping your phone or computer on a stable surface. This will make it less distracting for other members.
7. If you experience technical difficulties, try exiting and then re-booting the Zoom app. If difficulties persist, e-mail [program@gildasclubsm.org](mailto:program@gildasclubsm.org) (we are able to call you back to help troubleshoot if required).