



GILD HANDBOOK
For Members and their Families
Revised January 2023

Mission of GILD

The mission of GILD is to serve adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. GILD aims to build and maintain skills and friendships through classes, social activities, and events which enrich and expand the members' social world and independence.

GILD Membership

GILD is open to adults 21 years and older who reside in the Baltimore metropolitan area and have intellectual and/or developmental disabilities that impede their social skills and independence. Membership is offered without regard to race, color, religion, ethnic origin, or gender identity.

Goals and Purposes of becoming a GILD Member

- ❖ Have a fuller social life
- ❖ Plan and enjoy group activities
- ❖ Develop friendships
- ❖ Become more independent
- ❖ Gain life and social skills
- ❖ Learn more effective ways to problem solve
- ❖ Learn conflict management skills
- ❖ Give and receive peer support
- ❖ Learn self-advocacy
- ❖ Improve communication skills

The GILD Board of Directors

The GILD Board of Directors is comprised of approximately 12 parents, family members, and/or volunteers from the community who share in the responsibilities of GILD's oversight. A list of GILD's current Board members is available under its own heading on this website. The Board has established five standing committees to work on GILD matters in the following areas: Activities, Education, Events, Financial Development & Fundraising, Membership & Communications, and Strategic Planning.

Social Skills and Life Skills Classes

Classes are held twice a month on Wednesday evenings. Information regarding the times, locations, and topics of these classes can be found in GILD's monthly newsletter. Two trained facilitators run the classes and cover various topics throughout the year such as relaxation and stress management, relationships, goal setting, conversational skills, gardening, healthy eating, and conflict resolution. Currently, one virtual and one in-person class are being offered from September through June, and two virtual classes are being offered in July and August.

Social Activities

The Activities Committee is composed of a combination of GILD parents and members who meet regularly to plan and organize activities. Members who do not currently serve on the Activities Committee are encouraged to share their ideas for future activities by contacting one of the Activities Committee members. Currently, 1 to 2 in-person activities are being scheduled each month.

The RSVP Collector for a GILD activity must keep an RSVP list of those attending and may be asked to perform additional duties specific to the activity. Members can consider having a co-host. Social activities are typically held on the weekends. Some examples of previously held activities include going to the movies, restaurants, outdoor live music performances, bowling, mini golf, paint classes, ceramics classes, nature walks, and game nights. Specific information about the next month's activities can be found in the GILD monthly newsletter.

RSVP'ing for GILD activities must be done in a timely manner. Members must call, text, or email a host of the activity by the stated RSVP deadline on the invitation. RSVP's are generally required up to one week before the activity, and members who do not meet the RSVP deadline will not be able to attend. Members may not ask other members to RSVP for them. Also, members who have RSVP'd for an activity but end up not being able to attend MUST contact one of the hosts prior to the activity to let them know of their change of plans.

Events

The GILD Events Committee plans several large events each year. At two of these annual events, which include a Fall Picnic and a Spring Party, members and their family members are invited to attend. At the other events, two (or sometimes more) parents or family members volunteer to attend as facilitators. Examples of previously held events include shows at Toby's Dinner Theatre, a Baltimore harbor cruise, and an Orioles Game. The members' cost to attend GILD events is greatly subsidized by GILD.

Contact Information

When joining GILD, a new member and the family member who is designated as their GILD emergency contact MUST provide full contact information including a home address, email address, and cell phone number. Any changes to this contact information should be submitted to lvetusi@comcast.net as soon as possible so that the information in the GILD rosters can remain current.

Guests

A GILD member or parent who would like to invite a prospective member or an occasional guest to attend a skills class, activity, or event MUST email Lorette Vetusi, Co-Chair of the Membership & Communications Committee, at lvetusi@comcast.net at least one week before the RSVP deadline. If approved by the Committee, Lorette will let the member and/or parent

know and then forward the name of the guest to the host or instructor of the class, activity, or event. Guests may not attend a GILD function without Committee approval and the host or instructor knowing well in advance.

Cancellation of GILD Skills Classes, Activities, & Events

GILD classes, activities, and events may be canceled or postponed due to inclement weather or other unforeseen circumstances. If a class, activity, or event needs to be canceled or postponed, you will receive an email as soon as the decision has been made. Please be sure to check your email if the weather on the day of a class, activity, or event looks iffy. In addition, the RSVP collector or host of an activity will cancel an activity if fewer than 5 people RSVP by the stated deadline. If the RSVP collector or host of an activity decides to cancel, he/she must notify all members who RSVP'd well in advance of the activity.

GILD Dues

The GILD Board of Directors sends out membership renewal notices in January. The dues are \$50 per year and should be paid promptly. If dues are not paid by the deadline, the member will not be permitted to attend any GILD functions until payment is made, and will need to pay a late fee. Dues scholarships may be available based on need. For further information, please contact Cathy Cope, Co-Chair of the Membership & Communications Committee, at cmcopester@gmail.com.

Donating to GILD and Fundraising Efforts

GILD depends upon the generosity of donors to fund its skills classes, activities, and events throughout the year. An annual appeal letter is sent out in November to all member families and previous donors. However, donations are accepted all year long on our website at <https://www.gildgroup.org/donate-to-gild>. Contributions to GILD are tax deductible. All donor names will be listed on the GILD website unless a donor specifically requests at the time of the contribution to be listed as anonymous.

GILD has held two Dance-A-Thons in the couple of years, in collaboration with the Oriole Advocates Charitable Foundation, and they were turned out to be very successful fundraisers and social events. GILD has also launched an ongoing GoFundMe campaign.

GILD Website and Facebook Page

The GILD website address is www.gildgroup.org, and the GILD Facebook page address is <https://www.facebook.com/GILDmaryland>. As part of the application process, GILD members agree to allow their photos and videos to be shared on the GILD website and Facebook page. GILD does not identify people by name on the internet, except as noted above regarding donations.

GILD Revised Code of Conduct (Sept. 2023)

We show kindness and respect towards others through words and actions.

We are welcoming and polite.

We listen when others are speaking.

We use kind and supportive words.

We give others personal space as needed and keep our hands to ourselves.

We accept differences in opinion without harassing or pressuring others.

We mind our own business and don't tattle on others.

We will always tell the truth and be honest.

We work hard to resolve conflicts.

We speak privately with another member to resolve a conflict without involving other members.

We propose positive solutions.

We avoid conflict by keeping our distance as necessary.

We apologize when appropriate.

We use calming strategies when upset or angry: we take a few deep breaths, calm down and remove ourselves from the situation if needed.

We do not engage in in-person or digital communication or behavior considered to be:

- Disruptive to the group
- Negative rumors or gossip
- Inappropriate public displays of affection

GILD Disciplinary Protocol

1. Verbal Reminder

The first step takes place when an alleged infraction occurs to the GILD Code of Conduct. The infraction must be reported to a GILD Board member on a timely basis (preferably within 3 days of the violation). Three members of the GILD Board disciplinary sub-committee will verify that the infraction has occurred. They will then issue a **verbal reminder** to the GILD member(s) of the Code of Conduct and state the infraction that has occurred to that Code. The Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy will be reviewed at this time.

2. Formal Warning

The second step will be a **formal warning** in verbal and written formats. For this step, the three members of the GILD Board disciplinary sub-committee will have a meeting (telephone, Zoom, or in-person) with the GILD member(s) and will follow with an email record of the violation. The documentation for this formal warning will be kept in GILD records.

3. Suspension

The third step will be a **suspension** from all GILD in-person skills classes, activities, and events for a period of 90 days. However, a member(s) on suspension status will be allowed to attend all Zoom skills classes. For this step, three members of the GILD Board disciplinary sub-committee will have a meeting (telephone, Zoom, or in-person) with the GILD member(s) to initiate and will follow with an email record of the violation. During the period of suspension, the three members of GILD Board disciplinary sub-committee will have a follow-up meeting to assess progress regarding permanent resolution about the infraction.

4. After Suspension

After the suspension period has ended, the GILD member(s) will be allowed to attend all classes, activities, and events. Should the member(s) refrain from further infractions to the Code of Conduct, all membership privileges will resume.

However, should the member(s) violate any element of the GILD Code of Conduct, the three members of the GILD Board disciplinary sub-committee will intervene. That sub-committee will then decide if an additional consequence is justified.

5. Termination

The GILD Board disciplinary sub-committee determines whether termination is recommended. This recommendation will then be taken to the Officers of the GILD Board for approval. If approved, then the three members of the GILD Board disciplinary sub-committee will have a meeting (telephone or Zoom) with the GILD member(s) and then send a follow-up email to the member(s) documenting the termination and the prohibition for future admission to GILD.