



# GILLIAN'S PLACE

**REDUCING BARRIERS &  
CREATING LASTING CHANGE**

STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2024





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## WHO WE ARE

As one of the first shelters of its kind in Ontario, Gillian's Place has over 40 years of experience and expertise in gender-based violence service in Niagara. Since 1977, we have grown from an 8-bed emergency shelter to a multi-site provider of free and confidential services that support survivors as they break the cycle of violence and abuse.

Gillian's Place is much more than a safe shelter. Our team provides confidential and compassionate counselling, legal advice, transitional support to women, children, Two-Spirit, genderqueer, trans, and non-binary people facing gendered violence in our community. We desire to offer services and spaces where all survivors can come without reservation, knowing that they will be welcomed, respected and provided with hope, support, and choices.

At Gillian's Place, we are abundantly grateful to our government, foundation, corporate, and individual funders, who enable our work to end gender-based violence in Niagara.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In March of 2021, Gillian's Place commenced a strategic planning process entitled Reducing Barriers and Creating Sustainable Change.

This planning took place during the COVID-19 pandemic and is influenced by much of the challenges faced throughout this time in our communities. Recognizing the impact of COVID-19 on shelter services and the growing diversity in the St. Catharines and North Niagara Region guided our work.

The successful implementation of our 2021-2024 Strategic Plan, Reducing Barriers and Creating Sustainable Change, relies on our ability to build on our current community collaborations and increase our connections to local organizations that support diverse populations.

Further, responding to post-pandemic needs in our communities will require outreach and adapting to the changing needs of our community through collaborations and targeted expansion of our programming.

We have carefully documented a road map of our goals and laid out our strategic priorities in three overarching themes, with an action plan to ensure accountability and a clear guide to success.



Nicole Regehr  
Interim Executive Director



Jennifer Wallace  
President, Board of Directors

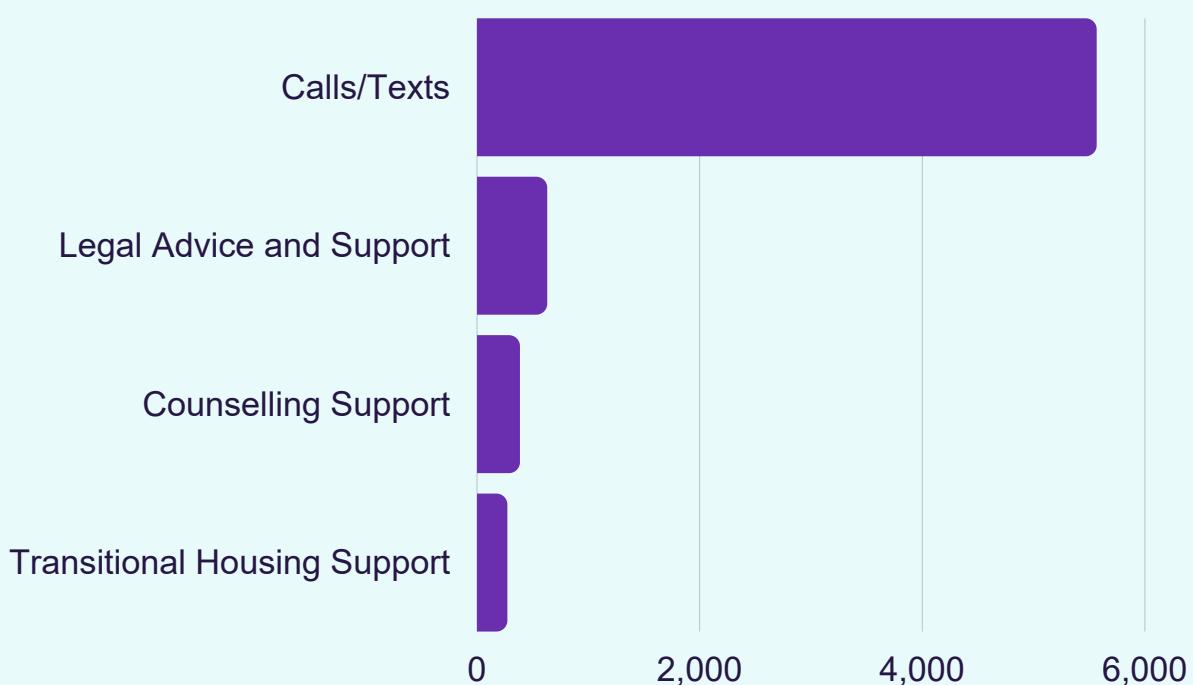
# 2020-2021 SERVICE SNAPSHOT

In the 2020-2021 fiscal year, our emergency shelter housed 196 women and children and our community outreach services served a total of 7,261 women and children.

Our counsellors and support staff responded to 5,562 crisis calls on our 24-hour support line, and 626 women received legal advice and information.

381 women living in the community attended counselling sessions, and 94 children received much-needed support from our Child and Youth Counsellors.

268 women obtained transitional housing support.



# OUR SERVICES

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Our wide-spectrum of free and confidential support services are designed to meet our clients' unique and complex needs.

- 24/7 phone or text support line
- 34-bed emergency shelter
- Second-stage housing
- Safety planning
- Legal advice and support
- One-on-one and group counselling
- Child and youth programs and counselling
- Transitional housing support
- Workshops for survivors
- Education, advocacy, and violence prevention programs



# OUR BASE

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Through the strategic planning process, we revisited and refreshed our vision, mission, and values statements to reflect our commitment to providing an inclusive and safe environment for survivors of gender-based violence.

Our vision, mission, and values guide our work, and we strive to remain accountable and adaptable to the communities we serve.

## VISION

We strive to be a socially just and equitable community where all are free from gender-based violence.

## MISSION

To work with and empower people experiencing gender-based violence by providing safety and support through a variety of services and raising awareness about root causes to end the cycle of violence and abuse.

## VALUES

Our organizational values inform how Gillian's Place is governed, how our services are delivered, and how we work together. Simply said, our values permeate everything we do. We honour the innate strength of survivors in everything that we do and commit to the practice and principles of self-determination.



# OUR BASE

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## VALUES

**COLLABORATION:** We are better together. We see our community partners, funders, clients, and each other as allies and our shared work as the only way to achieve lasting impact. We come hospitably to the table with openness and humility.

**INTEGRITY:** We act with uncompromising honesty, respect, and fairness with the people we serve, with our community and with each other. We welcome questions, and we answer sincerely.

**SURVIVOR-CENTRED:** We're here for all survivors and for each survivor. Our language and our work are informed by each survivor's context, stage, dignity, and right to self-determination and are more important than our own agendas or the systems within which we work.

**COURAGE:** We are here to change things. Regardless of traditional mindsets, power structures, and norms, we welcome the challenge of stepping out and speaking up. We work within an intersectional, feminist, and anti-racism/anti-oppression framework, and we honour each other's courage in doing this work.



# OUR PLANNING PROCESS

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In March 2021, Gillian's Place strategic planning committee engaged with the Rainbow Diversity Institute to facilitate the planning process. The process used an intersectional, anti-oppressive, feminist equity framework throughout to guide the analysis. Board members, staff, and external stakeholders were consulted throughout this process.

## THE PROCESS:

- Review of internal documentation
- Virtual interviews and focus groups: stakeholders, staff, board members
- External sector research
- Review of vision, mission, and values statements
- SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis



# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

2021-2024

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## REDUCE BARRIERS

- Demonstrate inclusivity and enhance cultural competency throughout the organization
- Increase community engagement with communities representing underserved populations

2

## EXPAND TO BETTER SERVE THE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY

- Restructure and expand our current facility to increase capacity and accessibility
- Add resources to our programs to address the diverse needs of our community

3

## RESPOND TO POST-PANDEMIC COMMUNITY IMPACTS

- Assess and review the impact of the pandemic on populations experiencing gender-based violence in all communities we serve

4

## ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

- Strengthen existing funding partnerships to ensure lasting support as programs expand
- Secure sustainable funding for priority programs



# PRIORITY ONE: REDUCE BARRIERS

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- Demonstrate inclusivity and enhance cultural competency throughout the organization
- Increase community engagement with communities representing underserved populations

## OUR STEPS

- Expand our cultural competency through ongoing training and learning opportunities for all staff and volunteers
- Undertake a review of recruitment, hiring, onboarding, and retention practices to ensure diverse representation amongst staff and volunteers
- Conduct a review of our policies, practices and marketing to ensure gender diverse, inclusive language is used to support, welcome, and reflect the wide range of gender-diverse survivors we serve
- Expand our collaborations further with culturally linguistically, and geographically diverse communities through informal and formal community partnerships; to strengthen access to survivors from communities historically and currently underserved



# PRIORITY TWO: EXPAND TO BETTER SERVE THE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY

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- Restructure and expand our current facility to increase capacity and accessibility
- Add resources to our programs to address the diverse needs of our community

## OUR STEPS

- Undertake renovations and expansions to our current facility to provide a more strategic use of space, greater accessibility, and culturally responsive spaces to better serve our clients and the organization
- Increase organizational presence in the rural parts of our community to provide greater access to support
- Expand culturally responsive programming to accommodate religious and cultural practices
- Expand our programming internally and/or through community partnerships to support survivors who find themselves at the intersections of experiencing violence and needing mental health and substance dependency support



# PRIORITY THREE: RESPOND TO POST-PANDEMIC COMMUNITY IMPACTS

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- Assess and review the impact of the pandemic on populations experiencing gender-based violence in all communities we serve

## OUR STEPS

- Consult studies reflecting the impact of COVID-19 on gender-based violence in our communities, and review how to enhance our programming as a result of these findings
- Review staffing capacity to ensure expansion of counselling services to meet the growing need is supported
- Review programs to ensure they are welcoming and available to all communities under any restrictions



# PRIORITY FOUR: ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

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- Strengthen existing funding partnerships to ensure lasting support as programs expand
- Secure sustainable funding for priority programs

## OUR STEPS

- Build on existing funding partnerships and stakeholder engagement to strengthen the long-term financial sustainability of the organization through a phase of program and footprint expansion
- Prioritize programs and initiatives to secure long-term financial sustainability





# GILLIAN'S PLACE

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