



lega cancro ticino



10 pointers  
from **VIKI**

## La Lega cancro Ticino (The Ticino Cancer League-Switzerland)

The **Lega cancro Ticino** is a private entity of public utility, whose principal goals are the following:

1. Direct assistance, "here and now" and psycho-social accompaniment of the patients and their family members during all the stages of the illness;
2. Financial and administrative support with respect to social entitlements and assistance in obtaining them;
3. Information aimed above all at the prevention and early diagnosis of cancer diseases;
4. Courses and support activities for rehabilitation purposes;
5. Promotion and financial support of scientific research in the field of oncology.

The greatest intent of the Ticino Cancer League is to offer a warm embrace and to lighten the burden that serious illness entails for the patients and their loved ones.

**Insieme con coraggio** (*Together with courage*), is a parents' group active in pediatric oncology created within the Ticino Cancer League as support to the pediatric oncology service, and to offer assistance to parents who have, or have had, a child with a tumour disease.

Its main purpose is to encourage self-help, facilitate access to information and improve the expansion of support to parents who go through the difficult and heartbreaking experience of a child diagnosed with cancer.

The social workers of the Ticino Cancer League, in collaboration with the social workers of the hospital, offer specific forms of support of practical, administrative and economic nature.

Finally, the Ticino Cancer League offers psychological support in and out of the wards.



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For further information:

[www.ticino.legacancro.ch](http://www.ticino.legacancro.ch)

[www.insiemeconcoraggio.ch](http://www.insiemeconcoraggio.ch)



February 2022 seems far away... nevertheless, I still vividly remember that February, an experience shared with the Ticino Cancer League while preparing ourselves to welcome people from the war zone in Ukraine, who needed urgent cancer treatment.

After learning of the arrival of children or young people who would be treated in pediatric oncology in Bellinzona, we involved volunteers to find accommodation, activated social workers for administrative matters and relations with the authorities, looked for translators, organised transport... while new needs emerged day by day. We were faced with an exceptional and unexpected event, for which we wanted to offer the best solidarity, and we were committed to coordinate it.

*Thank you all!*

Our gratitude goes to the people close to us who immediately contributed with a special fund for the first expenses; to those who offered their apartment for accommodation; to those who through relatives and acquaintances assisted us in the work of translating and interpreting during interviews in the hospital, in our offices and with homeowners. Last but not least, to the team of volunteers from the League and the pediatric oncology parents' group *Together with Courage*, for their availability and selfless service.

This intense and complex human experience, at times joyful, at others demanding, proved to be greatly enriching for all those involved. The overall process became a new opportunity to build awareness as to how as "world citizens" we can feel united by being of mutual help, and by exchanging emotions, challenges and concerns. Thanks to this shared experience we have grown in collective solidarity, as we continue to nourish hope and trust for tomorrow.

It is with joy that I invite you to read this book which is the result of the heartfelt encounter between a volunteer and a little girl welcomed with love, and followed by all of us at the LCTI.

Alba Masullo  
Director LCTI

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Texts and drawings by Viktoria Rybas

Project and layout by Suzanne Palermo

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Would you like to donate?

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Please mention: “bambini, adolescenti e cancro” (children, adolescents, cancer).



# 10 pointers from **VIKI**

Texts and drawings by  
Viktoria Rybas





***A**t the time of this publication Viktoria (Viki), was a 12 year old girl. She arrived in Ticino (Switzerland) from Ukraine during March 2022, to treat her disease. She was eager to share part of her experience through this booklet hoping to reach out to her peers, affected by the same disease, o other forms of illness. The fruit of her process has given way to 10 pointers!*

*The drawings that enrich the reading of the book, filling it with creativity and cheerfulness, are a small portion of the artwork Viki produced during the 8 months of her stay in Ticino.*

*Viki is now back in Ukraine, and has gifted the hospital of Kiev with many copies of her book, translated into local language for this purpose.*





## POINTER 1

**DON'T give UP** when you are given  
the diagnosis!

*It is difficult not to give up when problems are bigger than you. At the beginning you can feel overwhelmed by worries and anxiety. I had some very difficult times, and even had some panic attacks when I found out about my illness. But I learned to hold on thanks to my determination.*

*We must move forward!*



## POINTER 2

Follow the guidance and the **DieT** the doctors give you!



*The doctors explained that a good diet can help us heal more quickly. What kind of diet should that be? Vegetable soup and porridge, like the ones we make at home in Ukraine, steamed or lightly cooked meat, fruit, milk and cheese products.*

*It's important to remember that though you may not feel like eating, you need to make an effort, because if you don't eat you won't have the strength you will need!*

*In Swizterland I could eat fresh fruit and vegetables at will!*





## POINTER 3

### Don't keep quiet! **CALL YOUR FRIENDS!**

*You don't have to talk about your illness  
if you don't want to!*

**BUT** *a friend of mine, who wanted to help me,  
told our friends about my illness. Their support and  
friendship has been the most important thing for  
me.*





## POINTER 4

### Don't let you **emotions** get in control!

*At the beginning it was really hard. I wasn't eating anymore and had panic attacks. I was afraid to be alone. I cried alot.*

*It was very difficult for my mother, too. She didn't know how to help me because she couldn't understand what I was going through.*

*No one told me how to control my emotions and mine were "out of control"! There was no book that could help me recover my calmness. At the hospital in Ukraine, I met a psychologist who helped me understand what was happening to me. We made drawings and talked alot about my experience.*

*The presence of our parents and loved ones is what counts most.*

***Talk to a psychologist.  
You'll get good support!***



## POINTER 5

If you lose your hair  
**Remember** these words:

*If your teeth fall, it's a problem!  
If your hair falls, it grows back!*

*In the meantime you can use wigs (I did!), or scarfs,  
headbands, caps and beanies!*

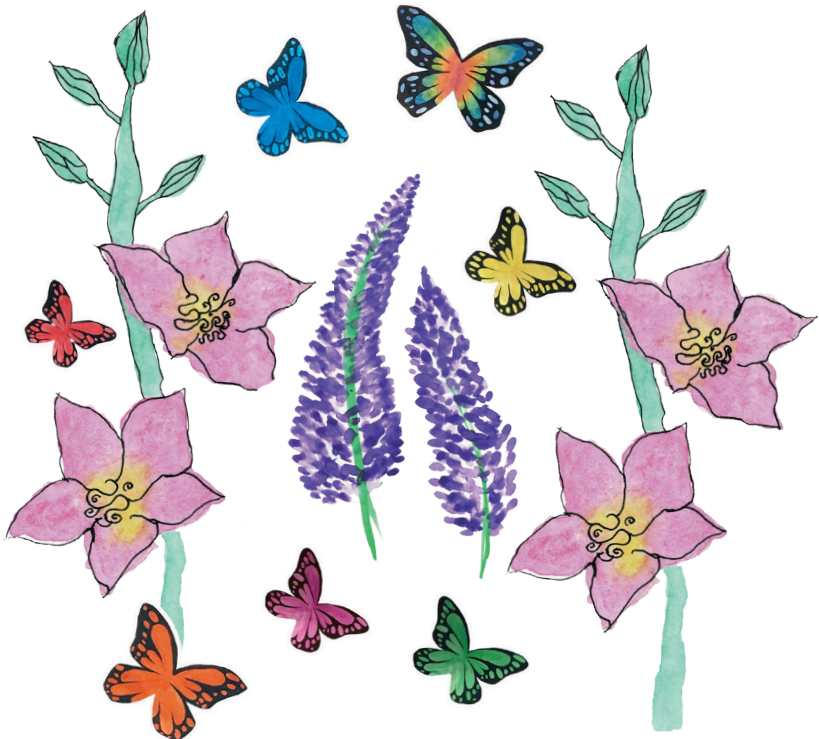


## POINTER 6

# Express yourself!

## Draw! Color! Sing!

*You can have fun in lots of ways and help your mind focus on something constructive. I drew and painted alot. I learned new creative techniques and discovered watercolor. I played crossword puzzles, made pop-ups, and filled our home with my drawings! And, I love to sing.*



## POINTER 7

### Dont' be afraid! **TRUST!**

*I don't remember being afraid too many times, but I was afraid when they inserted the catheter, and when they took it out! That day I used a magic marker and chose my favorite color to highlight my name on the hospital record.*

*Fear can be overcome with courage !*



## POINTER 8

# Gratitude makes you feel good

*The doctors and nurses were all very kind with me, and this helped me alot. They understood when something was not right and when I had pain, and did everything they could to help me. Their presence and the way I felt respected made me feel serene and confident. I made many surprise-drawings for them. It was my way to say "Thankyou".*



## POINTER 9

### Cultivate a **HOBBY!**

*It's important to have a hobby to cultivate because you set your mind on that, and you don't think about not feeling well.*

*Find a hobby if you don't have one, or become more committed to the one you already have!*

*A hobby helps us continue to have fun, even when we have an illness. It helps us create new friendships, too, as we dedicate ourselves to new projects.*





## POINTER 10

# Learn from your **exPeRience!**

*This experience has taught me not to give up in front of anything. My most important advice is:*

*Hold on!  
Don't be afraid of anything!  
Focus only on  
Victory!*



**My special achievements:**

**DETERMINATION**

**COURAGE**

**ACCEPTANCE**

**TRUST**

**PATIENCE**

**CHARACTER**

**FRIENDSHIP**

**CREATIVITY**

**CHEERFULNESS**

**Make a list of the positive qualities  
WITHIN YOU that are becoming  
stronger and helping you!**


# SURPRISE!

## Advice for parents

*Before ending this book, Viki's mom, Olena, would like to give some advice to all the parents who accompany their children in the process of facing a disease. Her words are sweet and important:*



*"Help your children by remaining cheerful. Play with them, draw with them, have fun with them. Most of all make sure that you always talk to them!"*



*This space is for you! Use it to draw, express your emotions  
and share your experience!*

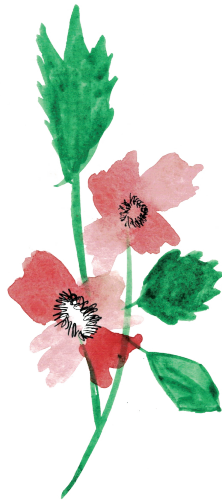


*Use this space to make your list of achievements!*



*If I can stop one heart from breaking,  
I shall not live in vain;  
If I can ease one life the aching,  
Or cool one pain,  
Or help one fainting robin  
Unto his nest again,  
I shall not live in vain.*

*Emily Dickinson*





Ciao! Viki



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