



SHARSHERET

TEAL AND PINK SHABBAT®
IN YOUR COMMUNITY



HOW MY

**SHARSHERET
LINK** SAVED MY LIFE

SHARSHERET

LEADS THE GENETICS CONVERSATION



Sharsheret is leading the hereditary cancer conversation across the country. Sharsheret's Genetics Program Coordinator, Peggy Cottrell, is ready to address your and your family's questions about knowing your family history, BRCA genetics, and how it affects you.

To schedule a free confidential call with our genetic counselor, email genetics@sharsheret.org

CANCER GENETICS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

1

1 in 40 Ashkenazi Jews - men and women - carries a BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutation.

2

Multi-gene panel testing can identify mutations in genes other than BRCA1 or BRCA2, such as CHEK2 or PALB2, that predispose you to a variety of cancers.

3

Everyone who carries a cancer gene mutation has a 50% chance of passing it on to the next generation.

4

If results of genetic testing in a family are negative, it is still possible that the cancer in the family is inherited, resulting from genetic mutations that we do not yet know how to identify.

“ I FELT AN OVERWHELMING NEED FOR INFORMATION



From the moment I found out I was a BRCA gene carrier, I felt an overwhelming need for information and to connect with others in similar situations.

I was in my twenties, about to get married, and I needed to know more. Thankfully, I was

already getting medical and family support, but Sharsheret really gave me the help I needed to make the decision to undergo biannual screening to stay 'one step ahead.' As time went on, having undergone numerous biopsies and wanting to focus on growing my family, I had begun living a life consumed by fear. I decided to do what I hadn't imagined I would ever consider, and underwent a prophylactic double mastectomy.

I chose a dream team of doctors and with the support of Sharsheret, I began this next journey. I maintained my privacy throughout that period of time, not putting my story out there for all to hear.

However, I have now come to feel a sense of pride, relief and confidence in my decision and the journey I went on as an individual, a young wife, and a mother. The more I shared, the more people opened up and I realized the importance of paying it forward. Everyone's journey is different, but feeling like you are standing tall on love, support and generosity of spirit, I believe, is the best way to move forward, stay focused, and heal. - **Liora Tennenbaum**

“HOW MY SHARSHERET LINK SAVED MY LIFE”

Adina Ciment

Two years ago, as I was recovering from surgery and measuring my days in Percocet doses and nightly ziti platters, a friend of mine dropped by with a present. It was a lovely necklace with an equally lovely charm that was engraved with swirly curly cheerful letters: “Enjoy the Journey.”

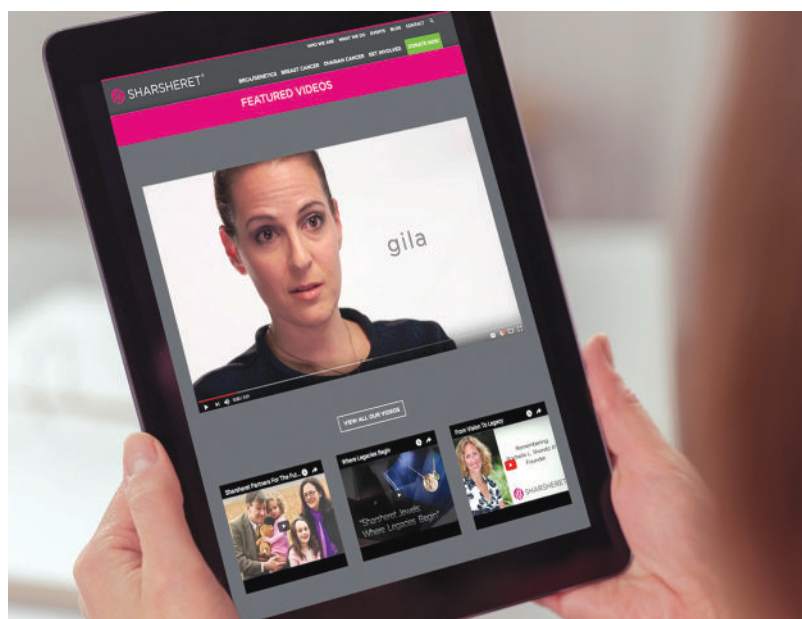
The well-intentioned sentiment was supposed to be inspiring, but seeing as how the only journey I was taking at that time consisted solely of moving from my bed to a recliner and back again, the charm and its message were tragically ill-timed. To make matters worse, it came in a pretty little pink box with the breast cancer ribbon insignia on the cover.

I tell you this story because while you may know what Sharsheret does in theory, I have been on the side that has seen Sharsheret’s actual, boots-on-the-ground work. Sharsheret was not the place I went to for little pink boxes and cutesy charms. [Sharsheret was a voice of reason when I was thrown into a world of chaos. A place that helped me navigate a dark time. And remarkably, in many ways Sharsheret saved my life.](#)

I’m not speaking in hyperbole here. Months before I was handed the cancer card, I was fighting doctors and surgeons who told me that the large area of atypical cells they found in my breast increased my chances of one day developing breast cancer. I didn’t buy it. And I wasn’t about to jump into major surgery on a doctor’s “maybe” prediction. I had statistics on my side. The odds were in my favor. I figured at best, I would add kale to my diet. Keep up with my mammograms.

It was a video on the Sharsheret website that pushed me to undergo the surgery that eventually revealed the hidden invasive cancer which had not been caught on mammogram, ultrasound, or MRI. And when Gila, the woman in the video who later became my Sharsheret Link, spoke to me for the first time, I told her that she saved my life. That the story she shared about how her cancer was discovered - in the same backwards way as mine - was the cautionary tale I played out in my mind every time I went to a new doctor looking for someone to tell me I didn’t need surgery. I kept thinking, what if there really is cancer growing that no one can see? What if I am Gila? And apparently, I was.

So when I say Sharsheret saved my life, it started there.



But Sharsheret saves lives in more ways than that. Sometimes, saving a life is simply reaching out, letting someone know she is not alone. There are numerous breast cancer organizations but only one that understands what it means to go to the *mikvah* (ritual bath) after a bilateral mastectomy. Or how to prepare for *Pesach* (Passover) when the medications and side effects have you more exhausted and nauseous than you ever thought possible. Or who understands how difficult it is to go to services on Rosh Hashana when the words of the prayer, “who will live and who will die,” are suddenly very real and close to home. Sharsheret knows how to speak to the woman who is crying into her *tehillim* (Psalms) as well as the woman who is raging at God, and Sharsheret knows that sometimes they are the same person.

Sharsheret is more than just a resource for women facing breast cancer. It is a vital part of the Jewish community. An organization that reminds us that we all are part of the chain - of the Sharsheret - linking each individual in the community.

[We are all meant to be the chain. The support. The strength. We are meant to be a Sharsheret.](#)



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“I went to a pink challah bake thinking that I would learn a new braid or something, I didn’t realize I would walk out understanding I actually need to start taking better care of myself. I went for the fun, but took away so much more.” - Sarah, 41

Organize a Teal and Pink Shabbat® and raise breast and ovarian cancer awareness in your community. This special programming is designed to educate women and men about the increased risk of hereditary breast and ovarian cancer among Jewish families, the measures they can take to protect their health, the impact of breast and ovarian cancer on the Jewish community, and Sharsheret’s life-saving resources.

Contact us to get started. We will work closely with you to create meaningful Shabbat programming.

GET INVOLVED IN YOUR COMMUNITY



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SHARSHERET®
 Your Jewish Community Facing Breast Cancer

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