

Board Mentoring Handbook

DIVERSITY
diversity Diversity *diversity*
DIVERSITY
DIVERSITY *diversity*
D **DIVERSITY** *diversity* DIVERSITY



The Maytree Foundation



Ontario



Acknowledgement

This handbook is the result of the efforts of a number of individuals and the foundation would like to thank all of them for their dedication and commitment.

Heather McFarlane

Consultant and author of the handbook

Ann Decter

Editor

abcGTA Advisory Committee members

Amanuel Melles

United Way of Greater Toronto

Janice Chu

United Way of York Region

Sharon Douglas

United Way of Peel Region

Norm King

Altruvest Charitable Services

Kal Tobias

Altruvest Charitable Services

Rose Van Rotterdam

Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration

Paulina Maciulis

Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)

Joanne Hamill

Strategic and Corporate Policy Unit, City of Toronto

About Maytree

The Maytree Foundation is a private Canadian charitable foundation established in 1982, committed to reducing poverty and inequality in Canada and to building strong civic communities. The Foundation seeks to accomplish its objectives by identifying, supporting and funding ideas, leaders and leading organizations that have the capacity to make change and advance the common good.

www.maytree.com

© 2007 THE MAYTREE FOUNDATION.

Table of Contents

Contents	Page
1. Introduction to Board Mentoring	1
Definitions	3
Benefits	5
2. Program Structure	7
Leadership Commitment	7
Selection of Mentors	8
Selection of Board Members to be Mentored	8
3. The Mentoring Toolkit	9
4. Quick Guide to Mentoring Activities	11
5. Roadmap For a Mentoring Relationship	13
6. Evaluation	17
7. Appendix A – Elements of a Board Manual	18
8. References	19
9. Additional Resources	20



"Boards do not need to do anything different for people who are different. They do need, however, to build a board culture that is welcoming, uses the talents of its members and has clear standards and expectations for all board members."

**Governance Matters:
Brown Bag Lunch Roundtable**

"By incorporating diverse perspectives and ideas boards also find better solutions to complex problems and enjoy increased innovation."

**Inclusive Governance in Practice:
Characteristics and Strategies**

Introduction to Board Mentoring

Why Mentoring?

Mentoring is an effective and inexpensive means of preparing new board members for full participation in the work of the board. A complement to board governance training and board orientation, mentoring is an efficient way of sharing knowledge and developing cross-functional understanding. It reduces the learning curve of new board members and allows them to engage productively early in their board tenure.

Like a new staff member, a new board member needs time to learn the ropes, become familiar with the culture of the board and the organization and gain awareness of the issues. While all new board members have expertise, that expertise may not be in the area of board governance. Every board is different and each incoming member must learn how it operates.

The National Study of Board Governance Practices in the Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector in Canada (2006) indicated that on fully engaged boards, new board members take less time to become effective participants. It also noted that an orientation session contributes to board members feeling more engaged.

Definitions

In the context of a board, mentoring is a relationship between a more experienced board member

- a mentor - who provides knowledge, advice and support to a newer member. The new member

- a mentee – is seeking information and knowledge about the workings of the board and the organization.

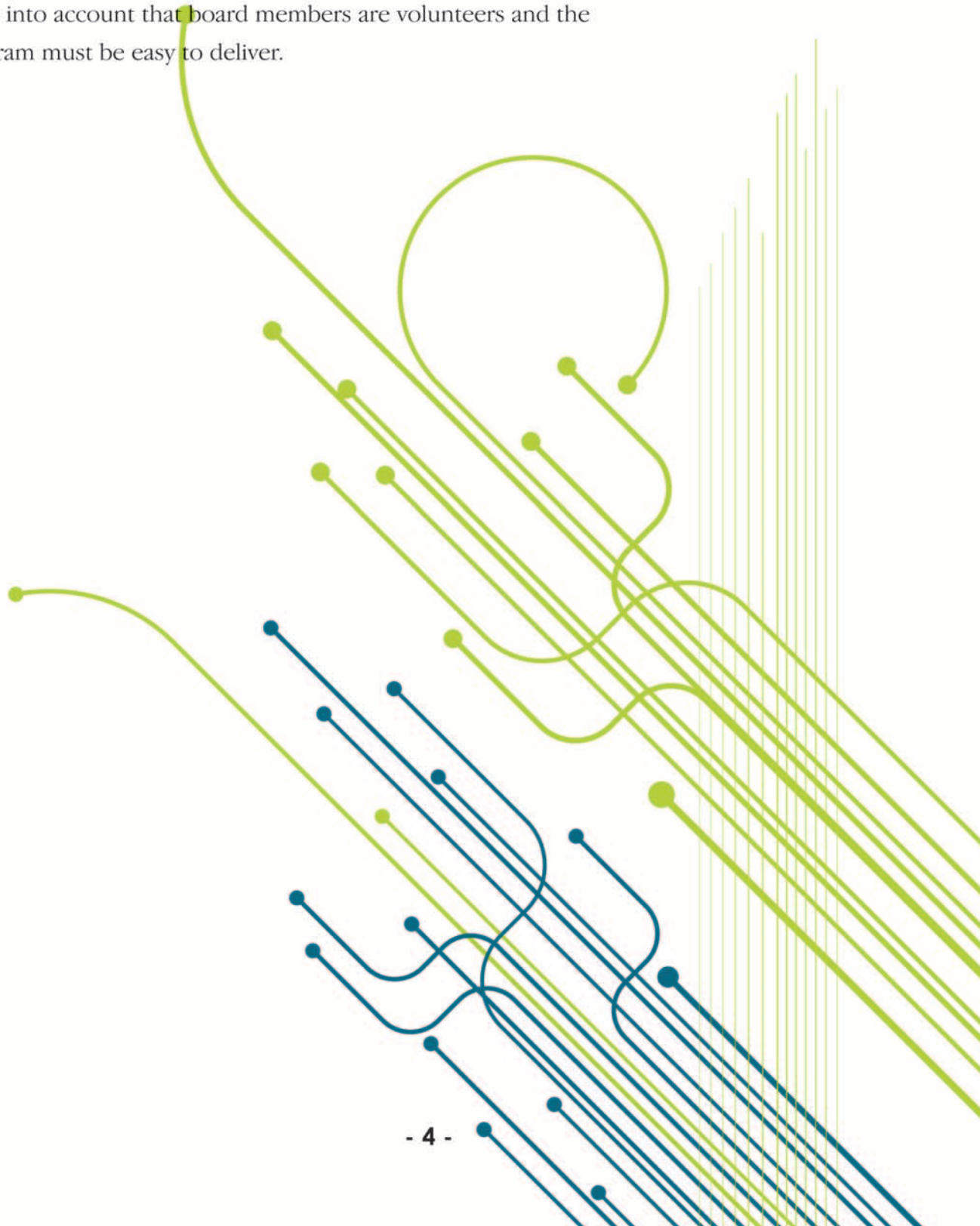
Models of mentoring range from extremely formal to informal relationships. Which model is best for an organization will depend upon the organization's needs, goals and resources.

Formal mentoring is a structured program with a specific timeframe. Mentors and new board members are matched, trained and sign a partnership agreement, which is a written agreement outlining their mutual expectations and the new board member's learning goals. The relationship is monitored and the experience evaluated. Informal mentoring is a spontaneous relationship that unfolds naturally when a less experienced person seeks advice from someone more experienced and knowledgeable.

This handbook outlines a pragmatic mentoring program that a non-profit board can use to integrate new board members quickly and effectively. The board mentoring program outlined here is:

A semi-structured, one-on-one mentoring relationship between a new board member and a more experienced board member that takes place face-to-face, via telephone and on-line over a six month period for a total of nine hours.

This semi-structured program incorporates an evaluation that allows tracking of measurable outcomes. Unlike some other forms of mentoring, it is goal-focused and emphasizes the learning objectives of the new board member, or mentee. The design takes into account that board members are volunteers and the program must be easy to deliver.



Benefits

Mentoring creates a welcoming climate for newer members, especially new board members from different backgrounds, cultures or with different life experiences. Mentoring is a win-win strategy. New board members, existing board members and the board as a whole, all profit.

The benefits to new board members who become mentees are:

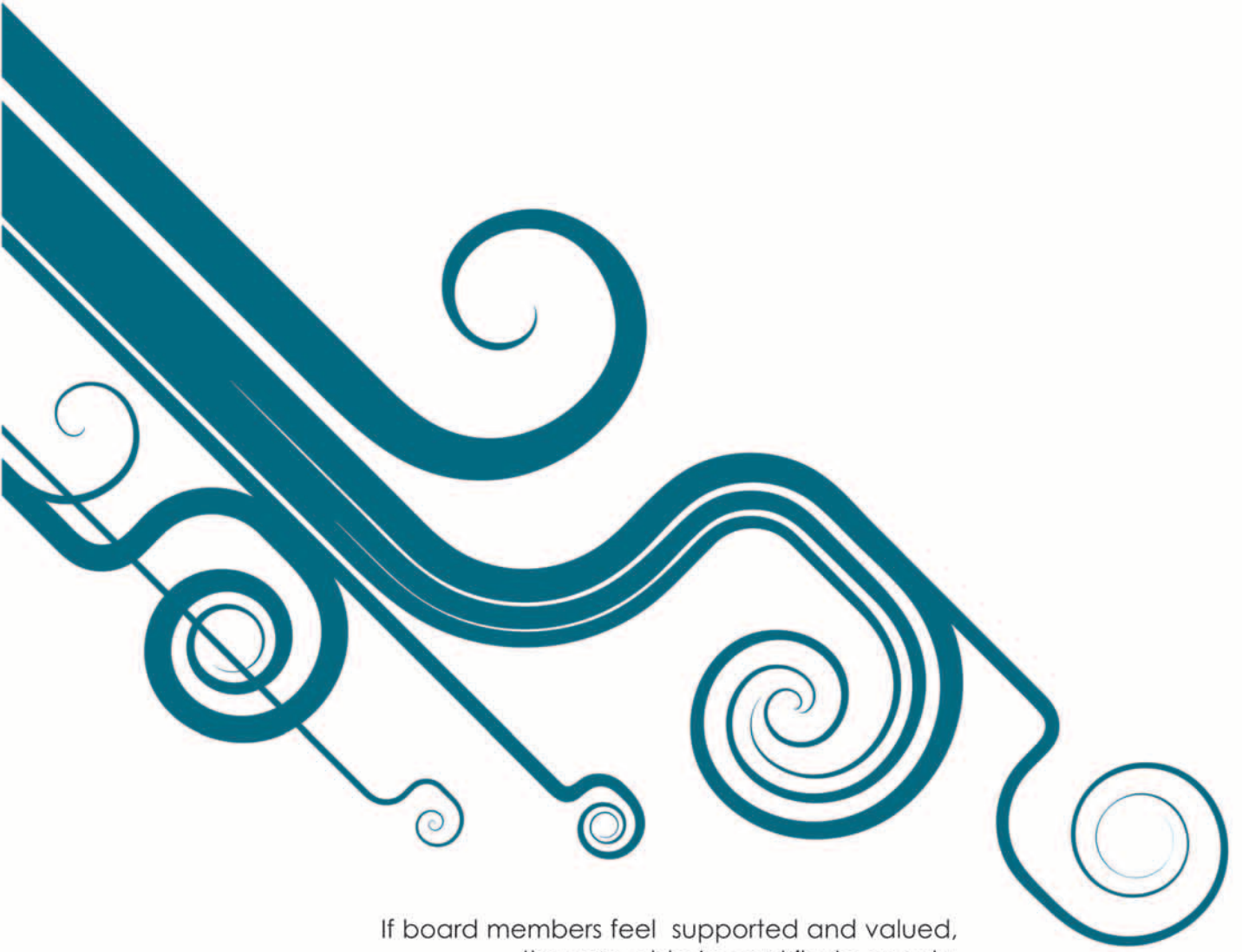
- A more immediate connection to the organization and ability to contribute to the board sooner;
- Better oriented to board service and more empowered to engage with the board and its work;
- Able to contribute more effectively to the governance of the organization;
- Seeing the big picture and surrounding context and more able to make informed decisions;
- Building social capital within the board structure;
- Learning to take a leadership role on the board.

The benefits to existing board members who become mentors are:

- Learning from a fresh point of view;
- New insights;
- New lines of communication resulting in increased levels of trust;
- New contacts.

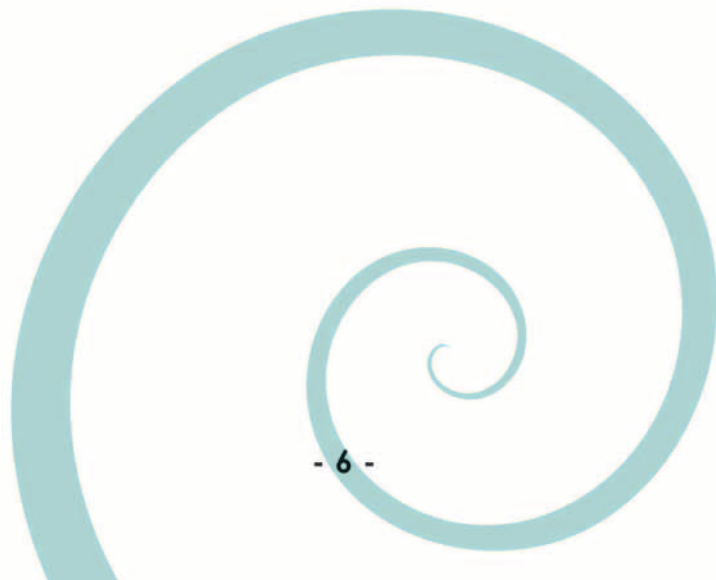
The benefits of a mentoring program to the board as a whole are:

- Retention of board members;
- More cohesive board;
- More productive board meetings, meeting time is not spent acclimatizing new members;
- Minimizes the risk of errors in judgment by new board members;
- Allows for succession planning.



If board members feel supported and valued,
they are able to contribute openly.

Inclusive Governance in Practice: Characteristics and Strategies



Leadership Commitment

A mentoring initiative is more likely to succeed if it is valued and supported by senior members of the board and senior management of the organization.

The chair of the board is often a natural champion for development of the program. In mentoring, a champion is an influential advocate within the organization who acts as a spokesperson for the program. The chairs of the board and/or the executive director are responsible for the selection of mentors and mentees.

It can be a great help for the new trustee to have someone s/he can call on with questions and concerns who has experienced being a new trustee at some point.

**Trustee Recruitment Toolkit,
National Council of
Voluntary Organizations, UK**



Program Structure

The mentoring program outlined in this handbook is designed for easy implementation by a board looking to use mentoring as a tool to engage and retain diverse board members.

Two components are essential to a successful mentoring program:

1. A strong commitment to the program from board leaders and senior management;
2. Clear selection criteria for mentors and for new board members to be mentored.

Beginning with two or three mentoring pairs rather than a single pair is recommended, as it allows mentors to discuss their experiences with each other, particularly when the program is in its initial stage.

Selection of Mentors


These criteria are recommended when selecting experienced board members to become mentors:

- Minimum of one year on the board;
- Good knowledge of the strategic priorities of the organization;
- Good knowledge and understanding of governance;
- Willingness to share knowledge;
- Experience in leadership roles on the board or board committee(s);
- Commitment to increasing diversity on the board;
- Comfortable with the time commitment of nine hours over six months;
- Understanding of challenges faced by new board members.

Selection of Board Members to be Mentored

These criteria are recommended when selecting new board members to become mentees:

- Recently appointed to the board (less than six months);
- Some prior experience on community boards or committees or other experience of community leadership;
- Commitment to increasing their capacity as board members;
- Motivated to take leadership on the board;
- Willingness to commit the time to increase their effectiveness on the board.



Mentors help..... Mentees do!

Gordon F. Shea
The Mentoring Organization

The Mentoring Toolkit

A mentoring relationship is an exchange of ideas and knowledge that creates a shared understanding for both the mentor and mentee. It's a two-way street, based on mutual respect, in which both gain from the experience. One key to success in mentoring is to set SMART goals; an acronym for Specific, Measurable, Attainable learning goals that have expected Results within a Time limit.

Organizations have engaged in mentoring for decades and countless articles and books have been written on the topic. The literature shows that the characteristics of effective mentors, mentees and the elements of successful relationships are consistent.

The characteristics of an effective mentor are:

- Ability to see the mentee's point of view;
- Dependable and consistent;
- Ability to help the mentee to deeper thinking;
- Ability to give constructive feedback;
- Honest.

The characteristics of an effective mentee are:

- Open to feedback;
- Communicates clearly;
- Follows through on plans;
- Listens;
- Honest;
- Establishes SMART learning goals.

The characteristics of successful mentoring relationships are:

- Establishing clear boundaries around confidentiality, frequency of contact, context for interaction, type of communication;
- Setting an agenda for each meeting (even though other priorities may arise);
- Maintaining confidentiality;
- Articulating mutual expectations clearly;
- Measuring progress against mentee's learning goals.



Why a Quick Guide?

- Appeals to holistic learners
 - Allows for meeting planning and agenda setting as needed
- 

Quick Guide to Mentoring Activities

Time: Nine hours over a period of six months

Methods: In person, online and via telephone

Mentor Tasks

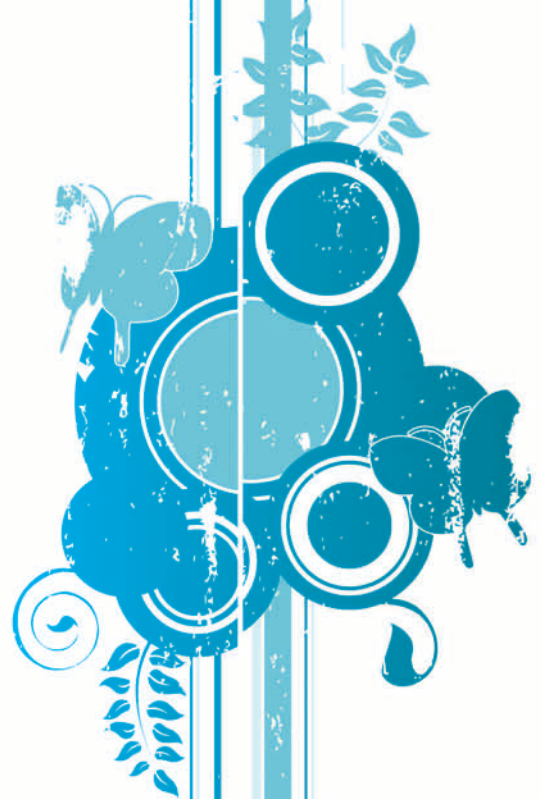
- Share articles, books and websites on board governance with your mentee.
- Discuss your history with the board and how things get done on the board and within the organization.
- Meet with your mentee half an hour before a board meeting to clarify agenda items.
- Telephone your mentee after the board meeting for reaction and to answer questions on issues.
- Provide feedback to mentee on board committees and process for joining a committee.
- Take mentee on a tour of organizations premises and introduce to staff.

Mentee Tasks

- Read and discuss materials recommended by your mentor, and share materials you've read.
- Select a topic from the board manual that you want to learn more about and discuss with your mentor.
- Make a list of unfamiliar board terminology and ask your mentor to explain.
- Observe meetings of committees and discuss which to join with your mentor.
- Ask your mentor about governance training sessions for new board members.
- Ask your mentor how to add items to the board agenda.
- Ask your mentor what the procedure is for making a presentation on an agenda item.

Why a Roadmap?

- Appeals to the analytical thinker
- Covers all essential components of board governance
- Keeps mentoring process on track



Roadmap For a Mentoring Relationship

Time: Nine hours over a period of six months

Methods: In person, online and via telephone

MONTH 1		Meeting 1	Meeting 2
	2 meetings	In person -1 Hour Topic: Introduction	Online or telephone - 1/2 Hour Topic: Bylaws, Policies, Codes, Liability and Officers Insurance
	GOAL Get to Know Each Other and the Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet face-to-face and get to know each other • Share previous board experiences • Share expectations of each other • Mentee outlines learning goals for the mentoring relationship • Mentor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reviews basic information about the organization and answers questions - explains board's governance model - clarifies roles of board and management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentor arranges for mentee to receive copies of bylaws, policies and codes, e.g. resolving conflict, insurance coverage • Mentor clarifies content and context
	SUGGESTED READING/ RESOURCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Imperfect Board Member: Discovering the Seven Disciplines of Governance Excellence.</i> Jim Brown. 2006. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco. • <i>Governing for Results: A Director's Guide to Good Governance.</i> Mel D. Gill. 2005. Trafford Publishing, Victoria, BC. • <i>Board Manual (see Appendix A)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Board Policy Documents</i>
MONTH 2		Meeting 3	Meeting 4
	2 meetings	In person -1 Hour Topic: Board Contacts, Communication, Roles and Responsibilities	In person -1 Hour Topic: Meetings
	GOAL Board Structure and Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentee reviews organization chart • Discuss board's responsibility to oversee organization • Mentor discusses fiduciary and legal duties as a board member • Mentor answers questions on interpreting financial statements • Mentor outlines lines of communication and information flow between board members, committees, Executive Director, management and staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the types of meetings including board meetings, committee meetings, AGM • Set up a meeting for 30 minutes prior to next board meeting to outline rules of procedure and agenda
	SUGGESTED READING/ RESOURCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Orientation Package – Organization Chart</i> • <i>Board Manual</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Board Manual</i>

MONTH 3	Meeting 5 Online or telephone - 1/2 Hour Topic: Committee	Meeting 6 In person - 1/2 Hour Topic: Preparing for a Board Meeting
2 meetings		
GOAL Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss committee most suitable for mentee to serve on • Mentor introduces committee chair to mentee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentor outlines rules of procedure for board meeting • Discuss board meeting agenda
SUGGESTED READING/ RESOURCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Orientation Package</i> – List of committees, chairs and members of committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Board Manual</i> • <i>Meeting Agenda</i>
MONTH 4	Meeting 7 In person -1 Hour Topic: Strategic and Operational Plans and Reports	Meeting 8 In person -1 Hour Topic: Strategic and Operational Plans and Mentee Learning Goals
2 meetings		
GOAL Strategic and Operational Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss organization's vision, mission statement, and values of organization as they relate to strategic plan • Mentor discusses goals and objectives of board • Mentor shares internal and external reports relative to strategic and operational plans • Mentee reviews list of programs • Mentee reviews list of funding partners, memorandum of understandings and funding agreements outlined in board manual • Discuss history of funding relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and discuss outstanding questions on strategic and operational plans and/or reports • Assess mentoring relationship; what's working, what's not • Revisit mentee's SMART learning goals
SUGGESTED READING/ RESOURCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Board/organization Strategic Plan</i> • <i>Board Workplan & priorities</i> • <i>Reports from any strategic planning activities</i> • <i>Most recent audited Financial Report</i> • <i>Minutes of previous meetings</i> • <i>Program Descriptions</i> • <i>Board Manual</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Board Manual/ Reports</i>

MONTH 5	Meeting 9 In person - 1 Hour Topic: HR Policies
1 meeting	
GOAL Organization Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentee reviews all HR policies for employees and volunteers • Discuss any issues regarding HR policies • Mentor shares background information regarding any existing collective agreement
SUGGESTED READING/ RESOURCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Board Manual</i> • <i>Policy Documents</i> • <i>HR Council for the Voluntary/Non Profit Sector www.hrcouncil.ca</i>
MONTH 6	Meeting 10 In person -1 1/2 Hour Topic: Evaluation and Closure
1 meeting	
GOAL Evaluation of Board Performance and Closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss board evaluation process • Celebrate mentoring relationship • Discuss what to do differently next time • Discuss any further training mentee should pursue
SUGGESTED READING/ RESOURCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Previous Board Evaluations</i> • <i>Mentor/Mentee Evaluations available at www.abcGTA.ca</i>

“Diverse boards tend to perform better on recognized measures of board effectiveness, in particular, they are better at creative problem solving...”

**Inclusive Governance in Practice:
Characteristics and Strategies**

Evaluation

Evaluation is an important tool in mentoring. It provides for continuous improvement and a means of identifying ways to increase effectiveness both at the individual and the board level. Feedback from participants helps establish best practices for mentoring.

By documenting what worked well and what did not through an evaluation, mentors and mentees provide guidelines for future mentoring partners. Feedback has multiple benefits.

It “encourages accountability in subtle and not-so-subtle ways.

It fosters ownership, nurtures commitment, and creates ongoing value for mentoring participants, mentoring programs, and organizations as a whole.” (Zachary: 2005, p. 129)

Both “increased emphasis on measuring effectiveness of boards” and “increased use of board self-assessments” have been identified as key trends in board governance practices in a national research study (The National Study of Board Governance Practices in the Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector in Canada: 2006, p.10). The researchers found that boards with fully engaged members also conducted formal board evaluations.

Mentor and Mentee Evaluation forms can be downloaded from www.abcgta.ca

Appendix A

Elements of a Board Manual

Introduction

- History of Organization
- Mission Statement
- Board Members
- Staff
- Contact Information
- Funding Background
- Calendar of Events

Governance

- Bylaws, Policies, Codes
- Insurance Coverage
- Governance Model
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Board Organization Chart
- Procedures
- Committees
- Strategic and Operational Plans

Minutes

- Current Year's Board Meetings
- Annual General Meeting

Reports

- Financial Reports and Contracts
- Executive Director's Report
- Committee Reports
- Auditor's Reports

Administrative Procedures

- HR Policies
- Collective agreements

Training and Education

- Orientation for new board Members
- Any ongoing support/workshops for all board members
- Evaluations

Miscellaneous



References and Bibliography

Ensher, E., Murphy, S. Power Mentoring: How Successful Mentors and Proteges Get the Most Out of Their Relationships. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005.

Johnson, W.B., Ridley, C.R. The Elements of Mentoring. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

Zachary, L. Creating a Mentoring Culture: The Organizations' Guide. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005.

Building a Board Member's Manual, Non-Profit Sector Leadership Program, Dalhousie University (2006).
www.communityleadership.net/resources/BuildingaBoardManual2006.pdf

Inclusive Governance in Practice: Characteristics and Strategies. Nonprofit Research Abridged 2.2 (2003).

Governance Matters®. Brown Bag Lunch Roundtable Event on May 17, 2006. Available as of November 2006 at www.governancematters.org.

National Study of Board Governance Practices in the Non-profit and Voluntary Sector in Canada. Strategic Leverage Partners Inc, 2006.

Additional Resources on Board Governance

Books

Training Your Board of Directors: A Manual for the CEOs, Board Members, Administrators and Executives of Corporations, Associations, Non-Profit and Religious Organizations. Arlyne Diamond. 2005. Productive Publications, Toronto.

The Art of Trusteeship: The Nonprofit Board Member's Guide to Effective Governance. Candace Widmer and Susan Houchin. 2000. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Websites

Altruvest Charitable Services
www.altruvest.org

Leadership Development Services
www.leaderservs.com/mentoring-boarddev.html

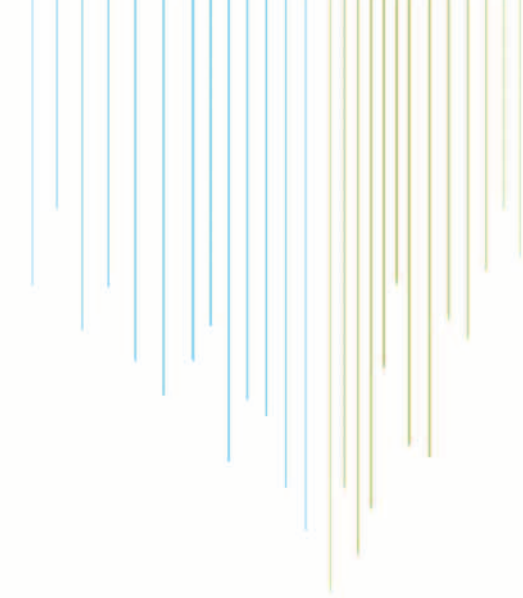
Additional Resources on Mentoring

Books

The Mentee's Guide to Mentoring. Norman H. Cohen. 1999. HRD Press, Amherst.

Websites

Mentoring Canada www.mentoringcanada.ca/rresources/training.html



abcGTA is an initiative of The Maytree Foundation,
a private charitable Canadian foundation.

The initiative works to ensure that
the governance bodies of public agencies,
boards and commissions (ABCs) as well as voluntary
organizations reflect the diversity of people who live
and work in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).



The Maytree Foundation

