

Bite Size Pieces

Learning Topic: Board Governance Styles – Module #1

1. Suggested Prerequisite(s) – None – this is the first module

2. Learning Objective

Discuss the Various Styles of Community Legal Clinic Boards and Understand How they Function

This is a good way to establish common ground among the members of your board as you proceed to discuss governance matters. As the session leader you will draw out ideas from the group about the types of boards found in the not-for-profit sector and ask the group to identify the governance type which they believe most closely resembles your board

Note – Relax! You don't need to be a trained facilitator to run this session – everything you need is provided with this module.

3. Content Covered

Key aspects of Governance
Four possible Governance Styles
Your Clinic's Governance Style

Tip – If food is being served, you might consider having the board start the module while eating lunch or dinner.

4. Learning Outline

A few days before the session, and again on the day of the session, read Parts 1 and 2 (pages 15 to 43) of

Bite Size Pieces

Learning Topic: Board Governance Styles – Module #1

“Governing for Results: A Director’s Guide to Good Governance” by Mel Gill.

At the start of the session, begin by asking the group that they think governance means, encouraging them to draw on their own experiences. (5 minutes)

Show the group the flip chart and tell them that according to Gill, the four aspects of board governance are Accountability, Transparency, Predictability and Participation. Ask the group to share what these words mean to them. Capture their ideas on the flip chart. Read out and write up the Gill definitions on the same flip chart. (5 minutes)

Hand out the “Four Possible Governance Styles for Community Legal Clinics”. Discuss the four styles and ask the board members to identify which one they think most closely resembles their clinic board. Explain why this is the style of governance chosen by your clinic board. (10 minutes)

Note – Many community clinic board members are serving on, or have previously served on, other boards. You will find that many people around the table have experiences you can draw upon.

For information on the handouts and the book “Governing for Results: A Director’s Guide to Good Governance” by Mel Gill, please see the “equipment and Materials” section.

Bite Size Pieces

Learning Topic: Board Governance Styles – Module #1

5. Equipment and Materials

Paper and Pencil

Flip chart and Markers

Flip Chart - Sample of “Key Aspects of Governance”
(page 3)

Handout – “Four Possible Governance Styles” (page 4)

Reading Material – Parts 1 and 2 (pages 15 to 43) of
“Governing for Results: A Director’s Guide to Good
Governance” by Mel Gill

Note – the book “Governing for Results: A Director’s Guide to Good Governance” by Mel Gill can be ordered online from the BSWG website at www.onboardlegalclinics.org – on the Home Page, click on ‘Board Tools’ and choose ‘Bite Size Pieces’.

6. Timeframe

20 minutes

7. Facilitator Notes

Use this section to make your own notes about the session. Be sure to share anything of an evaluation nature when the session is over.

Bite Size Pieces

Learning Topic: Board Governance Styles – Module #1

Use this section to make your own notes about the session. Be sure to share anything of an evaluation nature when the session is over.

Bite Size Pieces

Learning Topic: Board Governance Styles – Module #1

8. Results/Evaluation

Please make enough copies of the Evaluation form (page 5) and have each participant complete and hand in to you at the end of the session.

Note – Evaluation is an important part of our training success! Please ask all participants to complete an evaluation form.

9. Next Steps

Consider adding another Bite Size Piece module to your next agenda

Ask for a volunteer to lead the next session.

Encourage all board members to visit www.onboardlegalclinics.org to sign up for automatic updates on board learning and development.

Tip – Why not download the ‘Bite Size Pieces Board Training Grid’ which can be used to track what training has been covered and who has been a session leader?

Bite Size Pieces

Learning Topic: Board Governance Styles – Module #1

Session Leader: Create this flip chart without recording the bullet points provided under the heading “Mel Gill”. Once you have recorded the board’s definitions for each aspect – add the definitions provided in the Mel Gill Column.

	Our Board	Mel Gill
Accountability		Answerability - requirement to respond periodically Consequences - application of sanctions when required
Transparency		Timely access to information by stakeholders
Predictability		Clear laws, regulations and role definitions Uniform and effective enforcement
Participation		Involvement in planning, decisions and evaluation Provides for feedback by users

Learning Topic: Board Governance – Module One

Handout – Four Possible Governance Styles for Community Legal Clinics

The governance style of a board needs to reflect the unique interests of the organization and the clients it serves. Community clinics are grassroots organizations that have most often been established through local initiatives and their board members are expected to understand, affirm and support, in principle and in practice, the purpose and objectives of the clinic.

Here are four different governance styles that may be found in a community clinic –

1. The Conventional Board

This type of board focuses on governance and oversight and is responsible for determining the vision, mission and strategic imperatives of the clinic. The board delegates management responsibility to the ED who may report to the Chair or the board as a whole. The board works cooperatively with the staff to ensure that the strategies, goals and objectives are carried out and provides advice and support when appropriate. This type of board may have committees or task forces to deal with matters specific to operations (e.g. Finance, Law Reform, Board Nominations Committee etc.)

2. Policy Governance Board (The Carver Model)

This type of board focuses on governance and oversight and is responsible for determining the vision, mission and strategic imperatives of the clinic. The board focus is on the end results to be achieved and the

Learning Topic: Board Governance – Module One

Handout – Four Possible Governance Styles for Community Legal Clinics

manner in which staff will help achieve them. The board works as a whole and speaks with one voice with the

mandate of the ED clearly defined and that individual reporting to the whole board. This type of board may have committees or task forces to deal with matters specific to operations.

3. Working/Operational Board

This type of board has some responsibilities for the day to day operations of the clinic, in addition to providing governance, policy and general direction to employees. This is sometimes found in an organization that is just starting up and has few staff so must rely on committed volunteers. This type of board is less likely to have committees, as board members are actively engaged in carrying out the work of the organization. In this type of organization there may not be an ED or senior staff person in place.

4. Collective

A collective is a group of like-minded people working towards a specific goal who share the same values and philosophical mind-set. The individuals within the collective have responsibility to define and support the basic philosophy of working as a collective and staff may have a strong voice in governance matters.

Bite Size Pieces

Evaluation

Name of Clinic:

Module Name: Board Governance Styles

Date:

Module Number: One

About this Module

(To be completed by all participants and the session leader)

This material contributed to a better understanding of the topic

Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

The Content was relevant

Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

The content was organized and easy to follow

Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

The time spent on this module was worth it

Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

For an introductory session, the level of the content material was:

Too Advanced Just Right Too Basic

This module could be improved by:

Bite Size Pieces

Evaluation

About Bite Size Pieces Training

(To be completed by all participants and the session leader)

This is an easy and cost-effective way to learn

Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

I like making learning a board agenda topic

Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Everyone on the board should take a turn at leading a session

Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

About the Bite Size Pieces Facilitation

(To be completed by the session leader)

I found the facilitation notes and material easy to follow

Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

I enjoyed my role as session leader

Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Session Leader. Please provide a copy of this evaluation form to each participant and ask that it be completed and returned to you at the end of the session.

Tabulate all results on a separate sheet and fax to the BSWG at: 1-866-674-6714. You can also send an email of the results to: contact@onboardlegalclinics.org