



**CAPACITYCANADA**

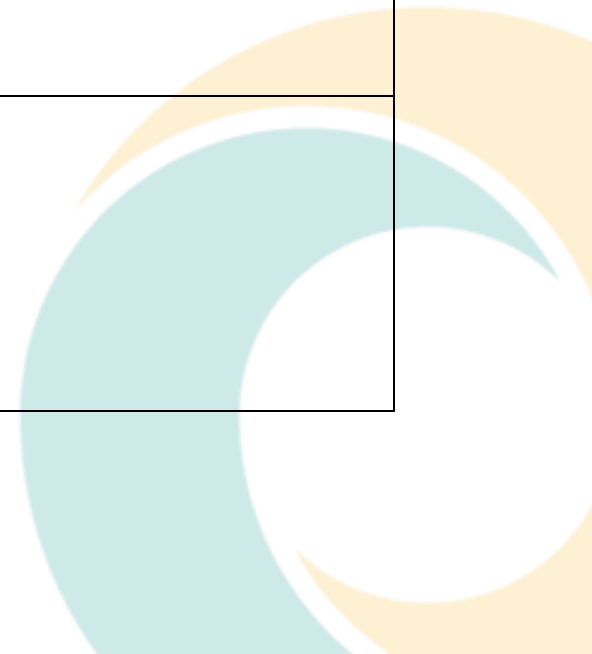
## Board Readiness Assessment to Live an Inclusive Culture

### Step #1: Instructions

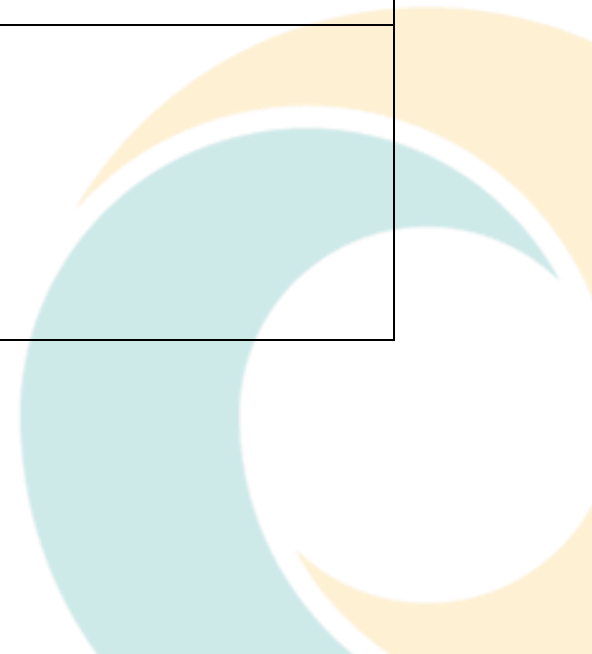
Each board member should complete this assessment tool, rating each of the 15 items on the scale from 4-1, providing any evidence they notice to support their rating. The completed assessments should be compiled. The averaged score may be instructive, however, more useful is the range of scores offered. For example, if four board members rate the items at its highest rating of 4 and one member identifies that same item as a one or zero, that offers a perspective that there is not a level playing field at the board table. The range is more important than the averaged scores. Once the assessment result has been compiled, the board will want to discuss the results and what those results mean in terms of the board's readiness to truly be inclusive. Once that meaning has been established, the board should create a clear and prioritized plan to move itself forward toward living an inclusive culture.

## Step #1: Board Readiness Assessment to Live an Inclusive Culture

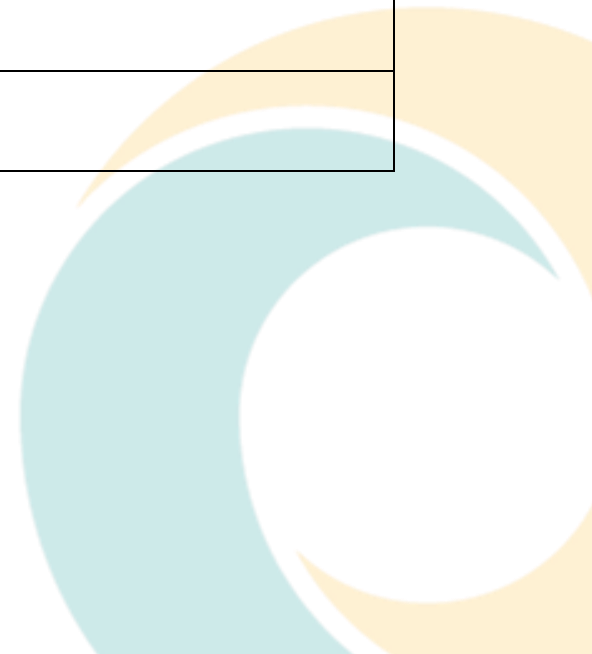
		Rating System: 4=To a great extent; 3=To a moderate degree; 2=A Small Amount; 1= Not At All; 0=Not Applicable					
		4	3	2	1	0	What evidence demonstrates your response?
<u>1</u>	We recruit board candidates based on an established criteria that offers equity of opportunity.						
<u>2</u>	Our board has an adaptable hierarchy in alignment with its expressed aims/goals, rather than a traditional hierarchy based in power.						
<u>3</u>	Our board regularly engages in trust building work and assesses its own trustworthiness.						
<u>4</u>	Our board demonstrates an intentional culture of accountability around respect and inclusion within its own processes as well as assuring accountability to these values throughout the organization.						



5	Our board hears all the relevant perspectives around the table before forming opinions and diving into discussion or dialogue about the issues on the agenda.						
6	Our board intentionally creates a safe space for people to authentically share their perspectives and opinions.						
7	Our board intentionally works toward deep listening to each other, encouraging and accepting the authentic self of those around the table.						
8	Our board regularly discusses the assumptions that we hold in addressing our issues.						
9	Each member of our board practices inquiry before advocacy. Each member demonstrates a value for curiosity about opinions or perspectives shared in a non-threatening manner.						



<a href="#"><u>10</u></a>	When conflict is present, our board navigates and resolves conflict in a healthy manner.						
<a href="#"><u>11</u></a>	Our board engages in ethical dialogue centered around a human rights approach.						
<a href="#"><u>12</u></a>	All board members feel empowered in their interactions with each other.						
<a href="#"><u>13</u></a>	All board members have a deep appreciation and intentionally consider the unique perspectives shared in dialogue. There is forgiveness and learning when subtle acts of exclusion are made.						
<a href="#"><u>14</u></a>	Every board member's strengths and talents are known, recognized and celebrated.						
<a href="#"><u>15</u></a>	There is clarity in board member roles and responsibilities.						



## Step #2: Board Readiness with Strategies to Improve

### Instructions:

Once the Board Readiness Assessment result has been compiled, the board will want to discuss the results and what those results mean in terms of the board's readiness to truly be inclusive. Once that meaning has been established, the Board should create a clear and prioritized plan to move itself forward toward living an inclusive culture. The strategies in the second part provided here are intended to give some direction as to potential methods to employ that could improve the Board's Readiness for Inclusive Governance.

	Readiness Criteria	Strategies to Improve Readiness
1	We recruit board candidates based on an established criteria that offers equity of opportunity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a strategic criteria for candidate recruitment that will further the board's strategic vision.</li> <li>• Assess the spectrum of diversity represented in terms of social circles, skill sets.</li> <li>• Create a succession plan for board seats to assure equity of opportunity to serve from new segments of the community.</li> <li>• Assure a fair and objective review of a candidate's strengths and opportunities to contribute value to our board only against our stated criteria.</li> </ul>
2	Our board has an adaptable hierarchy in alignment with its expressed aims/goals, rather than a traditional hierarchy based in power.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The board conducts its own assessment of "colonial" practices that need to be adapted to assure there is no power imbalance. Consider:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Does the Chair act as though the position holds more power than the full board holds? (The chair does not have higher authority but has a differentiated job to do in assuring the integrity of governance in the organization.)</li> <li>○ Do the bylaws state that the officers have more power than the full board does? (If so, change the bylaws to</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		<p>assure that all board members are equals. Officers simply have a differentiated role to play to assure integrity in their assigned roles such as finance and documents.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Is there board policy established that states that the Executive Director is accountable to the full board? Is there policy that clearly states that the Chair is NOT the supervisor of the Executive Director, but rather a partner empowered to do the operational work.</li> </ul>
3	Our board regularly engages in trust building work and assesses its own trustworthiness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assure the board has properly educated itself and inculcated practices around concerns of trauma, intersectionality and emotional, social, vocational and moral safety.</li> <li>• Assure a board culture of learning so that all board members are operating from a level playing field of understanding of the issue.</li> </ul>
4	Our board demonstrates an intentional culture of accountability around respect and inclusion within its own processes as well as assuring accountability to these values throughout the organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assure an intentionality around respect and inclusion including evaluation of formal and informal processes at every meeting.</li> <li>• Assure all governing documents are reviewed for inclusive language.</li> <li>• Assure all processes have been reviewed for equity and inclusion.</li> <li>• Conduct regular assessments of inclusion and respectfulness with our board and committees.</li> <li>• Respond and initiate change processes when barriers for equity and inclusion are identified.</li> </ul>
5	Our board hears all the relevant perspectives around the table before forming opinions and diving into discussion or dialogue about the issues on the agenda.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assure the questions for discussion are posted on the agenda so that people can come prepared to share their initial perspective.</li> <li>• Board members need to practice suspending their judgment on issues until the conclusion of dialogue, thus allowing themselves to be informed by people with lived expertise.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chair might regularly ask, “Does anybody see this issue differently?” OR “Does anyone hold information that could better inform us on this issue?”</li> </ul>
6	Our board intentionally creates a safe space for people to authentically share their perspectives and opinions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assure the board honors the need for process to assure an inclusive dialogue, i.e. adjust the agenda to allow time for focused dialogue.</li> <li>• The Presider of the meeting needs to use quality facilitation skills to allow for quality process.</li> <li>• Assess at the end of each meeting whether there were moments that may have been unsafe for members.</li> </ul>
7	Our board intentionally works toward deep listening to each other, encouraging and accepting the authentic self of those around the table.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assure the board has time to process and dialogue in the creation of the meeting agenda.</li> <li>• Board members take ownership of the process to assure quality dialogue, assuring no individual or committee hinders its ability to hold deep and meaningful dialogue.</li> <li>• Board members engage in inquiry vs advocacy in the course of dialogue.</li> </ul>
8	Our board regularly discusses the assumptions that we hold in addressing our issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presider regularly asks about what assumptions are driving opinions shared by Board members.</li> <li>• The presider facilitates dialogue when assumptions expressed vary significantly.</li> </ul>
9	Each member of our board practices inquiry before advocacy. Each member demonstrates a value for curiosity about opinions or perspectives shared in a non-threatening manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The culture of the board is shared leadership rather than dependent on the presider to drive opinion sharing.</li> <li>• The board engages in self-assessment to create continuous process improvement.</li> <li>• The board seeks education and learning on how to improve engagement in group process and dialogue skills.</li> </ul>
10	When conflict is present, our board navigates and resolves conflict in a healthy manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individually and in group process, practice resolving conflict in three steps: acknowledge there is conflict, address (or name) the conflict, then resolve the conflict by finding areas of</li> </ul>

		agreement first, then exploring ways to bridge the areas of expressed disagreement.
11	Our board engages in ethical dialogue centered around a human rights approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In each topic of the agenda, the Presider asks what are the ethical issues surrounding this topic.</li> <li>• The board gains clarity and a shared value around the ethical issue, then places that value in the context of the issue.</li> </ul>
12	All board members feel empowered in their interactions with each other.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess if there is bullying behavior on the board. Address it.</li> <li>• Assess the facilitation of the group's process. Does everyone have the opportunity to express their opinions openly?</li> <li>• When an issue is to be discussed, assure everyone has an opportunity to share their initial perspective on that issue BEFORE dialogue begins. Do not allow discussion until all relevant perspectives have been expressed.</li> <li>• Add an agenda item "Comments for the Good of the Order" where board members acknowledge each other for thoughtful and impactful contributions to their understanding of issues.</li> </ul>
13	All board members have a deep appreciation and intentionally consider the unique perspectives shared in dialogue. There is forgiveness and learning when subtle acts of exclusion are made.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assure that everyone leaves a meeting whole.</li> <li>• Assure that the Board as a group is healthy and whole before adjourning a meeting.</li> <li>• When a mistake is made, the Presider should assure that the people involved have an opportunity to address it and forgive, likely in a private setting.</li> <li>• Alternatively, for the board to learn as a collective body, follow this process: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pause the action.</li> <li>2. Assume good intent.</li> <li>3. Explain why the action was paused; what was the subtle act of exclusion that occurred.</li> <li>4. Then acknowledge the feedback with gratitude.</li> <li>5. Replace defensiveness with curiosity and empathy.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>



		<p><b>6. Follow through and follow up to assure forgiveness and learning have taken place.</b></p> <p><i>This process is described in Subtle Acts of Exclusion by Tiffany Jana and Michael Baran © 2020, published by Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., California.</i></p>
14	Every board member's strengths and talents are known, recognized and celebrated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intentionally create a culture of gratitude and acknowledgement among the board.</li> <li>• Institute Comments for the Good of the Order as a regular feature on the meeting agenda. The comments offered should acknowledge people who contributed to one's learning AND/OR create an uplifting comment so that all people leave the meeting energized.</li> </ul>
15	There is clarity in board member roles and responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assure there is clear role delineation between the board's governing role and that of the operational organization.</li> <li>• Conduct an effective orientation and on-boarding process for new board members that includes the whole board.</li> <li>• Assure that the on-boarding process includes inclusive dialogue practices as well as general governance philosophy and procedures. Assure that all board members understand their role, rights and responsibilities in the process as well as in delivering governing results. <i>This is vocational safety.</i></li> </ul>

