



Ontario Centre of Excellence  
for Child and Youth  
Mental Health

Centre d'excellence de l'Ontario  
en santé mentale des  
enfants et des adolescents

Bringing People and Knowledge Together to Strengthen Care.  
Rassembler les gens et les connaissances pour renforcer les soins.

# Generative Governance - A Model for times of change

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# Objectives

- Defining Generative Governance
- Key Success Factors
- Implementing Generative Governance





# About us

We bring people and knowledge together to strengthen the quality and effectiveness of mental health services for children, youth and their families and caregivers.

## SERVICE AREA SUPPORT

strengthen skills and knowledge in key areas that lead to **improved outcomes**

## SYSTEM SUPPORT

provide consistent evidence-informed approaches that **enhance service planning and delivery**

## IMPACT AND INNOVATION

inspire excellence and innovation through **continuous learning, evolution and innovation**



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# Reference Material

## *The Practitioner's Guide to Governance as Leadership : Building High Performing Non-Profit Boards*

Cathy Trower



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# Three Modes of Governance

## Fiduciary

- oversight and policy; stewardship of assets; Can we afford it? Does the budget balance?

## Strategic

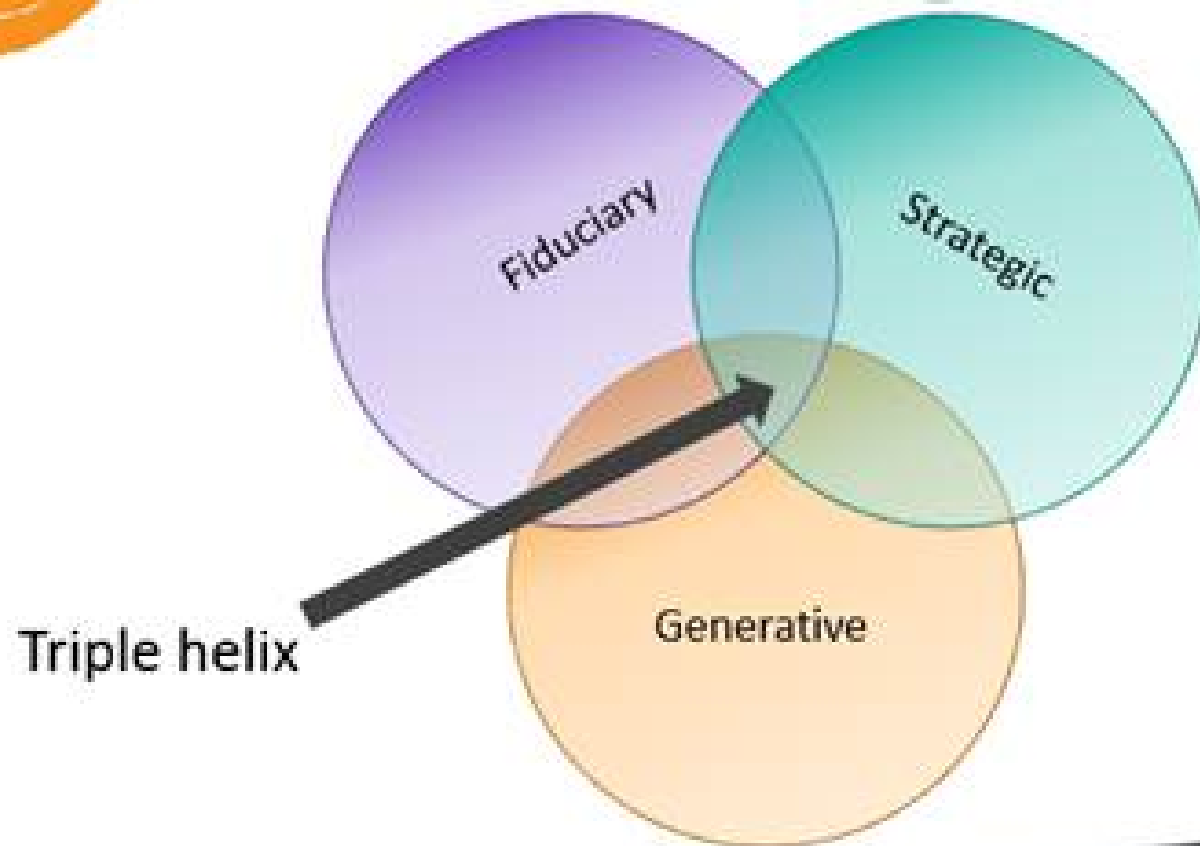
- prospective and reactive; strategic indicators or balanced score cards; What are the opportunities?

## Generative

- Framing questions; shifting the cognitive paradigm; direct answers not available; meaning matters; What bigger purpose is this serving?



# Three Modes Together



Triple helix



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# Working Together

- Not all issues or problems require all modes
- Most effective Boards can operate between all three modes
- Identify situations that require fiduciary, strategic and generative considerations (triple helix)





# What is a Generative Discussion Appropriate

- Ambiguity
- Saliency
- High Stakes
- Strife
- Irreversibility







# Framing Generative Governance

<b>Structural</b>	Focus on authority, rules, regulations, priorities, policies, procedures, plans, chain of command, performance and control
<b>Human Resources</b>	Relationship or fit between people and organizations; members needs, skills, fulfillment, commitment, and professional development
<b>Political</b>	Exercise of power, constituents, coalitions, conflict, compromise, bargaining, negotiating and allocation of resources
<b>Symbolic</b>	Organizational culture, meaning, beliefs, stories, rituals, ceremonies, myths, spirit and expressions





# Characteristics of Each mode

	FIDUCIARY	STRATEGIC	GENERATIVE
Nature of Leadership	Hierarchical	Analytical, visionary	Reflective Learners
Board's Purpose	Stewardship of assets	Partnership with management	Source of leadership for the organization
Board provides	Oversight	Foresight	Insight
Board's Core Work	Technical, oversee operations; ensure accountability; select and assess CEO; ratify policy	Analytical; shape strategy; review performance	Reconcile value propositions; manage accountability; discern and frame adaptive issues; think collectively; make sense of circumstances



# Characteristics of Each mode

	FIDUCIARY	STRATEGIC	GENERATIVE
CEO-Board Relationship	Hub and spoke	Strategic alliance	Think-tank peers
Key Question	What's wrong?	What's the plan?	What's the key question?
Strategy	Set by CEO; ratified by board	Board and CEO plan strategically together	Board and CEO think strategically together
Performance Metrics	Facts, figures, finances, reports	Strategic indicators, benchmarks, comparative data	Signs of learning and discerning



# Characteristics of Each mode

	FIDUCIARY	STRATEGIC	GENERATIVE
Agendas and Meetings	Standardized, staff-dominated, passive	Variable formats; strategy-driven; participative	Collective mind of board doing generative work
Group Dynamic	Great minds think alike	Reasonable people disagree agreeably	Great minds think differently
Ways of deciding	Reaching resolution; protocol and exception	Reaching consensus; group process	Perceiving, grasping, and grappling
Communication with constituents	Limited and ritualized, mostly to legitimate	Bilateral and episodic, mostly to advocate	Multilateral and ongoing, mostly to learn





# Traditional Board Competencies

- Financial (Accounting)
- Legal
- Human Resources
- Subject matter expertise (the area of the non-profit)
- Community/Family/Youth Representation





# Generative Board Competencies

- Critical thinking
- Broad Perspective
- Open communicator
- Open to new ideas and perspectives
- Curious
- Not defensive





# ED/CEO Competencies

- Holds that nothing is undiscussable
- Do not think they have all the right answers/questions
- Invites dissent
- Shares information, power and leadership opportunities
- Not wedded to the past, nor too far ahead, awareness of history, context and culture



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# Getting Started

## Survey on Board Service and Board Effectiveness

- Key focus areas are on oversight, strategy, insight, context, organization and operations, meeting functions, composition, personal experience, how well informed
- Often the responses will include areas for improvement such as:
  - more time deliberating issues of strategic important;
  - more engagement of board members;
  - more people expressing their opinions;
  - better board focus on performance and understanding performance







# Getting Started – Building Support

- Opportunity for Engagement
  - How do we get the best from each other
- Opportunity for moving from Good to Great
  - It's not about what is wrong with our board
- Embodiment of Core Organizational Values
  - How are we practicing our values in our governance discussions
- Reflection of Sector Best Practices
  - Asking thoughtful questions and valuing multiple perspectives





# Building Support (cont'd.)

- Incremental Experiment
  - Small steps, evaluate as you go, sense-making is at the heart of this
  - Shift the agenda, adding consent agenda for “straight forward” fiduciary approvals, add space for discussion
- Demonstrating Capacity to Change and Improve
  - What spurs growth, fosters innovation, takes advantage of opportunities
  - Evaluation within meetings – did we get the right questions?





# Working with the Three Modes

- **Working an issue either with the three modes sequentially**
  - Good when the board is not sure it has the right question, or when there is very fundamental questions about mission/markets/values to be settled first
- **Working with the three modes simultaneously**
  - Certainty over the right question and the decision implications
  - Considering operational issues, strategic issues, alternatives to meet the same end





# Ways to encourage critical thinking

- Leaders should take a neutral stance at the beginning
- Assign devil's advocates (counterarguments) and devil's inquisitors (questions)
- Break the board into small groups (even in 2) to work on the same problem
- Invite outside experts to act as sounding boards
- Hold "second chance" meetings where residual doubts are encouraged
- Use mind maps, paradoxical/wicked questions to surf assumptions





# Closing Thoughts

- Generative Governance is different in many ways
- Trimodal is not as easy as it seems
- Use a variety of techniques to get started
- Persistence – it requires work and a reflection at every meeting as to how the board is doing and what they are learning
- Practice – it is a change in behavior and we all like our own status quo; play the devil's advocate





# QUESTIONS?

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