

## Resource A: Glossary of Terms

**Accessible:** Everyone can comfortably sit at the table, have their voices and opinions equally heard, and be respected by all Members.

**Acronyms:** A shortened form of a group of words, usually made from the first letter of each word. For example, “CLO” stands for Community Living Ontario.

**Advertisement:** A way of drawing public attention to something, in writing or by using audio or video.

**Agenda:** A list of topics to be discussed at a meeting.

**Alternative Text:** A description of an image in a document that can be read aloud by screen readers.

**Board or Committee Mentor:** A peer mentor that has experience being on a Board of Directors or a Committee.

**Board or Committee Candidate:** A person others think might be a good Board or Committee Member, or who is interested in joining a Board or Committee.

**Board Committees:** A smaller group of Members, staff, and volunteers who work together to help the Board make decisions on special topics.

**Board of Directors:** A group of people who represent the interests of an organization. The Board provides guidance and advice to the CEO and executive team.

**Board or Committee Overview Information Sheet:** A document that has information about what Boards or Committees do and how they work to help the organization.

**Chairperson:** The person in charge of the meeting.

**Code of Conduct:** A set of clear rules that everyone knows and agrees to follow.

**Confidentiality:** Keeping certain information secret or private. All Members receive documents and share information about the organization. This information is confidential, meaning all Members are not allowed to discuss or share this information outside of Board or Committee meetings.

**Conflict of Interest:** This means a Board or Committee Member may or will personally benefit from a decision the Board or Committee is making. If this happens, the Member must tell the rest of the Board or Committee about the conflict and not take part in the discussion or vote.

**Debrief:** A follow-up meeting to discuss topics covered in a meeting.

**Fiduciary Responsibilities:** When a person volunteers as a Board or Committee Member, part of their role includes helping make decisions that use the organization's resources, like money and property. As a Board or Committee Member, you must make decisions that are best for the organization, and sometimes that decision might not be what is best for you as a person. By making decisions that are best for the organization, you are fulfilling your fiduciary responsibility.

For example: The Board or Committee is voting on whether to sell an older group home that needs a lot of repairs and buy a newer home for the people living there to move into. The old home is in your neighbourhood, and you are friends with one of the people who lives there. If the person moves, you will have to travel farther to visit them. As a Board or Committee Member, you need to vote and make decisions based on what is best for the organization and the people it supports, even if the decision affects you personally.

**Interview Information Sheet:** A document that tells Board or Committee Candidates what kinds of questions they will be asked and topics they will talk about at their interview.

**Jargon:** Special words used by some people or groups that not everyone will understand, like legal terms.

**Liability:** A legal term that means that you, as a Board or Committee Member, can be held responsible for your actions as a Member, or the actions of the Board or Committee. This could happen if you did not act in good faith, put your interests ahead of the organization or did not follow the laws and regulations while acting as a Board or Committee Member. Typically, an organization has liability insurance to cover any claims against the organization. It is important that all Members must act in good faith and within their role as Board or Committee Members.

**Meeting Minutes:** Notes taken during a meeting by the Board or Committee Secretary.

**Personal Liability:** All Members are expected to make decisions that are in the best interest of the organization. Personal liability means a Board or Committee Member could be personally responsible for money or costs if something goes wrong while they are serving on the Board or Committee. However, when all Members act in good faith, ask questions when they are unsure, follow Board and Committee policies and the Code of Conduct, and make decisions carefully, the risk of personal liability is generally low.

**Plain (Accessible) Language:** Sharing information in a clear, simple, and inclusive way so more people can understand and participate. It uses plain language, avoids jargon, and may include supports like visuals, captions, or Easy Read formats.

**Recruitment:** Finding new people to help with volunteering on a Board or Committee.

**Tokenism:** The practice of doing something only to prevent criticism and give the appearance that people are being treated fairly (such as hiring a person who belongs to a minority group) (onBoard Canada, p. 62). When tokenism exists, the perspective of the advocate with lived experience is not valued and there is limited opportunity for a true positive impact.

**Unconscious Bias:** Refers to the information, attitudes, and stereotypes that inform our subconscious mental shortcuts which allow us to process immense amounts of information every day. While unconscious information-processing is a critical part of human functioning, these mental associations happen without awareness, without intention and without control, and often introduce errors into decision-making (onBoard Canada).