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Stronger Together: Practical Strategies to Elevate Board Effectiveness

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Some boards are high-functioning strategic partners. Others struggle with engagement, structure, or clarity about their role. Most fall somewhere in between. Regardless of where your board sits on that spectrum, one thing is clear: in today's environment, effective governance is more essential than ever.

At **mhca's** Summer Conference in Salt Lake City, we'll explore what it takes to build and sustain a strong board. During the Leadership Incubator session on Tuesday afternoon, August 19, we'll facilitate an interactive workshop grounded in widely accepted not-for-profit governance best practices. The session will give behavioral health leaders a structured way to assess their board's strengths and opportunities—and leave with actionable steps to improve board function, relationships, and impact.

This session is not about theory. Instead, we'll explore practical frameworks that reflect what works across the sector—focusing on seven key drivers of effective governance:

1. **The Right People** - Board composition matters. A competency-based approach to recruitment, selection, and reappointment ensures that board members bring the skills and attributes needed for effective

governance—not just representational ties. We'll explore how to build a board with the right size, independence, diversity, and expertise.

2. **Clear Roles** - Effective boards understand their fiduciary responsibilities and stay in their governance lane—setting strategy, making policy, and overseeing performance. We'll clarify the distinction between governance and management and explore frameworks to guide conversations about the right level of board involvement.
3. **Optimized Committees** - Board structure should align with organizational needs and governance responsibilities. We'll highlight how clear committee charters, competency-based membership, and streamlined committee structures (can support more efficient and focused governance).
4. **Robust Onboarding and Education** - Board effectiveness starts with orientation—but doesn't stop there. A strong onboarding process, a mentoring program, and a well-designed annual board education calendar help ensure that members are informed, connected, and ready to govern.
5. **Healthy Meetings and Culture** - Well-structured board meetings allow time for meaningful discussion. We'll share practices such as using agenda framing questions, and governance-level dashboards to make meetings more strategic and less operational. We'll also discuss ways to cultivate a respectful, inclusive, and high-functioning board culture.
6. **Effective Board Leadership** - Boards need strong chairs and committee leaders. We'll outline how to identify and develop these individuals through clear job descriptions, thoughtful succession planning, orientation, evaluation, and coaching.
7. **Continuous Improvement** - Even high-performing boards benefit from regular self-assessment and goal setting. We'll explore tools and processes to help boards, committees, and their leaders reflect on their own effectiveness, set priorities, and track progress over time.

Throughout the session, participants will have the opportunity to reflect on their own governance practices, exchange ideas with peers, and apply lessons from national frameworks to their local context. Whether your board is newly forming, rapidly evolving, or simply looking to sharpen its impact, you'll leave with specific strategies to support a stronger, more aligned board-executive partnership.

Join us on Tuesday afternoon in Salt Lake City to build new insights, share ideas, and walk away with practical tools that can help your board—and your organization—thrive.

Haven't registered for the Summer Conference in Salt Lake city yet? There's still time! [Click here to register](#) and then [click here to book your room](#) at the Grand America. See you soon!

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