



Inside ASWB New Board Member Training

Three attendees share their positive experiences

The facilitators of New Board Member Training will tell you that each group of attendees is unique. Each comes with its own collective set of experiences, needs, and questions. The group of 17 attendees in March's session, the first of three to be held in 2014, was no different.

The attendees who sat around the rectangular conference table in the meeting room at the Loews Hotel in Washington, D.C., included both new and longtime board members and staff from ASWB and a guest from the Federation of Association of Regulatory Boards (FARB). The two facilitators were from the worlds of U.S. and Canadian regulation and law: Dale Atkinson, ASWB legal counsel, and Richard Silver, legal counsel for the Ordre des travailleurs sociaux et thérapeutes conjugaux et familiaux du Québec and chair of the association's New Board Member Training.

At the completion of the three-day training, the diverse group of 12 social workers, four staff members, and an attorney was brought much closer together by embracing a clearer and more enlightened understanding of social work regulation and the regulator's role in providing public protection.



Mary Bridgman

Mary Bridgman traveled from Florida to attend the training. She is not a new board member, but she

was a first-time attendee. She is a retired attorney, a freelance writer, and chair of the Florida Board of Clinical Social Work, Marriage & Family Therapy and Mental Health Counseling. Like most of the attendees, she didn't know what to expect from the training.

"Until I got there, I didn't really know what ASWB is and how committed the association is to the public good, to servicing the consumer through its members," she said. "I was impressed by the caliber of the instructors. Being a lawyer, I particularly appreciated that they provided so much legal insight.

"Another thing is that I was not familiar with the *Model Social Work Practice Act*. And I see it now as a resource for our board when we're looking at issues that maybe our regulations, our laws, don't address the way that we might need them to. Obviously it doesn't have the force of law, but it is a valuable resource."

A couple of days after the training, Bridgman was contacted by one of the other attendees who asked for information on the Florida board's regulations on qualifications/training needed by mental health professionals prior to conducting child custody evaluations. Bridgman was thrilled she could help.

“Now I have access not only to the model act, but to other board members in other jurisdictions. Another aspect of that networking is the strength you draw from your colleagues, the moral support, recommitment to your purpose, supporting each other in work that is rewarding but not always easy. The training provides a wonderful opportunity to do that. I’m going to recommend that everyone on our board participate in the training.”



Josh Myers

Josh Myers, MSW, RSW, from Vancouver, British Columbia is a newly elected member to the British Columbia College of Social Workers. British

Columbia will begin using the ASWB licensing examination for the first time in 2015, so his attendance at the training was both instructive and timely.

“With all the things our college is rolling out and has rolled out, ASWB has been critical in terms of us gaining the knowledge and confidence we require,” he said.

“I was pleasantly surprised at how practical the training was. It was a good mix of oral information, written information, and also a chance to work collaboratively with the other participants through some rather difficult scenarios using the tools that were given to us by ASWB.

“ASWB really made it relevant for us in Canada—you did a really good job with anything that may

not be relevant to the work we do up here.” Myers added that he appreciated Richard Silver’s presence as facilitator to provide the Canadian perspective. “That would be an important thing to highlight for the folks in our country—that might help them see the relevance of sending their members to a training like this, because they’ll know that they are going to get not only the global perspective, but also the really rich Canadian content as well.”



Jennifer Henkel

Jennifer Henkel, MSSW, LCSW, ASWB Member Services senior manager, attended not only as the leader of Member Services, but also as a trainee.

“I think the training was excellent and well received. It was interesting for me to hear about their [regulators’] processes and what happens at their meetings. I also learned how much they have to do, including investigating and resolving complaints and educating the public. There are so many different perspectives,” Henkel said.

“I would truly like to have even more opportunities to share more about all the many different things ASWB does and offers, not just the headline topics but the softer things we do for our members: the research, the meetings, the support, as well as why we do them.

“I would love to see board members and staff from every

jurisdiction have the opportunity to attend New Board Member Training one time,” she continued. “They’re not going to get this training any place else, or the opportunity to be surrounded by other people doing what they’re doing.”

The other 14 attendees at last month’s ASWB New Board Member Training were: Barbara Arango, staff at Atkinson & Atkinson; Meenakshi Budhraj of Arkansas; Gary Cockman of Ontario; John Dick of Colorado; Gloria Harper, ASWB staff; Valerie Huntley of Iowa; Justin “Jay” Miller of Kentucky; Adrienne Newman of Tennessee; Tim Schoch, ASWB staff; Robert Showers of Louisiana; Sherry Silberman of Maryland; Jennifer Venable-Humphreys of Alabama; Tara Watson of Tennessee; and Annie Wilson of Nevada.

To take advantage of this unique training opportunity, visit <http://www.aswb.org/members/board-member-training>. ASWB will pay all expenses for one board member per jurisdiction, per meeting. Space and funds are limited, so seats are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. The next training with openings is August 22–24, in Seattle, Wash.