



Real tools for implementing Mobility

REAL Committee is plugged in, charged up for Halifax conference

Technology has been part of the conversation about Mobility since ASWB first approached the subject in its current strategic plan, adopted in 2013. Social workers—like other professionals in social services, health care, and mental health—are working via technology to do tasks ranging from providing psychotherapy via web conferencing to completing case management via email.

This year, technology also provided a means of conversation for the ASWB Regulatory Education and Leadership (REAL) Committee as they put together the 2018 Education Conference: Developing Tools for Social Work Mobility.

Committee members met in person twice, but the extensive planning required meant they relied on technology to help them stay on task. “When you have a yearlong task, it’s important that people know what’s going on all the time,” says Jan Fitts, ASWB education and training senior manager. That’s where online project management software comes in. Committee members frequently logged in to an online project management system that several ASWB committees and staff groups use to keep track of project deadlines, collaborate on documents, and follow conference milestones.

Throughout the planning process, the REAL Committee met regularly using web-based video conferencing software. Online meetings gave the committee a chance to engage in conversation and brainstorm about the conference. Using online collaboration tools “makes the process a lot more dynamic—we see each other, we build off each other, share screens, chat,” says Fitts.

As with all technology, there have been glitches, but most have been resolved quickly without slowing down the group. “We’ve not missed a beat because of technical problems,” Fitts says.

As helpful as the powerful technological tools were to enhancing engagement, Fitts emphasizes that the willingness of committee members to dig into the Mobility topic was even more critical as ASWB brings this initiative to the implementation stage. The committee reviewed the previous two education conferences that focused on Mobility in 2015 and 2016 to make sure this year’s meeting would cover new territory. “This conference is about implementation,” says Fitts, “and we were looking for an integrated approach, where each session builds on the previous one.”

The 2015 conference, [From Silos to Bridges](#), looked at examples of Mobility solutions from other professions, as well as the impact of technology on practice mobility. [The 2016 conference](#) focused on technology, geographic mobility, and social work regulation. With this year's return to the Mobility initiative, the REAL Committee wanted to focus on how social work regulators can effect change. "We want to give people tools but do it in an intentional way," Fitts says. "We're not providing our members with a template but letting them build their own Mobility plans."

Consequently, many of this year's speakers are familiar faces to ASWB members. The roster of presenters draws from ASWB volunteers, ASWB staff, and other professionals in the fields of law, communications, and marketing who have expertise that regulators can draw on to implement Mobility. REAL Committee members will introduce and moderate the conference sessions. "[Committee] engagement has come about because they've invited the speakers and are meeting with them to plan the sessions," says Fitts.

Working together, whether online or in person, the REAL Committee, the invited speakers, and ASWB staff have created a regulator-focused conference exclusively for ASWB members designed to equip them for the next step toward Mobility. "We've got to do the hard work of making a usable plan," says Fitts.

About the tool kits

Sometimes a conference theme is a catchy way to approach familiar content. But this year's REAL Committee looked to models for implementing change to present a series of clear, achievable steps that allow room for social work regulatory boards to implement Mobility. The conference sessions are arranged so that each step serves as a useful tool that regulators can use when they return to their jurisdictions to begin or continue designing their Mobility plan

ASWB is also taking a different approach to conference materials. Just as the past two education conferences had their own websites, this year's conference features the [Mobility Tools website](#), where participants can view the agenda, get details about sessions, learn more about speakers, and even navigate Halifax. The agenda is color-coded and uses tool icons to guide attendees through the various steps. Those icons and colors will also appear on printed materials at the conference to make it easier for attendees to organize and customize a tool kit for their jurisdictions.