



Society for  
**HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY**

**This is an official American Psychological Association (APA)/Society for Health Psychology (SfHP) forum and as such, subject to the rules set forth here.** This Forum is administered and monitored by APA/SfHP. Any person or content that violates any of APA's or SfHP's social media policies may be removed from the site, at the sole discretion of APA/SfHP.

By unanimous action of the Executive Committee of the Society for Health Psychology, the following communications policy is in effect as of 2/7/18, and reviewed/affirmed to date.

**Use of SfHP networks (website, listservs, and other social media forums) is open and voluntary; use indicates agreement to abide by the SfHP Social Media policies described here.**

First and foremost, social networks are **not private**. Some may be open only to invited or approved members; but even then, users should not expect privacy among the members. If you choose to participate on such Forums, assume that anything you post will be seen, read, and open for comment. Anything you say, post, link to, comment on, upload, etc., can and may be used against you by your peers, colleagues, employer, potential employers, fellow members, and so on.

The site may provide, or third parties may provide, **links to other websites** or content. Such links are provided for your convenience and do not reflect any endorsement by APA/SfHP with respect to the provider of such linked site, or the quality, reliability or any other characteristic or feature of the linked site. APA/SfHP is **not responsible in any manner** (without limitation - including any loss or injury) for any matter associated with a linked site, including the content provided or your reliance thereon. APA/SfHP makes no representations or warranties with respect to any linked site. Your use of a linked site is solely at your own risk. In addition, you should be aware that your use of any linked site is subject to the terms and conditions applicable to that site (including privacy policies, or lack thereof).

SfHP's social and professional communication tools (listservs, Twitter, Facebook page, etc.) are provided as a **benefit of membership in the Society**, and as such are used by the entire cross-section of members: clinicians, researchers, academics; senior professionals, students, and non-psychologists; in the US, Canada, and abroad. We understand that individuals from different cultures and groups may have varying customs and beliefs about what constitutes civil or uncivil behavior. **We expect all to be respectful** and mindful of these differences and norms. We appreciate openness and diverse viewpoints, including minority ones, on health-related topics. Any eligible participant may post a message and all will see it.

**By embracing the following standards, we all contribute to a climate of trust and collegiality that encourages friendly, informed, and spontaneous discourse.**

**APPROPRIATE POSTINGS:** The SfHP Executive Committee may or may not choose to endorse a candidate for APA President. If so, a statement to that effect may appear through Society media. Individual participants may choose to use SfHP communications tools to provide their perspectives on APA Presidential candidates in a positive, collegial manner. All eligible members are urged to vote in the APA Presidential elections.

Members may post questions, seek advice, or debate professional issues on topics **related to health psychology**. Messages may be program announcements, job postings, information of professional interest, etc. Conference or Training announcements for events sponsored by 501(c)3 organizations are welcome.

Professional debates can create strong differences of opinion, which may be expressed in a constructive manner; but personal attacks and offensive comments are inappropriate, not in the spirit of the Society, and against the policy of all associated communications tools. **SfHP adopts, in total, APA's Civility Statement** (see below).

**INAPPROPRIATE POSTINGS:** Inappropriate behaviors include, **but are not limited to:** name-calling and other *ad hominem* comments; overgeneralizing and offering dispositional character criticisms and

attributions; using language that is perceived as being aggressive, sarcastic, or demeaning; posting excessively or repeating an established position; or failure to adhere to the directives of the list administrator and/or SfHP Publications Committee. Use of profanity is explicitly disallowed.

Please observe all **copyright** laws as they pertain to the Internet. Do not copy/attach any full-length article or substantive portion thereof, without obtaining and including the copyright holder's permission to do so.

The forwarding of any individual's postings or emails to you or others without her or his permission constitutes an **"unauthorized back-channel communication."** To do so is a violation of our communications policies. If you wish to forward listserv communications from another individual, you must include documentation of that individual's permission to forward his or her communication when you forward the contents of the communication.

Be considerate of the length of your message; extended documents, or even a long series of abstracts, may be more information than all readers are interested in receiving. Alternatively, you may direct interested parties to contact you **off-list**, or provide a link to another more comprehensive site.

Please refrain from **repetitious requests** for the same information; listmembers who initiate a call for resources are charged with compiling and re-posting the assembled content.

**SfHP listservs may not be utilized to invite participation in surveys.** Results obtained via the use of listserv surveys may not be deemed representative, generalizable, or defensible.

Federal law providing for the American Psychological Association's tax-exempt status absolutely **forbids** the use of APA resources or facilities, including SfHP (Division 38) communications tools, in any way that would even **appear to support or oppose** a political candidate for local, state or national public office.

**FREE SPEECH:** The First Amendment is not implicated by expression on APA listservs. The First Amendment is implicated when the government tries to restrict free speech. Listserv rules are private rules for members participating on a private forum, so there are **no First Amendment implications**.

**REFERRAL REQUESTS:** Listmembers are advised that all referral requests should be posted using the following format. This protocol has been approved by the Society's Presidents and Chair of the Publications & Communications Committee, in consideration of patient privacy and listmember convenience.

*(Listmembers may use the "Referral in:" subject line to delete postings to which they have no reply - without opening.)*

*Subject Line: Referral in: (city/state)*

*Body: Seeking licensed clinical psychologist with experience in: (describe clinical skills required; do not include patient identifiers)*

*Contact: Back-channel only to: (requesting member, email)*

Remember that Ethical Standard 4.04(b) notes that in our work, "Psychologists discuss confidential information obtained in their work...only with persons clearly concerned with such matters." (APA, 2010) Also, Standard 4.06, explicitly addresses consultation, and notes that psychologists "disclose information only to the extent necessary to achieve the purposes of the consultation," (APA, 2010)."

**LISTSERV VIOLATIONS:** The list administrator will refer any posting deemed to be in potential violation of communications policy to the SfHP Publications Committee for review. A subcommittee (including, at least, the SfHP Publications Chair, President, and list administrator) will determine when activity is in violation of policy. If it is determined that a subscriber violated policy, he or she will be notified by email of the violation, and be advised that if a second violation occurs, the subscriber may be blocked from participation in Society communications system(s) at the discretion of the Publications subcommittee. The SfHP Executive Committee will be informed of any suspension. A third violation will automatically result in removal. Notification of the removal of a subscriber will be filed with the SfHP Executive Committee and the APA Legal Counsel's office for reference. The minimum length of suspension for violating policy is six months from the date of notification of removal.

**REMOVAL/REINSTATEMENT:** Any subscriber who has been removed from SfHP communications system(s) can make a request in writing to the Executive Committee of the Society (in consultation with the Publications Committee) for consideration to be reinstated. The request for reinstatement must include an

acknowledgement of the violation(s) of policy that led to removal, an agreement to conform to the policies in effect, and recognition that an additional violation (of any kind) will result in permanent revocation of all SfHP communications privileges. Requests for reinstatement will be considered by the Executive Committee during their semi-annual meetings, which typically occur in January/February and August of each year. Requests must be submitted to the Executive Committee at least 30 days prior to the next semi-annual meeting via the SfHP administrative office (apadiv38@verizon.net).

**APA RESOURCES:** The resources (hardware, software, and technical assistance) for this effort are provided without charge by the American Psychological Association as a public service. If you subscribed, and especially if you send messages, you are agreeing to the rules outlined below. ***If you break these rules, you will be unsubscribed from the listserv by APA.***

If you have specific questions about the use of SfHP communications tools, or suggestions for their improvement, please contact apadiv38@verizon.net. Thank you for your participation.

### **APA LISTSERV USAGE RULES**

**Rule 1:** Do not use the forum for illegal purposes, including but not limited to defamation, violation of intellectual property laws, violation of antitrust or unfair competition laws or violation of criminal laws.

**a. Copyright** - Referring to an article or news item with typical reference citations, providing a brief quote, or offering a link to legitimate online published content is permissible; list members should not post a full-text version of published material to the listserv. Not infrequently a list member wants to tell others about an article or news item related to the issues discussed on the list. However, sending the entire article to the list, without the permission of the author or publisher, results in a prima facie case of copyright violation. While there can be defenses to a claim of copyright infringement where the purpose of copying is clearly not for commercial purposes (e.g. "fair use" or academic teaching exceptions), those defenses are complicated, have been construed differently in different jurisdictions and are not necessarily applicable to listserv distribution.

**b. Defamation and libel** - In exchanges on the listserv and when referring to others, avoid personal attacks and characterizations that question a person's motives or qualifications. Sometimes a robust debate about ideas spills over into attacks on the proponents or opponents of the ideas. List members need to be reminded that a false statement that harms someone's reputation can be actionable as libel. There is a substantial difference between disagreeing with how someone did their research or treated a patient and accusing the person of fraud or incompetence. Because negative statements that impugn someone's professional qualifications can cause substantial economic and emotional harm, this is an area for careful scrutiny. Keeping criticism on an objective basis that is factually verifiable and skipping personal commentary about character, competence or motive minimizes legal risk.

**c. Antitrust concerns** - APA by its nature is subject to antitrust issues. Discussions about rates charged, efforts to exert collective pressure on payors, terms of contracts with insurance companies, internship salaries, etc., all are prohibited. The antitrust laws are broad and complex but on a very basic level they operate to prohibit and even in some cases criminalize certain anticompetitive agreements between competitors. A professional association like APA is almost by definition a group of competitors that has come together to pursue common interests. Where those common interests involve agreements on such terms of competition as rates charged, salaries paid, standards applicable to members of the profession, and other issues of the marketplace, the antitrust laws apply. Listservs provide a written record of statements that can create an antitrust risk even when there is no anti-competitive intent.

**Rule 2:** Do not intentionally interfere with or disrupt other forum members, network services, or network equipment. This includes distribution of unsolicited advertisement or chain letters, propagation of computer worms and viruses, and use of the network to make unauthorized entry to any other machine accessible via the Forum.

**Rule 3:** Do not use the Forum for commercial purposes. "Commercial" as used for purposes of evaluating listserv messages means communications whose primary purpose is to advance the business or financial

interests of any person or entity, or otherwise to promote a financial transaction for the benefit of the author directly or indirectly. Examples of prohibited communications include advertisements for products or services, notices regarding rental of office space, or direct solicitations of listserv members to purchase products or services.

Examples of messages that may be of financial benefit to listserv members but are not prohibited because they do not inure to the financial benefit of the author include news of job listings or position openings, or discussion of professionally-related products or services where the listserv member conveying the information is not in the business of selling the products or services. Announcements that provide useful professional information to List members but may also have some incidental commercial benefit to the sender (e.g. an author who is a list member merely advising the List of publication of a professional book) typically would not be "commercial" for purposes of this restriction.

*[\*SfHP note: Professional book citations should not include pricing or ordering information.]*

The ban on commercial use of the lists is based in legal requirements that flow from APA's status as a 501(c)3 organization. APA and its divisions enjoy exemption under 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code, which is the most favorable tax status available to any United States organization; it is the same tax exemption held by universities, churches, and charitable foundations. Because of this status, among other things, APA and its divisions pay no federal income tax on revenues from carrying out exempt activities; voluntary contributions are tax deductible by donors as charitable contributions; and they are exempt from some kinds of local taxes. With these advantages come significant restrictions on how APA can conduct its business, including such restrictions as taking no role in political elections, restricting lobbying and using resources for tax-exempt purposes.

The commercial use ban derives from the related requirements that 1.) APA activities, including those of APA divisions, be focused on 501(c)3 tax exempt purposes 2.) APA's assets, such as its lists, be used for tax exempt purposes and 3.) APA not provide financial support directly or indirectly to other persons or entities that are not 501(c)3 organizations, absent certain limited conditions that would not apply to use of APA's lists by other organizations for their business purposes. Thus, the Listserv rules provide that sponsored lists hosted by APA cannot be used for commercial purposes or to promote the financial or commercial interests of others, as these are not tax-exempt purposes.

In addition, material that looks like an advertisement or has that intent, also runs afoul of the rule that APA not provide support to non-c3 organizations by allowing, in effect, free advertising on the List that would normally be purchased elsewhere i.e. APA is donating support to the advertiser. Posting recruitment materials for other non-c3 membership organizations does not comply with these restrictions.

A closely related and equally important restriction based in the tax law, is the fact that APA is not able to share its resources freely with organizations that are exempt under less restrictive tax statuses, such as 501(c)6 organizations. Other membership organizations, that are not exempt under 501(c)3 of the Code, are likely to engage in a range of activities that APA cannot legally engage in and therefore entwining their activities and initiatives with APA division listservs is not permissible. Thus permitting another entity, even one that is tax exempt under another Code provision, to utilize a list to promote membership, distribute its information or conduct activities is inconsistent with and could jeopardize APA's tax status and that of the divisions who enjoy tax exemption under APA 's exempt status.

While these limitations on use of 501(c)3 resources are clearly quite important, in administering the rules, APA has sought to avoid being heavy-handed. For example, an individual author of a publication of professional interest to others on the list is not precluded by the policy from simply announcing the publication of a book to the list (as opposed to a de facto advertisement) and providing a link to another site where commercial information could be available. In short, we are trying to balance the benefits of information exchange among members with our legal obligations and need to protect an important APA asset, its tax-exempt status.

List managers' and list members' judgment is involved in following the rules and protecting the interests of all involved. APA MIS and legal counsel are always available as resources for list managers and members if needed. It has been APA's experience that when provided with the rules, and explanation of the underlying reasons for the rules, as needed, list members do a good job of keeping list discussions focused on material that is inherently related to the purposes for which APA and the divisions were formed.

**Rule 4:** Do not use this forum for any communication that could be construed in any way as support for or opposition to any candidate for a federal, state or local public office. The Federal law providing for the American Psychological Association's tax-exempt status absolutely forbids the use of APA resources or facilities, including this forum, in any way that would even appear to support or oppose such a political candidate.

**a. Political statements affecting tax exemption** – Listserv exchanges must avoid electioneering or endorsing a candidate for federal, state, or local political office.

While using the list to endorse political candidates in a federal, state, or local election or for commercial purposes likely won't expose a member to personal legal risk, it can jeopardize APA's tax-exempt status under section 501 (c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code. To keep this advantageous tax status, APA cannot ever be involved in or support in any way electioneering or endorse a candidate for federal, state, or local political office. APA must assure that its activities are focused on the scientific, educative, and charitable purposes for which it gained tax-exempt status.

**b. Lobbying Elected Officials**

Advocacy on substantive issues is separate from electioneering for candidates. While electioneering is absolutely prohibited, advocacy on legislative issues is not part of this prohibition. However, for APA Divisions, "calls to action" asking listserv members to contact their elected officials to express a view on legislation are considered a statement of the division under APA Rule 100-1.4, and are subject to the mandatory review and disclaimer requirements therein. Such statements may not be included on the listserv unless and until they have received such review and, where appropriate, have included required disclaimer language.

**Rule 5:** APA does not endorse or forward requests for research participation to any APA listserv. Divisions may choose to post requests for research participants to their listservs. If you need more information about a Division listserv, it is recommended that you contact the listserv administrator of that Division. Please note the following statements regarding the limits of division and all other listservs as sources for research participants and samples.

**APA disclaimer regarding limits of division listservs as research samples.**

- Listservs (Division and other APA discussion lists) make no claim to be exhaustive collections of members who may fit into one or more specific category (e.g., clinical psychologists, practitioners, educators, and so on). In fact some 45% of APA members do NOT belong to any one Division. By using a Division as the "universe" for one's respondents, researchers are excluding a large number of eligible participants and hence may be introducing bias into their research.
- Many members belong to more than one Division, and if the research is being sent to more than one Division, the researcher faces the challenge of defining response rate given duplication and of removing duplicate records.

APA members and others who are not APA members belong to Divisions and topical listservs for a number of reasons, some of these may not reflect the fact that the member works in the area covered by the Division or list in any more than a tangential sense - raising questions about the suitability of the sample to the research.

**Additional Listserv Information:**

List retention policy:

The Listserv list's administrator/owner is REQUIRED to notify the APA Listmaster (Listmaster@apa.org) when he/she discontinues their duties as the Listserv list administrator. Any list whose administrator/owner's email address is either no longer valid, or mail from the Listserv server or its lists are blocked for any reason, or the Listserv list's administrator/owner does not respond to inquiries, instructions, contacts or other

communications, will be made inactive until the owner can be contacted and the situation has been rectified. If the situation has not been rectified for a period of twenty-one calendar days, the Listserv list may be deleted. Any list which remains unused for 6 months or longer may be removed.

If you have any questions, concerns, or problems, with regard to the Listserv server, please feel free to contact me.

APA Listmaster [listmaster@apa.org](mailto:listmaster@apa.org) ITS Department American Psychological Assoc. 750 First ST. N.E. Wash. D.C. 20002 (202)218-3587 or (202)336-5839 FAX

### **APA CIVILITY STATEMENT (2017)**

APA leadership proactively assembled a working group in 2016 to develop policies and procedures to "develop aspirational civility principles as well as procedures for all forms of direct in-person communication and online messages and postings within and on behalf of APA." A diverse working group team then worked closely with APA leadership and council membership as well as investigated best practices and guidelines in the literature about civility in workplace environments.

**As psychologists, we seek to embrace and practice the ethical principle of "respecting the dignity and worth of all people" and create a climate of civility, respect and inclusion throughout the APA community.** We strive to accomplish this goal by interacting and communicating with others in a spirit of mutual respect and an openness to listen as well as to consider all points of view. While we may disagree on important issues, we debate and express our ideas in a collegial, civilized and professional manner.

Corrective feedback will be provided constructively, respectfully and compassionately whenever members don't behave civilly in order to maintain a comfortable, safe and professional environment in which to conduct the work of the Association. Finally, we understand that individuals from different cultures and groups may have varying customs and beliefs about what constitutes civil or uncivil behavior. We expect all to be respectful and mindful of these differences and norms.

*[SfHP note: for written communications, please substitute "writing" or "posting" for "speaking."]*

#### Civility Operational Definitions

1. Think carefully before speaking
2. Differentiate and articulate facts from opinions
3. Focus on the common good
4. Disagree with others respectfully
5. Be open to others without hostility
6. Respect diverse views and groups
7. Offer a spirit of collegiality
8. Offer productive and corrective feedback to those who behave in demeaning, insulting, disrespectful, and discriminatory ways
9. Create a welcoming environment for all
10. Focus corrective feedback on one's best and most desirable behavior

#### Operational Definitions of Incivility

1. Interrupting and talking over others who have the floor
2. Overgeneralizing and offering dispositional character criticisms and attributions
3. Using language that is perceived as being aggressive, sarcastic, or demeaning
4. Speaking too often or for too long
5. Engaging in disrespectful non-verbal behaviors (e.g., eye rolling, loud sighs)

6. Offering false praise or disingenuous comments (e.g., "With all due respect but...")

Civility Work Group Members: Thomas Plante, PhD (Chair), Ester Cole, PhD, Eduardo Diaz, PhD, Janet Hibel, PhD, Caridad R. Moreno, PhD, Dianne Salter, PhD, JD, David T. Susman, PhD, Randy White, PhD (Council Leadership Team Consultant), Terri Strong, PhD (Council Leadership Team Consultant), Cassandra Kemp, MA (APA Staff Liaison)