

Guidelines for the BCPA E-mail Forum

Purpose of the Forum

A shared Listserve (or Forum) can be a productive and enjoyable vehicle for communication and is unfortunately also easy to misuse. The purpose of the Forum is to promote communication among BCPA members, and between members and the Association, and to build a shared sense of community among members. Thus, messages posted to the Forum should be oriented toward enhancing communication or increasing the knowledge base of psychologists. It is a place where differences of opinion can be aired with courtesy and respect for Forum members and others. Note that the Forum is not the official mode of communication between the Association Board and/or Staff and its members. Also, the BCPA forum is not a substitute for registrants' intended communication with the College of Psychologists.

Official communications between the BCPA and its members are sent through the newsletter, other direct mailings, and/or through the BCPA website, or at an AGM. Given that most members have e-mail addresses, the BCPA office will occasionally send a message to all members. These notices will then have a header saying To: ALL BCPA MEMBERS.

We have modelled our guidelines along those used for APA's Listserve. Please remember at all times that something written on the ListServe becomes a document that can be printed, duplicated, modified and so forth by anybody else. Once you have posted an opinion or information, you cannot retract it; it is now in the public domain and you have lost control over it.

To make the best out of the Forum, here's a list of Do's and Do not's:

Do's:

- Enjoy the Forum and make use of it.
- Make ample use of Back-channelling; unless you feel strongly that many of your colleagues would want to receive your input, use Back-channelling only. Communication with individual Forum members (i.e., sending an e-mail to one person only) is known as "back-channelling".
- It is appropriate to notify Forum members of office space availability, or the availability of surplus tests, books, etc. It is also appropriate to mention continuing education opportunities for psychologists, or psycho-educational programs to which Forum members might want to refer their clients. Any such information must be directly relevant to the study or practice of psychology.
- Do post information that you think pertains to psychologists and psychological issues; this specifically includes issues that are within the mandate of BCPA: advocacy, mutual help on practice and ethics issues, or continuing education. In contrast, do not post on issues that fall under the mandate of: CPA, APA, the College, CRHSPP, or global causes like minimum wage, Amnesty International etc (however noble). If that was tolerated, the ListServe will quickly choke and participants will get flooded (and annoyed). By following these rules and standards, you will contribute to a climate that encourages trust and collegiality, and friendly, informative, and spontaneous discourse.

Do not's:

- Personal attacks, criticism, or "personal reflections" upon other psychologists are prohibited, no matter how serious the differences over policy or philosophy. This includes naming any particular psychologist, group of Psychologists (like, 'all school psychologists', or 'psychologists on the Board of the College', or 'all academic psychologists' etc.). Common courtesy must be observed. Reference to other professions or their members must be similarly respectful, regardless of the degree of difference of opinion.

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- Use the forum for illegal purposes, including, but not limited to, defamation, violation of intellectual property laws, or criminal laws.
- Do not intentionally interfere with or disrupt other forum members, network services, or network equipment. The following are prohibited: chain letters, propagation of computer worms or viruses, spurious virus warnings, and use of the network to make unauthorized entry into any other machine accessible via the Forum.
- Do not use it for commercial or advertising purposes. Individual members often seek something that other members might have, and it can be particularly helpful to use a closed list like the Forum to make the connection. Trying to sell one's latest publication for personal profit is a commercial act. Occasional messages from Forum members offering office space, or advising members of an event in which you have no financial interest, or offering surplus materials will be acceptable. Occasional postings by BCPA members regarding training workshops, positions available, office space, and publications or resources are permitted but repeated postings by a member are not. If such "offers" become frequent, the Committee may classify the activity as advertising, and require payment to BCPA in order to post the message.

How to use the Listserve effectively

Technical tips and etiquette:

- Please send a message to all of us and introduce yourself when you join the Forum. Send the message to bcpa_forum@shaw.ca. Include your name and professional affiliation. You may also include (this part is optional) where you live or practice, why you joined the Forum, and requests or questions you have.
- Please sign each of your messages, and include your email address, so that we can easily respond to you (i.e., make back-channelling easy).
- When you reply to a message, if your email software program repeats the message to which you are responding, please remove any part of the message which is not essential to your reply. This will save considerable space (bandwidth) for everyone who receives your message, and makes it easier to read what you have to say.
- The Forum software is set to reject attachments. If you wish to offer an attachment to other members you may indicate this in your posting and those desiring it can contact you directly.

Forum Oversight

We have established a Forum Oversight Committee of three individuals who will verify Forum activity multiple times every week. If they notice that a participant does not adhere to the guidelines, the following steps are taken:

- If the Forum Policy Committee agrees by consensus that the guidelines have been violated, a courteous warning will be sent directly to the Forum member, with a reminder of the Guidelines, and an explanation of the violation.
- In the case of a second violation, the member's name will be removed from the Forum, and an explanatory note will be sent. After a person has been suspended from the Forum for six months, the member will be eligible to reapply. A reapplication for Forum privileges will be made to the Administrator (or the Board), who will confer with the Forum Oversight Committee. Reapplication does not guarantee immediate reinstatement. If reinstated, 'the clock starts over'. If not reinstated, the rationale for the decision will be sent to the member.
- We welcome you to the Forum and look forward to your introduction and participation. When wishing to subscribe or unsubscribe, please login to the BCPA website Members' Area. Click on 'Your Dashboard'. Click on 'update Your Membership Info'. Opposite where it says 'Participate in Email Forum' there is a check box. If there is a check mark in it, and you wish to remove yourself from the Forum, click on the box to remove the check mark. If it is blank, and you wish to add your name, a click of the mouse will add a check mark, and your name will be forwarded for inclusion in the Forum membership. Don't forget to click on the 'submit' button to save your changes.