

Guidelines for the BCPA E-mail Forum

A shared mailing list (or E-mail Forum) can be a productive and enjoyable vehicle for communication. The purpose of the E-mail Forum is to promote communication among members of the Association to build a shared sense of community. Thus, messages posted to the E-mail Forum should be oriented toward enhancing communication or increasing the knowledge base of psychologists. The Forum is a place where differences of opinion can be aired with courtesy and respect for all.

Note that the E-mail Forum is not the official mode of communication between the Association Board and/or staff and its members. Also, the BCPA E-mail Forum is not a substitute for registrants' intended communication with the College of Psychologists of BC. Official communications between the BCPA and its members are sent through the *BC Psychologist*, the e-mail announcements, other direct mailings, through the BCPA website, or at an AGM. BCPA members are encouraged to provide the BCPA staff with an up-to-date e-mail address where they can be reached for such communications.

Please remember at all times that something written on the mailing list 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.

Permitted & non-permitted uses

To make the best out of the E-mail Forum, here is a list of permitted and non-permitted uses of the Forum.

Please do this...

- Enjoy the E-mail Forum and make use of it.
- Communication with individual E-mail Forum members (i.e., sending an e-mail to one person only) is known as back-channelling. Please 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.
- Post information that you think pertains to psychologists and psychological issues. This specifically includes issues that are within the mandate of BCPA, such as advocacy and mutual help on practice and ethics issues. In contrast, do not post on issues that fall under the mandate of the College, or topics regarding global causes like minimum wage, Amnesty International campaigns, etc. If that were to be tolerated, the mailing list would quickly choke, and participants would get flooded with e-mails and annoyed. By following these rules and standards, you will contribute to a climate that encourages trust and collegiality, as well as a friendly, informative, and spontaneous discourse.
- It is appropriate to mention free or non-profit psychoeducational programs to which E-mail Forum members might want to refer their clients, as long as this is not an advertisement (see next sub-section).
- It is appropriate to look for a referral for a client only if you have failed to find one through the BCPA Referral Service. You can access the Referral Service at www.psychologists.bc.ca or at 604-730-0522. Contacting the E-mail Forum to find a psychologist should be your last resort. If it does happen that you cannot find who you are looking for through the Referral Service, please contact the BCPA office with your suggestions for additional referral categories.

Please don't do this...

- It is not appropriate to notify E-mail Forum members of office space availability, jobs, and the availability of surplus tests, books, and other items. It is also not appropriate to mention for-profit continuing education opportunities for psychologists. Any such information is considered advertising, and it must be approved and distributed by the BCPA office. For more information on advertising policies, please send an e-mail to communications@psychologists.bc.ca

- It is inappropriate to advertise one's psychological services/practice through the E-mail Forum.
- 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 or group of psychologists; for example, 'all school psychologists', or 'psychologists on the Board of the College', or 'all academic psychologists'. Common courtesy must be observed. Reference to other professions and their members must be similarly respectful.
- Do not use the E-mail Forum for illegal purposes. These include but are not limited to defamation, and acts in violation of intellectual property or criminal laws.
- Do not intentionally interfere with other E-mail Forum members' conversations, or disrupt network services or equipment. The following are prohibited: chain letters, propagation of computer worms or viruses, spurious virus warnings, and use of the network to make an unauthorized entry into any machine accessible via, and with access to, the E-mail Forum.
- Do not use the Forum for commercial or advertising purposes. Please note that trying to sell one's latest publication for personal profit, or promoting one's workshop(s), are commercial acts. Occasional messages advising members of an event in which you have no financial interest, or offering surplus materials for free, will be acceptable. Postings regarding training workshops, positions available, office space, and publications or resources are not permitted. If such "offers" become frequent, the Forum Oversight Committee may classify the activity as advertising, and temporarily block the user responsible (see Oversight).

How to use the E-mail Forum effectively

- Please send a message to all of us and introduce yourself upon joining the E-mail Forum. Send your message to bcpa_forum@bcpsychologist.org. Please include your name and professional affiliation.
- Please sign each of your messages, and include your e-mail address, so that we can easily respond to you
- When you reply to a message, if your e-mail 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 saves bandwidth, and makes your message easier to read .
- The E-mail 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.
- If you want to be subscribed, unsubscribed (temporarily or permanently), or your e-mail address changes, please send an e-mail to webmaster@psychologists.bc.ca.

E-mail Forum oversight

We have established a Forum Oversight Committee that will observe Forum activities throughout the week. Upon noticing that a participant does not adhere to these guidelines, the following steps will be taken:

- If the Committee agrees that the guidelines have been violated, a courteous warning will be sent by the Chair of the Oversight Committee 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 e-mail address will be removed from the E-mail Forum, and an explanatory note will be sent. After a person has been suspended from the E-mail Forum for thirty days, the member will be eligible to re-apply. A reapplication for E-mail Forum privileges will be made to the BCPA staff, which will confer with the Forum Oversight Committee. Re-application 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.

Contact information

Webmaster: webmaster@psychologists.bc.ca.

Forum Oversight Committee Chair: Dr. Cam Ellison, R.Psych. Send an e-mail to the webmaster to be put in touch with him.