

Monterey Bay Psychological Association
Monterey, San Benito, Santa Cruz Counties

MBPA Listserv Protocol

January 2024

An important benefit in MBPA membership is the privilege of joining and participating in our Listserv. The major aim of the Listserv is to build a strong sense of community among our members and to help us as a profession to optimally meet the needs of our counties' residents. Toward that end, typical Listserv postings contain clinical and practice questions, identification of helpful resources, requests for referrals, announcements of relevant professional opportunities and educational events, requests for participation in research and other academic and professional activities, and the ability to exchange the latest research and health policy updates.

MBPA adopts both the [APA Listserv Usage Rules](#) and the [APA Civility Statement](#). By embracing the following standards, we all contribute to a climate of trust and collegiality that encourages friendly and informed discourse. In summary: MBPA seeks to foster a supportive, collegial Listserv environment. Consistent with APA ethical principles, list members are aware of and respect cultural, individual, and role differences, including those based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status. Listserv members consider these factors when communicating with other listserv members and when communicating about others on the listserv.

PLEASE NOTE: Some posts can be perceived as political or opinionated commentary, so please keep in mind that we are a community and some of the information shared might negatively impact other members. Proceed with posts with awareness of and consideration for our colleagues.

We recommend reviewing a three-question filter before sharing on the Listserv. If any of the filters ring true, we advise that you refrain from sharing the post on the Chapter Listserv.

1. Does the post offer information relevant to the field of psychology, Chapter members, and the clients served?
2. Is there potential that your post may cause harm, hurt, fear, or anger due to its content in regard to race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity? Consider your "blind spots" and coded language.
3. Is the source credible and objective? If the source has a strong political bias, you might want to acknowledge the bias in your introduction.

Monterey Bay Psychological Association

Monterey, San Benito, Santa Cruz Counties

Protocol

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.
2. Do not intentionally interfere with or disrupt other forum members, network services, or network equipment. Commercial use is prohibited, as is distribution of unsolicited advertising, chain letters, propagation of computer worms or viruses, and use of the network to make unauthorized entry into any other machine accessible via the Forum.
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 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 the Listserv 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.
 - MBPA members are able to express the desire to rent an office or send an announcement regarding a known office availability.
4. "Personal reflections" upon other members, no matter how serious their differences over policy questions, is prohibited. Common courtesy and respect, which excludes personal attacks or criticism, must be observed.
 - Defamation and Libel: In exchanges on the Listserv and when referring to others, avoid personal attacks and characterizations that question a person's or entity's motives, qualifications, or actions. Sometimes a robust debate about ideas spills over into attacks on the proponents or opponents of the ideas. Listserv 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 (source: LA Psychological Association).

Monterey Bay Psychological Association

Monterey, San Benito, Santa Cruz Counties

5. Communications should be oriented towards increasing the knowledge base of psychologists. The Listserv is a forum for sharing information and community building. It is a place where differences of opinion can be aired, however, with courtesy and respect.

Violations of Listserv Protocol

Content posted on the Listserv that violates protocol will be reviewed by the MBPA Board. If the content is a clear violation, it will be removed from the Listserv. If the content falls into a gray area, the Board will review the post to determine if the content can remain on the Listserv or will be removed. The Board makes these decisions as a group, taking care to consider the guidelines carefully. The Board will also contact the member responsible for the post to explain the decision process and to provide further guidance regarding Listserv protocol.