

## RPA Listserv Guidelines

The RPA listserv is maintained by RPA as a convenient forum that can be used by listserv members to support their professional practice. The following guidelines are intended to facilitate a positive experience for participants and to help us to avoid inadvertently committing lapses either of ethics or of etiquette.

Some of these guidelines are consistent with APA and CPA listserv guidelines specific to our type of professional association. These are intended to protect RPA against legal action or the appearance that we support or advocate unethical conduct.

Other guidelines are reflective of widely accepted etiquette for any listserv; the intention of these guidelines is to help maintain a forum where all members will be more likely to participate and will expect to find useful information in a timely manner.

- 1) **Making comments about others.** When making comments about an individual or group, refrain from comments that could be perceived as gossip or slander by that person or others who are reading your comments. When other members are seeking assistance in expanding their referral network, it is certainly appropriate to make recommendations and positive comments about an individual or institution.
- 2) **Sharing identifying information.** When describing an individual's clinical situation, use minimal information in your comments in order to avoid potentially identifying a particular client. Even in those cases when you have altered some details in an attempt to protect the individual's identity, detailed identifying information can give the impression of carelessness with regard to confidentiality.
- 3) **Antitrust issues.** Avoid discussing "marketplace" issues such as rates charged, ways to exert collective pressure on payors, terms of contracts with insurance companies, and any other topics that could appear to involve collusion and which could cause us to run afoul of antitrust laws.
- 4) **Political Comments.** Avoid discussing political issues or endorsing a candidate for federal, state, or local political office.
- 5) **Copyright Issues.** Although referring to an article or providing brief quotes with the appropriate credit for the source is appropriate, a full text version would not be because of copyright issues.
- 6) **"Reply" goes to entire listserv.** Anytime you hit "Reply" to a listserv message this is the same as hitting "Reply All" and your comments will be addressed to the entire listserv. Before you hit "Send," always ask yourself if what you are saying is something the entire listserv (or the followers of a particular thread) either will need to know or will be likely to want to know. For example: comments germane to the topic at hand merit hitting "Reply" but social comments,

reminiscences, sharing an article or ads for the newsletter, or stating your plan to attend a CE function should be addressed to the appropriate individual.

7) **Sending responses backchannel.** If you are intending to reply to an individual only and not to the listserv, please make certain that you have replaced the listserv address with the address of the appropriate member or members so your comments will be sent “back-channel.”

8) **Inviting responses backchannel.** Similarly, when requesting comments from others, always consider if these would more appropriately be sent to you “backchannel.” If this is the case, please state that preference in your posting and also consider including your e-mail which will often appear as a link as a way to encourage this.

9) **Being brief.** Strive to be brief in your questions or comments when either posting or responding to a post. This will save everyone time and increase the likelihood that your comments are read.

10) **Using correct subject heading.** When replying to a previous post, make sure that you are using the subject heading for that post as opposed to another. When initiating a post, make sure you are using a subject heading that will identify it as new and send it to [RPAlist@redwoodpsych.org](mailto:RPAlist@redwoodpsych.org)

11) **Using descriptive subject heading.** If your original post is regarding help with a referral, consider including information in the subject heading that will help the reader know if they wish to read further (Referral needed for- client in Stockton area, adolescent, couple, dealing with issues of loss, etc.)

12) **Protecting the listserv from viruses and malware.** Please do not post without a subject heading since it will be assumed that it has a good possibility of containing a virus or malware. If you see a posting with no subject heading, do not hit "Reply," which would increase its exposure to the listserv and would need to be removed from the archives each time it appears. If you see a posting (with or without a heading) that has no content except a link or has a link which is either not well explained by the content or is inconsistent with the content or subject heading, beware of clicking on that link since it is a high risk to your computer. As when there is no subject heading, do not hit "Reply" to this or any e-mail that has a very high probability of having a virus or malware since it would then continue to put the listserv at risk.

13) **Understanding that a listserv cannot guarantee confidentiality.** Always remember that what you say on a listserv, like any e-mail, is not confidential. Postings can be seen by unintended recipients and can be forwarded to an unlimited number of colleagues and other listservs. Though it may appear otherwise when you hit “Send,” please consider anything you post to be a permanent part of the public record.

14) **Identifying our professional credentials.** When initiating or responding to a post, we follow the laws and regulations of the Board of Psychology and our professional ethics to avoid misleading the public in the manner in which we identify our credentials to others. If we are a licensed psychologist we avoid implying that we are licensed in “clinical” or any other field of psychology since California does not grant a specialized license. Because the Board of Psychology permits the use of the title “psychologist” only when one is licensed as a psychologist, only those who are licensed may refer to themselves with this term. If we are not licensed in any field of mental health, we avoid creating the impression that we do hold a license. When promoting our services or responding to a referral request on the listserv, we are expected to include our license type and number if we are licensed and our registration type and number if we are being supervised.

15) **Guidelines agreement.** These guidelines are meant to be aspirational and it is understood that mistakes and lapses occur from time to time. When this happens, the listserv monitor and/or another member may reach out with a reminder; often this takes place back-channel, and this is intended both as a friendly reminder and as a way to promote the smooth functioning of the listserv. In signing up for the listserv members agree to abide by these guidelines. In the rare and unlikely event that a member should repeatedly violate these guidelines, it is possible that such a member would be removed from the list by the Executive Committee.