

OPA LISTSERV INFORMATION & GUIDELINES

(Revised: October 2020)

Welcoming Message

Welcome to the Ohio Psychological Association's (OPA) listservs. These fora are governed by the Communication and Technology Committee (CTC) through OPA's Vice President of Communication, Board of Directors, and the Association's Chief Executive Officer. They can be a tremendous resource, giving you access to the collected experience of hundreds of other Ohio psychologists. Whether you choose to interact by posting messages to a given OPA list or prefer to read the messages posted by others and gather information, we hope you will find this experience informative, enjoyable and stimulating. For the list to provide the greatest benefit to the largest number of people, we expect you to follow the guidelines described below.

Expectations

Participation in professional organizations, such as OPA, and use of their services, such as membership in professional listservs, are considered professional activities. Therefore, the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct issued by the American Psychological Association (APA) applies to all OPA-related activity. The CTC asks that all OPA members, especially those engaging with the listserv, demonstrate behavior that follows the Ethics Code and adheres to the General Principles. Although the complete code can be viewed [here](#), a brief summary of the General Principles most relevant to the listserv are as follows:

Principle A: Beneficence and Nonmaleficence

Strive to benefit those reading the listserv and take care to do no harm. In their professional actions, psychologists seek to safeguard the welfare and rights of those with whom they interact professionally and otherwise.

Principle B: Fidelity and Responsibility

Build trust with those you interact with through OPA by upholding professional standards of conduct and accept appropriate responsibility for your behavior.

Principle C: Integrity

Psychologists seek to promote accuracy, honesty, and truthfulness; this means no one on the listserv should steal others' writing, post fraudulent information, and/or intentionally misrepresent fact.

Principle D: Justice

Psychologists recognize that fairness and justice entitle all individuals to access psychological services. Psychologists exercise reasonable judgment and take precautions to ensure that their potential biases, the boundaries of their competence, and the limitations of their expertise do not lead to or condone unjust practices.

Principle E: Respect for People's Rights and Dignity

Psychologists respect the dignity and worth of all people, and the rights of individuals to privacy, confidentiality, and self-determination. Psychologists must take the necessary steps to safeguard and protect the privacy, confidentiality, rights, and welfare of all persons and communities, vulnerable or otherwise.

Psychologists are also aware of and respect cultural, individual, and role differences for all individuals, including those of other professionals. This includes those based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status. Psychologists attempt to recognize their biases based on these factors and do not knowingly participate in or condone others for their beliefs or identity.

Whom is the listserv for?

The majority of listservs sponsored by the OPA are for OPA members only. Thus, all list members are assumed to be mental health professionals. OPA members are expected to behave accordingly by communicating in a manner consistent with the ethical guidelines and principles described above. Forwarding messages from the listserv to others is not permitted (refer to *Sharing Listserv Information with Others* under Prohibited Listserv Behaviors section below).

Purpose of the Listserv

The listserv is a place for Ohio psychologists and OPA members to discuss psychology-related topics and issues. One of the great strengths of this listserv is that it allows you to quickly and efficiently gather opinions and insights from a large number of practicing psychologists. Thus, the list is frequently used to solicit information on diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis of specific cases. It cannot be over emphasized how important it is to thoroughly disguise any information which might identify the client being discussed. The internet and social media sites have vastly increased the degree to which we are all connected. So please be very careful to disguise potentially identifying information or use hypotheticals in your postings. If you are still concerned that the client might be identified, give only the most general notion of the case and ask list members to contact you backchannel for details (refer to *Responding to a Message* under Listserv Basics below).

Below are specific examples of permissible content postings on the OPA listservs:

Referrals

Posting on the listserv is one way to help find a psychologist. As previously stated, please keep client confidentiality in mind and do not include any identifying information. When composing your message please include the word "referral" and the area of the state or country in the subject line. (Example: child psychologist in Cleveland area; family therapist in southwest Ohio.) All responses to referral questions must be sent backchannel directly to the sender and not publicly to the entire listserv.

Informal Advertising

The primary purpose of the listserv is to build a safe space where our community of psychologists can gain insight from other professionals and to also provide and receive advice. It is not intended to be a space to advertise and/or purchase products or services. That being said, some psychologists do benefit

from learning of available services and resources other psychologists have to offer. Because of this, informal advertising, or brief notices of available resources or positions that **will not** financially benefit the author of the post are permitted.¹ These types of posts do not include fliers, websites, links, attachments, or detailed information and they ask those interested to contact the author backchannel. (An example of an informal advertisement is: We have an opening for a licensed psychologist who works with children/adolescents in our office in Akron, Ohio. Please contact me backchannel for details) It is not appropriate to publicly respond to referral questions with any type of fliers, websites, links, attachments, or detailed information about your practice either- this should be done backchannel. For information about sharing resources (i.e., books, journal articles, support groups, other services) refer to *Sharing Resources* below.

[Classified Ads](#)

Classified ads may only be posted to the general listserv by the OPA Central Office. Formal advertisements about job postings may be sent to the [OPA Career Center](#) while those related to office space, continuing education opportunities, or items for sale, go to the [Classified Ads section](#). For additional information about creating, sharing, or finding CE opportunities, go to [OPA Educational Opportunities](#). Once the formal advertisements are posted there, the OPA central office will then post a message to the listserv directing members to the appropriate sections of the website.

[Sharing Resources](#)

Announcements that provide useful professional information (e.g., articles, books, videos, free support groups, trainings) to list members is allowed and very much appreciated. Sharing resources that may have some incidental commercial benefit to the sender (e.g. an author who is a listserv member merely announcing an article or book he/she published, someone offering a free support group who may then see individuals for pay) is allowed as long as the post follows *Informal Advertising* guidelines listed above and request interested parties to contact them backchannel. (Example: I am releasing my first clinical book about treating LGBT adults. Please contact me backchannel for additional information; I have an opening in the support group I'm offering for providers experiencing burnout. Please contact me backchannel for additional information.) Any direct links for purchase of resources is not permitted (refer to *Commercial Uses and Formal Advertisements* below.)

[Advocacy/Social Justice and Airing Disagreements](#)

OPA occasionally releases official statements regarding issues relevant to the field or significant public events. These statements represent OPA's official position and illustrate appropriate advocacy and social justice actions regarding these matters. The advocacy and social justice of psychology-related topics are significant to all psychologists and this type of discussion is allowed on the listserv. The listserv can also be a place to air differences of opinion.

Discussions and disagreements should be directed toward the specific committee related to the issue at hand. A list of OPA committees, subcommittees, task forces, and affiliates may be found [here](#). If you question whether your topic is psychology-related or appropriate for the listserv, please contact the listserv administrator at postmaster@ohpsych.org.

When posting about advocacy, social justice, or airing differences, all posts should be respectful and focus on the topic at hand and ***not the person sending the message***. In all instances, posts must use

communication patterns and language that adheres to the General Principles listed above. Professional and respectful language is required at all times.

Prohibited Listserv Behaviors

The listservs are continually monitored. Any member activity that violates listserv guidelines listed here should be reported to the listserv administrator at postmaster@ohpsych.org who will forward the complaint to either the appropriate Communications and Technology Committee (CTC) member or to the Association's Chief Executive Officer.

Commercial Uses and Formal Advertisements

The listserv is not to be used for commercial purposes, which includes any communication that advances the business or financial interests of any person, group, institute, or other entity. Formal advertisements are considered a product for commercial gain and are not allowed on the listserv. These types of advertisements include direct solicitations to purchase products or services and notices regarding rental of office space; they include fliers, websites, links, attachments, or detailed information. As previously stated under the *Classified Ads* section above, formal advertisements about job postings may be sent to the [OPA Career Center](#) while those related to office space, continuing education opportunities, or items for sale, go to the [Classified Ads section](#).

The announcement or advertisement of continuing education (CE) opportunities should not be distributed on the listserv. OPA's [Office of Mandatory Continuing Education \(MCE\)](#) manages all OPA-supported trainings and CE opportunities and advertises them directly to members. For additional information about creating, sharing, or finding CE opportunities, go to [OPA Educational Opportunities](#).

Rather than publicly advertising your services or trainings in response to referral questions, please contact colleagues backchannel if you are able to take that referral or wish to provide suggestions or feedback.

Sharing Listserv Information with Others

As previously stated, forwarding messages from the listserv to others, even if they are professionals in the field and may already be on the listserv, is not allowed. Once forwarded, there is no way of knowing what will happen to the message or its contents. Suppose you posted a clinical message that was meant only for the listserv that was then posted on social media without any explanation. First of all, this would cause harm and break trust, both of which go against the General Principles of the code of the ethics. Secondly, context is everything and taking a piece of an entire thread can be very damaging.

If you wish to share some information with someone outside of the list, please summarize the information in your own words in a way the recipient is likely to understand and summarize the context in which it appeared.

Unprofessional Language/Comments

We expect all posts to utilize courteous and respectful language. All members are to be aware of and respect cultural, individual, and role differences, including those based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, political affiliation, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status. Derogatory comments about any individual, group, or institution

are prohibited. Name calling, bullying, micro-aggressions, and demeaning comments directed at other list members will not be tolerated. Furthermore, this listserv is not to be used to communicate any type of support, opposition, or endorsement for any candidate or specific political party for any federal, local, or state office.

Not only is it unethical, but it is also considered unprofessional to include any identifying or Protected Health Information (PHI) in listserv posts. Protecting our clients' confidences is among one of our most important obligations; it is one of the pillars upon which the psychotherapeutic relationship rests. Above all, this means that we take whatever steps are necessary to ensure the confidentiality of our clients.

Illegal Activities (Including Collusion and Anti-Trust)

It is not acceptable to use the listserv for any illegal purpose. It is against the law for psychologists to discuss in a public forum what they charge and how they determine their fees. When publicly discussed, this gives the impression that psychologists are colluding with one another to fix their fees. This is a direct violation of antitrust law.

This also includes using the listserv for any unfair competitive advantage. Any statements made that defame the character of or interfere with the professional practice of any individual, group, or institution is not allowed. Making false claims or statements without factual evidence or direct sources is considered hearsay and/or rumor-spreading, which are both prohibited from discussion.

Worms and Viruses

Please do not post any worm or virus warnings to the list as a whole. Any such concerns should be directed to the listserv administrator at postmaster@ohpsych.org.

Failure to Adhere to Listserv Guidelines

Your usage of the OPA listservs constitutes your agreement to adhere to and comply with all guidelines described above. Failure to adhere to any of the above guidelines may result in your removal from the list by the Chair(s) of the CTC or the OPA Chief Executive Officer. To report a violation of these guidelines, please email the listserv administrator at postmaster@ohpsych.org, who will forward the issue Chair of the CTC and the OPA Chief Executive Officer.

The process of progressive sanctioning for misconduct on the OPA listservs are as follows:

1. An official warning will be sent to the violator with a reminder of the rules and an explanation of the nature of the violation(s). The violator will be informed that continuation of the cited behavior(s) can lead to suspension or removal from the OPA list.
2. In the case of a second warning, the Chair of the CTC or the OPA Chief Executive Officer will remind the offending list member of the nature of the violation(s). At that point, the member will be placed on probation for three (3) months. While on probation, the offending member shall receive only Read Only access to the listserv or have a Moderated/Curated listserv subscription requiring all posts to be reviewed and verified by either the CTC or OPA Chief Executive Officer. The member will also be informed that a third violation will result in suspension from all OPA listservs for six (6) months. The decision of listserv sanction is made through the CTC Chair(s) or Chief Executive Officer.

3. In the case of a third violation the person will be suspended from all OPA listservs for six (6) months.
 4. After a six-month suspension, the member may reapply to the listserv by connecting with the listserv administrator at postmaster@ohpsych.org or contacting the OPA Chief Executive Officer. Reapplication does not guarantee immediate reinstatement to the listserv. If reinstated, prior offenses will be disregarded and the violation procedure will start again. If not reinstated, the rationale for the decision will be sent to the member.
- Decisions that decline to reinstate a member shall be reviewed and approved by the Chief Executive Officer and CTC prior to notification to the member.
5. In egregious cases, the CTC Chair or the Chief Executive Officer can immediately suspend the violator.
 6. Due Process in Disciplinary Sanctioning: Any listserv disciplinary action may be appealed to the Association's Presidential Trio to dispute, challenge, or request relief from sanction. The appeal disposition from the Presidential Trio is final and not subject to any further review or arbitration.
 7. Repeated violations of the OPA listserv guidelines after the three (3) events described above can result in permanent revocation of your access to all OPA listservs.

Listserv Basics

Below are basic definitions and procedures that may be helpful as you interact with the listserv.

Posting (Emailing to a list)

Once you have subscribed to a list you may post a message to it. Compose an email and choose one of the following OPA listserv email addresses:

OPA-LINK@LISTS.APAPRACTICE.ORG

OPA-EARLY@LISTS.APAPRACTICE.ORG

OPA-FORENSIC@LISTS.APAPRACTICE.ORG

OPA-LGBT@LISTS.APAPRACTICE.ORG

OPA-NEURO@LISTS.APAPRACTICE.ORG

OPA-RXP@LISTS.APAPRACTICE.ORG

OPA-SM-COL@LISTS.APAPRACTICE.ORG

OPA-STUDENT@LISTS.APAPRACTICE.ORG

OPA-PSI-COM@LISTS.APAPRACTICE.ORG

OPA-PSI@LISTS.APAPRACTICE.ORG

OPA-BWC@LISTS.APAPRACTICE.ORG

OPA-Health-Pain@LISTS.APAPRACTICE.ORG

OPA-CAP@LISTS.APAPRACTICE.ORG

OFFICEMGR@LISTS.APAPRACTICE.ORG

Responding to a Message

If you wish to respond to only the sender of a message, hit 'Reply' which will only include the sender's email address in the 'Reply To' section of the email. This is commonly referred to as "backchannel," a term that is often used in posts.

To respond to the entire list (i.e., every member subscribed to that specific list), hit 'Reply All.' This will publicly send your response out to the entire list.

To begin a new conversation with the listserv, enter the listserv email address (from the list within *Posting (Emailing to a List)* above) in the 'To' section of a new email message.

Threads and Subject Lines

Several messages on the same topic are called a "thread." Threads are identified by the text contained in the subject header. Therefore, if you wish to contribute to a particular thread, it is extremely important that you not change the subject line. Even the smallest change will begin a new thread. The one exception to this rule is that the email software will insert the word "Re:" at the beginning of the header which indicates that you are responding to the thread.

Archived Messages

All messages appearing on the listserv are archived and can be accessed and searched at a later date. Please note that messages are archived by date and not by subject line or thread.

In order to access and search archived messages, follow the steps below.

- Visit <http://lists.apapractice.org/>, and click the first "Click Here" link to continue (or directly visit <http://lists.apapractice.org/cgi-bin/wa-apapractice.exe>).
- You will need to set up a username and password to access the archives.
- After logging in, you will be able to view links to all APA Practice Organization lists to which you are subscribed.

Managing Subscriptions

Subscribe to Listservs

- Sign into the Member area of the OPA website. Choose to manage your profile and update the field OPA ListServ Subscription. Place a checkmark in the box next to all the listservs you wish to subscribe to.

OR

- Send an email to the listserv administrator at postmaster@ohpsych.org indicating which lists you would like to join.

Digest Format

Instead of receiving each message immediately upon its appearance on the list, you may choose to receive all messages for the day in a single message, once a day. This is called the Digest format.

In order to subscribe to the digest format, follow the steps below:

- Address an email message to LISTSERV@lists.apapractice.org. The body of the email should contain the word SET and the name of the desired listserv followed by the word DIGEST. (Example: SET OPA-LINK DIGEST.)

OR

- Contact the listserv administrator at postmaster@ohpsych.org.

Unsubscribe from Listservs

- Sign into the Member area of the OPA website. Choose to manage your profile and update the field OPA ListServ Subscription. Remove checkmarks in the boxes next to all the listservs you wish to be removed from and choose option None.

OR

- Send an email to the listserv administrator at postmaster@ohpsych.org indicating which lists you would like to be removed from.

OR

- Address email to Listserv@lists.apapractice.org. The body of the email should contain: SIGNOFF and the name of the listserv. (Example: SIGNOFF OPA-LINK)

Change of Email Address

- Send an email to the listserv administrator at postmaster@ohpsych.org providing old email and new email addresses.
- Sign into the Member area of the OPA website. Choose to manage your profile and update the email address field.

Suspend Receipt of Messages Temporarily

- Send email to LISTSERV@lists.apapractice.org. The body of the email should contain SET and the name of the listserv followed by NOMAIL. (Example: SET OPA-RxP NOMAIL). Please note that you may still access the listserv activity through the archives if you choose to temporarily suspend listserv messages.

OR

- Contact the listserv administrator at postmaster@ohpsych.org.

Restart Delivery of Suspended Messages

- Address an e-mail message to LISTSERV@lists.apapractice.org. The body of the email should contain SET and the name of the listserv followed by MAIL. (Example: SET OPA-NEURO MAIL)

OR

- Contact the listserv administrator at postmaster@ohpsych.org.

Conclusions

We are glad to have you join the OPA listservs. By participating in the listservs, you are agreeing to adhere to and comply with all Guidelines described above. Remember to have all posts adhere to the Ethics Code and General Principles, protect client confidentiality, and recognize that all persons and psychologists have unique (and sometimes conflicting) views and beliefs. Use the listserv respectfully and enjoy your clinical journey. Should you have any questions or concerns about any of the guidelines, please contact the listserv administrator at postmaster@ohpsych.org.

¹ Business owners may post informal advertising or brief notices for their own businesses as long as it follows guidelines described within *Informal Advertising* above.