Guidelines for Communication Through SPSMM Interactions

LISTSERVs and Zoom Platform

These guidelines are meant to promote positive, productive communication among SPSMM members. They are focused on four primary values: civility, consideration, compassion/empathy and humility. As much as possible, they are both minimal and concrete. We hope anyone engaging on the SPSMM network will familiarize themselves with the guidelines, follow them, and support/monitor each other in their implementation. They are delineated in two sections, Structural Rules and Civility Guidelines. Each section takes into account possibilities for types, purposes, and roles involved in communication.

Modalities: Written – listserve, email (back channel), facebook (etc.)

Verbal – zoom call (group), zoom call (dyad), facetime, phone call

Purpose: discussion, debate, brainstorming/problem solving, support/sharing, presentation/educating, interpersonal dynamics focus

Roles: Primary Participant, Participant, Mediator, Moderator, Facilitator, Observer

Rules

ANNOUNCEMENTS Listserve (DIV51ANNOUNCEMENTS@LISTS.APA.ORG)

Announcements should be as concise as possible. Each announcement should include:

1. Subject Line
2. Purpose of Announcement/Intended Audience—Job Posting(s), Up-coming Event (e.g., webinar, workshop, lecture, discussion, debate), Request for Resources (e.g., referral, direction to wanted materials), Research Participation Request
3. Brief summary/descriptors limited to 100 words
4. Direction to more complete, detailed information (e.g., attachments, links) (if needed)

Attachments and links to other sources are both permitted and encouraged to allow for completeness and respect for others’ time. This listserve is actively moderated, so postings are vetted. Announcements can serve as to supply information and/or as invitation to more direct interaction.

The Announcements are monitored. The list moderator will briefly scan them and post them to the list. Shortly, Announcements will be routed through a Division Website link, providing a submission for incorporating the stated structure. Announcements will then be available for two weeks (or until the poster requests they be taken down).

DISCUSSION Listserve ([SPSMM@LISTS.APA.ORG](mailto:SPSMM@LISTS.APA.ORG))

Postings should be as concise as possible. Each message should include:

1. Subject Line
2. Purpose of Posting/Intended Audience—Discussion, Debate, Brainstorming/Problem Solving, Support/Sharing, Presentation/Educating, Interpersonal Dynamics Focus
3. Indicator of Connection to Other Postings (e.g., Posting by “Name,” Subject, Date)
4. Brief commentary limited to 250 words (one paragraph)
5. Direction to more complete, detailed information (e.g., attachments, links), invitation to other interaction format and details for how to access that interaction (if needed)

Interaction can take various forms, not necessarily mutually exclusive. However, clarity of purpose helps both self and others prepare expectations. Labeling the content focus and intended purpose allow others to choose how much and from what role(s) they might engage.

Attachments and links to other sources are both permitted and encouraged to allow for completeness, respect for others’ time, and ability to choose extent of engagement.

Although ultimately moderated by an officially designated list moderator(s), that function is only employed after more informal approaches to moderation have proved ineffective. The moderator function is NOT CENSORSHIP. Content and Persons will only be banned after due process. (See Civility Guidelines)

ZOOM (and other platform) Meetings

SPSMM will either directly sponsor or support face-to-face interaction. Interaction can take various forms, not necessarily mutually exclusive. However, clarity of purpose helps both self and others prepare expectations. Each contribution should state the content focus and the intended type of engagement in the subject line. Labeling the content focus and intended purpose allow others to choose how much and from what role(s) they might engage. Invitations should be enough in advance of the engagement to inform members of the opportunity to participate, at least one day prior. Invitations to interactions should be offered through both listserves to allow members to choose type and extent of participation. If purpose demands, certainly roles should be attended to (e.g., need for a facilitator, moderator, or mediator), that is agreed in advance and arranged for. “Leadership” Roles may be the group responsibility, if acknowledged and arranged in advance. A list of members equipped to

Facilitate – focus on process only (i.e., process group leader)

Moderate – attend to tasks, maintain designated group content focus, distribute time, assure civility rules are followed, tie threads and comments together, comment/summarize

Mediate – govern interaction by helping keep open communication flowing, promoting accurate understanding, assuring fairness and civility of exchanges

will be available to those arranging sessions as desired and needed. Each of these roles should be filled by a person or persons not directly involved or vested in the content focus of the interaction to assure impartiality and fairness as much as possible.

Other Modalities

Any and all modes of communication are encouraged. Smaller groups and less formal approaches (e-mail, phone calls, Facetime [or equivalent], snail-mail, and so forth are not within the purview of these rules. However, inclusion of others who may have an interest and/or stake in interactions is encouraged. Movement in and out of different modalities will likely occur and should be considered in relation to SPSMM interests as a group of individuals and organization.

Civility Guidelines (Adopted and Adapted from COR-- American Psychological Association Council of Representatives)

We recognize that the following guidelines are aspirational and open to interpretation. Still they capture the spirit of what SPSMM values. The original Guidelines were developed for verbal, face-to-face-interactions. They have been adapted to include written communications as well.

Preamble

As psychologists and SPSMM members in general, we seek to embrace and practice the ethical principle of “respecting the dignity and worth of all people” and create a climate of civility, respect and inclusion throughout our community.

We strive to accomplish this goal by interacting and communicating with others in a spirit of mutual respect and an openness to listen as well as to consider all points of view. While we may disagree on important issues, we debate and express our ideas in a collegial, civilized and professional manner. Corrective feedback will be provided constructively, respectfully and compassionately whenever members are perceived to not behave civilly in order to maintain a comfortable, safe and professional environment in which to conduct the work of the Association. Finally, we understand that individuals from different cultures and groups may have varying customs and beliefs about what constitutes civil or uncivil behavior. We expect all to be respectful and mindful of these differences and norms.

Civility Operational Definitions

1. Think carefully before speaking or submitting written comments (perhaps consulting with trusted others)

2. Differentiate and articulate facts from opinions. (Be aware the distinction is not always clear and definitely defined.)

3. Focus on the common good

4. Disagree with others respectfully (Be aware of differences in socialization.)

5. Be open to others without hostility (Be aware and modulate your own reactions and/or open to guidance by others.)

6. Respect diverse views and groups (Re respect see above caution.)

7. Offer a spirit of collegiality, openness, and curiosity

8. Have the courage to offer productive and corrective feedback to those who are perceived as behaving in demeaning, insulting, disrespectful, and discriminatory ways

9. Focus corrective feedback on one’s best and most desirable behavior

10. Create a welcoming environment for all

Operational Definitions of Incivility

1. Interrupting and talking over others who have the floor

2. Overgeneralizing and offering dispositional character criticisms and attributions

3. Using language that is perceived as being aggressive, sarcastic, or demeaning

4. Speaking too often or for too long

5. Engaging in disrespectful non-verbal behaviors (e.g., eye rolling, loud sighs)

6. Offering false praise or disingenuous comments (e.g., “With all due respect but…” [often a matter of tone or word-choice interpretation])

The “Rules” are intended to prevent, limit and/or correct incidents of perceived incivility. Protocol (including due process) for intervention adopts the approach of moving from informality, benefit-of-the-doubt, and consideration of others, to more stringent/aggressive actions as required. While we encourage people to address their issues with others personally, before resorting to other approaches, we also recognize the role/power/comfort differential between members (e.g., students, new members). Harsher (ultimate) responses are reserved for SPSMM members as a group, embodied in the Executive Committee after due process and only as a last resort, after all other approaches have been tried to no avail.