

One significant benefit of membership in the Illinois Psychological Association is the privilege of joining and participating on our listserv. Typically, the listserv has daily postings that contain questions for the group; announcements of relevant opportunities; recent press about psychological issues; requests for referrals; and requests for participation in research. Thousands of messages are sent and received on the list each year, most of which are informative, helpful, worded politely, and clearly relevant to the Association's focus on psychological research, education, training, practice, and advocacy.

IPA Listserv Guidelines

1. The purpose of the IPA listserv is to facilitate communication among all IPA members on topics related to psychological research, education, training, practice, and advocacy. Messages sent to the listserv should reflect this community objective.
2. The IPA listserv should be used in a manner that is consistent with the rules that APA has established for all of the listservs that it supports (see <http://listserve.apa.org/infopages/APARules.html>).
3. The Listserv Manager and the Listserv Assistant Manager will be appointed by the IPA President and approved by Council. The Listserv Manager will contact individuals who do not use the listserv in a manner that is professional and respectful of list members. The definition of "unprofessional" behavior and the consequences of displaying unprofessional and disrespectful behavior are stated in the section "Defining Unprofessional Behavior," found below. The Listserv Assistant Manager will take over the responsibilities of the Listserv Manager when the Listserv Manager is on vacation, or is ill or, for any other reason, is temporarily unable to carry out his/her responsibilities.
4. A Listserv Committee of three members will be appointed by the IPA President and approved by the IPA Executive Committee and by the IPA Council.

Defining Unprofessional Behavior

Unprofessional behavior is defined as any behavior that may be construed as being unsupportive of or disrespectful to listserv members or creating a hostile environment. Examples of unsupportive or disrespectful behavior or behavior that contributes to the creation of a hostile environment include, but are not limited to: hostile or sarcastic responses to a list member's posting; negative remarks about a list member's character or motives; repetitive postings; postings that contain statements that distort or misrepresent an event; postings that clearly address a relational issue with a specific list member; postings that are not obviously relevant to the purpose of the listserv.

Constructive criticism and dissenting positions are not considered "unprofessional behavior." Comments that express a negative evaluation but which do not explicitly offer alternative resources or a helpful course of action or do not ask for engagement are considered unsupportive or disrespectful. Some examples are cited below. These examples are not all-inclusive.

Unprofessional: "Obviously someone hasn't been keeping up with the field."

vs.

Professional: "What about the latest findings from X – might those be something that you might explore? I'd be very much interested in hearing your thoughts about those findings."

Unprofessional: "Taking this approach is deceitful and misleading."

vs.

Professional: "I disagree with this approach. In my opinion, our clients (or members) would be best served by going about it this way [step 1, step 2, and step 3]."

Unprofessional: "Those in leadership are just trying to hide things from the membership."

vs.

Professional: "I don't recall seeing this information anywhere. Can someone tell me where I might be able to access this information, or when it might become available to the membership?"

Consequences of Unprofessional Behavior

To assure that subscription to the listserv is a positive experience, violators of the listserv guidelines will be subject to the following sanctions, listed in order of increasing severity:

- 1. Listmember will be sent a reminder message about the listserv's purpose, community standards, and guidelines.**
- 2. Should another violation occur, subsequent to the warning, a listmember will be placed on read-only status with the listserv for a 30-day period. This means that his/her posting privileges will be suspended. He/she will be able to receive messages, but not post any. Asking another listserv member to post a message on one's behalf while on read-only-status is grounds for removal from the listserv on an extended or permanent basis.**
- 3. If, upon return to the listserv, a listmember posts a message that, again, violates our community standards, as stated above, his/her subscription to the listserv will be removed. This removal will follow a review by the listserv committee who will make recommendations to the IPA Executive Committee. The IPA Executive Committee will make the final recommendation for removal from the listserv. This decision to remove the member's subscription will come within 48 hours of the violating post. Immediately following the violating post, the listmember will be put back on the read-only status. If the IPA Executive Committee decides not to revoke the listmember's listserv privileges, the listmember will stay on read-only status for another 30 day period, after which the listmember could return to the listserv with full privileges.**

Why Listserv Moderation is not a viable option for the IPA

- 1. Subscribers may take offense and threaten legal action.**

2. If a list is moderated, then the moderator might approve an allegedly libelous statement, resulting in legal risks and/or significant annoyance to the moderator.

3. It is unfair to ask a volunteer, such as a listserv moderator, to take on this added level of responsibility and risk.

We intend to keep the IPA listserv unmoderated. All members can post messages directly to the list. Infractions of the listserv rules, therefore, will be addressed only after the fact.

Thank-you for your cooperation in adhering to these principles that will help us maintain a supportive professional community.