

AAMFT Community Guidelines for Blogs, Blog Comments, and Forum Posts

Welcome to the Community Guidelines for the AAMFT Community site! The Community is an exciting opportunity for interested members to discuss, comment, and make their voices heard. Members may choose whether they wish to participate in the Community and, if so, to what degree they will participate. These Guidelines have been written to help establish a positive culture and offer some basic information about using the Community, and should be read together with the Terms of Use.

What are AAMFT Community Blogs?

- AAMFT welcomes members to create blog posts in our AAMFT Community website. Blogs are your area to post and read essays and media about topics relevant to family therapy, training and research. Blogs tell stories, share news and resources, and offer opinions. While a typical blog entry is brief (200-500 words) because readers tend to prefer concise content, there is no set word limit and you may write as much as you like. Blogs that are posted in the AAMFT Community are restricted by default so that they may only be accessed by your fellow AAMFT members. However, you may choose to designate them as publically available. In that case, they may be read by anyone online. Regardless, only AAMFT members can post blogs to our website.

What are Blog Comments?

- At the end of most blog entries there is an area where readers may post a comment or brief response. A low number of responses does not mean there is little or no readership, just that your readers are not entering comments. Comments that are posted in the AAMFT Community may be read by anyone online; they are not restricted to your fellow AAMFT members. However, only members can post comments to our blogs.

What are AAMFT Community Forums?

- Our private, members-only, online discussion boards are called Forums. Forums are for asking a question or expressing an opinion – either way, they should be designed to illicit responses. Forum posts are considerably shorter than blogs and focused sharing a brief opinion or question to which others will probably want to respond. When Forum threads become out of date or members are no longer contributing to the discussion, Forums may be deleted by site administrators in order to keep the Forums more tidy.

What are our Community Guidelines for these areas?

- The number one guideline is respect. This is a shared conversation space and it is necessary that everyone involved be respectful. We've written these guidelines to help make it clear what kinds of respect are expected in our Forums.
- Speak only for yourself, not for other therapists or groups. Write in the first person and be clear about who you are. Filling out your profile can help a great deal.

- Try to continue existing threads when your topic matches, but don't go overboard. If your topic isn't already part of a thread, then it's better to start your own thread than to hijack another conversation for your own topic.
- Avoid posting the same message repeatedly (aka "cross-posting"). It seems like it would help you get more readers, but it usually ends up annoying people and cluttering the boards. For example, if you have a divisional event just post it once to your division's section. Be mindful of whether it is appropriate and useful to post anything to multiple areas. It rarely is.
- Guard your username and password! You're responsible for helping to keep our members-only areas private to members. Sharing your log-in with others violates that trust and leaves you in a difficult position if they share or post anything you wouldn't want attributed to you.
- Copyright rules and fair use policies must be followed here. If you do not have permission to share text or images, then only post through a direct link to the original material.
- Financial disclosure laws must be followed here. If you have a financial interest in the content of the blog or Forum post, you must be very clear and direct about it. Advertisements are not appropriate here; AAMFT has many other resources for those who wish to promote a commercial event, product or service.
- Follow our ethical guidelines and all applicable laws. Whether you're posting to the Forums or writing a blog, you must follow these rules. Be especially mindful of not disclosing identifying information in blogs or Forum posts. If you have changed someone's information to protect them, make sure to let us know so we don't worry and so that non-therapists continue to trust the confidentiality of professionals like us.
- Anti-trust laws are important. Make sure you understand what they are and how they apply to you. Just like all other applicable laws, you must abide by anti-trust laws in our Community.
- Respect your readers, your clients, your fellow professionals and students, and our field. It's important that we feel able to debate, raise awareness, and have lively discussion. It is equally important that we all feel safe posting. Go a step further by making sure that what you write doesn't just avoid hurting individuals, but also is not written with the purpose of harming our field. Remember that irony and sarcasm don't always come across clearly in text, so make sure that your meaning is respectful and not easily misconstrued.
- AAMFT doesn't filter posts to blogs or the Forums, but we do retain the right to make sure that everyone feels safe here. Sometimes that means contacting authors, other times it means removing a post or comment in order to encourage conversation on a larger level.
- Make sure you've read our Terms of Use and that you understand them. Not sure what something means in our Terms of Use? Contact us so we can help!
- Remember that the person who has posted, or is reading your post, is a real person. Treat your readers and those you respond to with dignity. Assume the best about them, even if their best is not apparent in their post or comment.