

Ground rules – personal responsibility



Purpose

The Forum is a SANE Service. Its primary function is to provide a space where support is given and received mutually between members.

Important – membership and personal responsibility

Membership requires you to be willing and able to engage with others in the spirit of mutual support.

You are expected to take *personal responsibility* for your participation in this community, accepting and applying the guidelines and ground rules provided.

Important - guidelines and ground rules

The guidelines and ground rules are built around the expectation that members take personal responsibility for their presence and contributions in the community.

They outline the practicalities of personal responsibility, including tools to enable you to manage your contributions and responses to the difficult interactions or other challenges that arise as part of any group or community interaction.

NB: You are expected to **take personal responsibility** for your contributions at all times, including times when difficult or challenging situations or interactions may arise.

The role of moderation

The role of moderation is to ensure the wellbeing of the community as a whole, through supporting the objective of facilitating mutual support.

The moderation role also includes taking an overview of interactions, acting as necessary when members do not appear willing or able to take the personal responsibility expected.

NB: Please **accept and apply all ground rules and guidelines** if you wish to be a member of this Forum. If, at any point you are unable or do not wish to accept and apply the ground rules or guidelines, please *refrain from using the Forum*.

Please **accept and respect** the actions of the moderating team. Moderation actions are guided by the expectation that members agree to the principle of taking personal responsibility for their contributions and presence on the Forum when they choose to use this service.

1. Personal responsibility

- Take responsibility for *your* contributions, using guidelines and ground rules for guidance.
- Be mindful of the effect of your posts on other members.

2. “*Trig* posts

If you are feeling vulnerable, consider whether you wish to read threads marked with “*Trig*”. **Please consider your own well-being as a priority.** If you feel you may be unsettled by someone else’s distress, please consider the effect of exposing yourself to such content.

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3. Managing difficulties / challenging situations

Difficult or challenging situations and/or conflict arise as a natural part of any group interaction; they may result in distress or other difficult feelings. You are expected to be responsible for your contributions and responses at all times, including times of difficulty or conflict.

Below are examples of difficult situations that may arise, and tools to enable you to be responsible for *your* contributions in such situations.

(i) Personality clash/personal differences – differences or similarities in personalities, opinions and attitudes may arise and may be experienced as challenging.

(ii) A member becomes unwell – individuals may become unwell; posts and responses may be informed by anxiety, fear or paranoia. In such circumstances, the member's presence may appear to be irrational, difficult or insensitive.

(iii) Trolling - 'trolling' *can* be a feature of internet forums. However, the term can also be used as a means of abuse or attack in response to challenging posts.

Any concerns about 'trolling' should be communicated **directly** to the moderating team at supportforum@sane.org.uk.

Public references to 'trolls' or 'trolling' **will be removed at the discretion of the moderating team** as they tend to fuel feelings of paranoia, anxiety and fear. They may also be hurtful and unjust to those who are unwell.

Tools to use in managing *your* contributions with challenging situations/feelings:

These options provide tools to help you take *personal responsibility* when faced with *any* contributions or situations you find challenging:

- Disengage from the situation.
- Address and resolve the situation directly with relevant member/s, while remaining respectful of differences.
- Do **NOT** react to what you may perceive as provocation.
- Do **NOT** engage in interactions intended to 'protect' or 'support' other member/s, ie do NOT 'take sides'.
- Do **NOT** talk about the situation/person in an indirect way.
- Do **NOT** speculate or make assumptions/ judgements/ statements about others.
- *Take responsibility for your feelings*, eg 'I felt – upset/ angry/ hurt/ frightened' etc.
- Take time out from the Forum.
- Use the '**Foes**' function (User Control Panel). This enables you to see that the member has posted, but hides the content of their posts.

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Please note:

The moderating team will allow time for members to resolve difficulties/conflict themselves.

This may result in uncomfortable feelings and/or the presence of difficult/challenging threads; however, SANE feels it is important that individuals are given this opportunity.

Please consider and accept *your own* responsibility for contributing to such material and/or for protecting yourself from such material as necessary.

If you are unable and/or unwilling to act respectfully and responsibly, **the moderating team will take action as necessary.**

Moderation action may include:

- Editing of posts/threads
- Locking of threads
- Removal of threads and/or posts
- Use of pre-moderation
- Suspension of accounts
- Any other appropriate action

The moderating team aim to communicate with members following any such action. However, this may not always be practicable, or there may be a time delay in so doing. Please see 'Role of Moderation'.

4. Suicide / Crisis

You may experience suicidal thoughts and feelings; you may have suicide plans. We wish you to be free to discuss such thoughts and feelings.

However, if you have suicide plans please be mindful of how you express these. Posting plans may evoke feelings of responsibility and helplessness in others.

Please consider whether you should post plans *if you are unable to be receptive to support*, as this can be acutely distressing for others.

Please note: The role of the moderating team is to enable the Forum to be a space for members to provide mutual support. This role does **not** include providing emotional or practical support directly to members, including those who may be suicidal or in crisis.

If you are in crisis or feeling suicidal – in addition to the Support Forum, SANE provides helpline and email services. You can contact either of these for emotional support and a space to explore options available to you.

The helpline is open every day from **6pm until 11pm on 0845 767 8000.**

SANE, 1st Floor Cityside House, 40 Adler Street, London E1 1EE T: 020 7375 2162 W: www.sane.org.uk

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SANEmail is **NOT** a crisis service therefore you will not get an immediate response, but you may find it helpful to write out your feelings. It can be contacted via the SANE website.

If you feel in immediate or urgent need of help, please visit the '**Crisis**' link on the Emotional Support page of the website which provides a list of options that may be available to you.

5. Equality amongst members

At any time, the community will host established and new members, as well as people considering whether to join. Please keep an eye out for new members, acknowledge introductory posts, welcome new members etc.

The Forum is available to people across the full spectrum of mental illness.

Individuals may experience different levels of need and/or distress at different times. Some will be more extrovert, some shy or more introvert. Some may use the Forum daily; others will be less frequent/ intermittent visitors.

Everyone is entitled to equal space, presence and weight. This requires awareness and sensitivity from everyone.

- Please be mindful of interactions that may feel excluding.
- Do **NOT** resurrect 'old' or historical material that is not in the spirit of mutual support.

The moderating team will take action as necessary with regard to such content.

Please note:

These Guidelines will be periodically reviewed and updated.
Any changes or amendments will be announced on the Forum.

NB: Comprehensive guidance is provided to enable you to take personal responsibility to manage your presence on the Forum. SANE cannot take any responsibility for any distress that may arise from use of the Forum.