



Terms of Use: Social Media for the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI)

I. The Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI)

The SVRI is a global research initiative that aims to promote priority driven, good quality research in the area of sexual violence, particularly in developing countries. The SVRI is building an experienced and committed network of researchers, policy makers, activists and donors to ensure that the many aspects of sexual violence are addressed from the perspective of different disciplines and cultures. The SVRI's objectives are to:

1. Increase awareness of sexual violence as a priority public health problem through evidence-based communication and information.
2. Promote donor and researcher involvement in supporting and undertaking research on sexual violence.
3. Build capacity in sexual violence research.
4. Improve knowledge of sexual violence internationally to influence policy and service delivery.

The SVRI has an increasing profile on the internet. The aim of this document therefore is to guide SVRI staff in using social media in a manner that is ethical and professional and furthers the aims and objectives of the SVRI.

II. Statement

The SVRI is currently hosting social media platforms and online communities via the blog site, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. SVRI staff, partners and other interested individuals are encouraged to constructively contribute to these mediums both to raise the SVRI's public profile and to share and disseminate information and resources on sexual violence.

III. Purpose of Social Media and blogging for the SVRI

The SVRI currently uses platforms such as [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Blog](#) and listserv to share and connect with our members and the rest of the public, in a more informal way. In addition to this, the SVRI regards its blogs as a platform that facilitates information sharing, learning and open discussions on the latest issues and research. The blog site helps in coordinating a dialogue between different stakeholders such as researchers, policy makers, activists, government officials and members of various communities. Social media and blogsite, extends the reach of the SVRI, increases our global profile, encourages new membership and provides additional platforms to circulate materials and resources related to sexual violence.

IV. Principles:

Posting and blogging must:

- Be guided by the [Sexual Violence Research Agenda](#);
- Be human rights based;
- Inform policy, programmes and services and serve to strengthen access to comprehensive care and support for sexual violence survivors;
- Challenge the gender hierarchy that contributes to sexual violence in order to promote gender equity;
- Prioritise the sharing of information from low and middle income countries;
- Share research that is cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary;
- Provide references for the work of others;
- Promote good quality research that is conducted in an ethical research manner; and
- Challenge the gender hierarchy that contributes to sexual violence in order to promote gender equity.

V. Code of Conduct

The code of conduct includes key ethical requirements and standards for using the SVRI's social media platforms and website. These are:

1. **Act with Integrity:** Be honest, polite and considerate when posting or replying to comments.
2. **Be Transparent:** Always be clear when personal opinions are given, identify yourself in these situations. As a SVRI staff member, opinions should be apolitical, impartial and professional.
3. **Use Discretion at All Times:** Do not publish findings that should not be made public. When images that represent violence against women are placed online by others, these need to be carefully reviewed for their impact on the public. The SVRI reserves the right to remove such content.
4. **Produce Content about Area of Expertise:** Stay on-topic and seek advice from the appropriate area when questions fall outside SVRI staff area of expertise.
5. **Admit Mistakes:** Admit and correct mistakes made as soon as possible. When correcting a comment or piece of information, indicate that the change has been made. In the case of a mistake which may lead to legal action should be taken up with the SVRI secretariat.

VI. Posting Comments and Opinions on Social Media Platforms

The Disclaimers for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and blog site is stated below:

The SVRI welcomes all to our social media platforms and we welcome you to post comments to our pages. The purpose of our social media platforms is to share and connect with the public about sexual violence research and related materials. We encourage questions, comments and concerns from all. We will give feedback to your comments during our business hours.

Once posted, the SVRI reserves the right to delete submissions that contain the following:

- Inappropriate language (E.g. swearing).
- Personal attacks on SVRI staff or other members of the public, of any kind.
- Comments or content that promotes or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, colour, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation, physical or intellectual disability etc.
- Spam or links to spam websites (posts containing the same message posted multiple times).
- Comments that Include contact details such as phone numbers, postal or email addresses.
- Comments that are clearly off-topic for the blog, discussion or site to which you are posting.
- Comments that promote or advocate illegal activities.
- Comments that promote particular services, products or political organisations.
- Comments that infringe on copyright or trademarks.
- Comments that include sexually explicit images or that promotes rape and other forms of exploitation and violence.
- Any information that may compromise the safety, security or proceedings of public systems or any criminal or civil investigations.

Individuals who comment on our blog posts are encouraged to provide their identification (i.e., names and affiliation/s). This is a way of giving recognition and acknowledgement to the individual and their organisations.

The SVRI welcomes feedback, both positive and negative, about our programmes and services but please make sure your comments are in line with the above guidelines.

The SVRI will gladly circulate links to study surveys on our social media platforms, and through our listserv, provided ethical clearance to relevant topics has been granted and shared with the SVRI Secretariat. Subscribe to our listserv [here](#).

Repeatedly posting personal or offensive comments about individual users or people who work for the SVRI may be considered harassment. We reserve the right to remove such messages and take action against those responsible. By commenting on this page you are indicating that you have read, understand and agree to abide by the house rules laid out above.

Please note that comments posted on our social media platforms do not reflect the opinions and position of the SVRI or its staff members. If you have any questions concerning the operation of our online platforms contact the SVRI at svri@mrc.ac.za.

VI. Guidelines for Responsible Posting and blogging

The following guidelines should be used when posting and blogging information and comments on the SVRI's social media platforms:

- Always promote the [SVRI mission, aims and objectives](#).
- Keep in mind the wider, more diverse audience. Show respect for the audience.
- Postings must always aim to educate and inform in a positive manner.
- Be sensitive to images, content that may have a negative impact on the public.

- Promote scientific research for professionals and the community in an ethical manner.
- Promote related events and exhibitions.
- Promote debates and discussions that will help find solutions.
- Be judicious in posts and comments.

VII. Roles and Responsibilities

SVRI staff members are expected to continually engage on social media platforms in order to keep SVRI web presence alive. Monitoring and Maintenance of the platforms are also the responsibilities of staff members. SVRI staff will determine the pace of interaction through posting on Twitter, Facebook and SVRI Blog. It is important that SVRI values as well as the Code of Conduct and Posting Guidelines apply at all times. All inappropriate or defamatory postings will be removed at the discretion of SVRI staff.

SVRI staff members are responsible for maintaining an online social presence and to analyze results which can be fed back to the SVRI Coordinating Group and donors supporting the SVRI.

This document will be reviewed regularly from the date of its endorsement.

The Sexual Violence Research Initiative.

www.svri.org.