

Rules for Confidential Communication

The manuscripts to be reviewed are considered confidential communication. Once an unpublished manuscript is set in a fixed, tangible form (e.g., typed on a page), it is entitled to copyright protection. The author of an unpublished manuscript owns the copyright and is entitled to the same rights as an author of a published work. As such, reviewers may not engage in the circulation, quotation, citation, or reference of the unpublished manuscript, nor may they use the information contained within the unpublished manuscript to further their own work without explicit permission from the author.

Prior to sharing the unpublished manuscript with any other person, such as a colleague or student, reviewers must receive permission from the Action Editor. It is not acceptable to share the manuscript with students for educational purposes.

Reviewers are expected to delete/destroy copies of the manuscript upon completion of the review. An exception to this rule allows reviewers to retain one copy of the manuscript until the reviewer has received a copy of the decision letter and other reviews of the manuscript from the Action Editor. Once these materials are reviewed, the reviewer must delete/destroy any remaining copies of the manuscript.

JPI uses a masked review process. The Action Editor must be immediately informed if a reviewer determines there may be a potential conflict of interest between the manuscript's authors and the reviewer. Examples of conflicts of interest include: recent collaborations, faculty colleagues, students, financial gain stemming from the acceptance or rejection of the manuscript, etc. If a conflict of interest appears to exist, the manuscript will be reassigned and the reviewer should immediately delete/destroy all copies of the manuscript.

Roles of the Reviewer

JPI reviewers fulfill two integral roles within the scientific peer review process: gatekeeper and consultant. As a gatekeeper, reviewers are tasked with submitting a recommendation to the Action Editor regarding the acceptance, rejection, or revision and resubmission of the manuscript to the authors. The importance of this role should not be underestimated, as published articles within JPI become permanent works within the scientific literature and ultimately influence the work of future readers. Reviewers are encouraged to exercise conscientiousness with their responsibility in maintaining the integrity of the posterity of published works within the scientific literature.

As a consultant, reviewers are tasked with submitting a constructive and sufficiently detailed narrative appraisal to the Action Editor, who is responsible for providing this information to the authors. Despite the inability of JPI to publish every article submitted, reviewers are tasked with providing thorough feedback to authors regardless of a manuscript's acceptance status. This feedback should encourage authors of rejected manuscripts to revise and resubmit their best works, as well as provide authors of accepted manuscripts with direction for future manuscripts.

Some reviewers may find it difficult to simultaneously perform the roles gatekeeper and consultant; instead focusing on one role at a time. Reviewers are encouraged to utilize *tactful candor* when pointing out errors within a manuscript, maintaining collegial *respect* for the authors. A common technique consists of two revision processes, with one focusing on publication recommendation and the other focusing on the narrative evaluation. Regardless of the approach of the reviewer, he or she must remain mindful of fulfilling both integral roles within the scientific peer review process.

Publication Recommendation

When communicating your publication recommendation, please use JPI's internal standardized evaluation form. This form helps ensure the separation of gatekeeper and consultant roles, as well as helps ensure authors do not receive a reviewer's explicit recommendation within the narrative evaluation they receive.

When making their publication recommendation, reviewers should consider these APA Publication and Communication Board guidelines:

To merit publication each manuscript must make an original, valid, and significant contribution to an area of psychology appropriate for the journal to which it is submitted. That is:

- (1) A manuscript cannot have been published, in whole or in part, in another journal or readily available work (see APA Publication Manual, 5th ed., p. 347, for more information on primary, or original, publication).
- (2) A manuscript must be accurate, and the conclusions and generalizations must follow from the data.
- (3) A manuscript must be more than free of major fault—it must be an important contribution to the literature.
- (4) A manuscript must be appropriate for the journal to which it is submitted.

For a manuscript not meeting all those criteria, you will usually recommend rejection, with detailed reasons for your recommendation.

As you consider your publication recommendation to the Action Editor, it may be helpful to answer three sequential questions:

1. Is the manuscript topic appropriate for JPI?

In the event an Editor is confident the manuscript is outside the scope of JPI, it shall be rejected without being subjected to peer review. However, reviewers may still be asked to review manuscripts when the Editor is uncertain regarding the manuscripts fit with JPI. Information regarding the fit of the manuscript is productive and helpful feedback to both the Editor and the authors, and should be included in either the publication recommendation or the narrative evaluation.

The instructions to authors describes JPI's scope this way: *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration* primarily publishes original peer-reviewed papers consistent with four major pathways associated with psychotherapy integration: (1) common factors (core elements to effective psychotherapy that transcend a specific orientation), (2) technical eclecticism (application of the best treatment for a specific population and problem), (3) theoretical integration (combining two or more theories and their associated techniques), or (4) assimilative integration (theoretical grounding in a single orientation with value added techniques drawn from other orientations).

Empirical studies of integrative psychotherapies targeting specific populations, clinical presentations/disorders, settings (e.g., integrated primary care), or developments in the broader fields of psychology and psychiatry (e.g., psychobiology) are also strongly encouraged. Meta-analytic studies of any of the above are well suited to *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration*, as are review papers of exceptionally high quality. The overarching goal is to significantly advance knowledge and application of

psychotherapy integration.

2. Does the manuscript significantly contribute to the scientific literature?

One of the most important variables in determining whether a manuscript should be accepted is manuscript importance. Although importance can be difficult to define, reviewers may benefit from asking themselves if the manuscript adds to the scientific literature in a meaningful way, stimulates new theory and research, and/or can be consistently cited in future works.

Unfortunately, many manuscripts which present solid work and which implement appropriate methodologies and research designs, fail to meet acceptance criteria by not significantly advancing the field.

3. Can the weaknesses of the manuscript be resolved through the revision process?

Two criteria must be met to receive an invitation to revise and resubmit. First, the authors must be potentially able to appropriately address all serious issues within the manuscript. Any serious issue that is unable to be successfully resolved is considered a “fatal flaw” by reviewers. Second, the manuscript must also contribute significantly to the scientific literature.

Narrative Evaluation

Below are general guidelines for preparing the narrative evaluation. Please note these guidelines do not constitute an exhaustive list, but merely a list of common recommendations for less experienced reviewers. When writing the narrative evaluation, reviewers should be clear with regards to which critiques they feel are more important and less important, as well as with regards to which critiques reflect needed change and which reflect the preferences of the reviewer. In general, the most helpful narrative reviews are 1-2 pages, single-spaced.

General Style

The narrative evaluation should be presented as communication from the reviewer to the Action Editor. Reference to the authors should be sparse and formal (i.e., third person). It is generally more acceptable for readers to accept critiques when the feedback references the manuscript, as opposed to the authors directly.

Organization

Most narrative evaluations begin with a summary paragraph of the manuscript. Such a paragraph helps inform the authors of the reviewer’s general understanding of the study, as well as provides the reviewers a helpful reminder of the study’s content when they receive copies of the other reviews and editorial decision letter.

Following the summary paragraph, narrative evaluations typically include a paragraph containing general comments about the manuscript. Strengths and outstanding aspects of the manuscript should be discussed, as both validation and encouragement in the face of more critical feedback. To ease the experience of both the Action Editors and the authors, please clearly delineate between major and minor critiques. It is generally most helpful to organize major critiques into numbered points, which can be individually elaborated upon and referenced, followed by a separate section for minor critiques.