

Guide to special interest groups (SIGs) for the EHPS



What are SIGs?

Special interest groups enable individuals with a shared interest to identify each other, exchange ideas and information and potentially establish collaborations. SIGs could include a focus on a specific illness or behaviour, an intervention technique/medium or a methodology.

How do I join an existing SIG?

First you need to be a Synergy member (simply go to <http://ehps.net/synergy/new> and sign up). If you are newly signing up, then some SIGs will be available to join as part of the signup process. If you are an existing Synergy member, after logging in to the site, visit <http://ehps.net/synergy/sigs> or click on the **Special Interest Groups** link on the left under Navigation. There you will see a list of existing SIGs. Click on the name of the particular SIG of interest and details of the SIG will be shown. To join that SIG click on the link in the first line where it says: *If you would like to join this Special Interest Group, please click [here](#)*

How do I set up an SIG?

First you need to be a Synergy member (simply go to www.ehps.net/synergy and sign up). To request the creation of a new SIG, log in to the Synergy website <http://ehps.net/synergy> and visit <http://ehps.net/synergy/newsig> or click on the **Special Interest Groups** link on the left under Navigation and click on the link for

creating a new SIG. A new SIG needs to have at least four members one month after it is created, otherwise it may be deactivated for lack of interest. Each SIG will have a chair or joint chair. By default, the chair will be the person who requested the creation of the SIG, although this can be changed. The role of the chair is to encourage and facilitate discussion amongst group members, help in moderating and updating the group, and communicate with the Synergy board regarding any requests for their SIG group. The above role tasks need not be implemented exclusively by the chair but the latter is encouraged so the chair can oversee that such tasks are being carried out in the interests of their SIG.

How do I communicate with others in an SIG?

The main method of communicating with other SIG members is through the SIG specific mailing list. The email address for each SIG can be found on the website if you click on **Mailing list** on the SIG details page (to get to SIG details page select **Special Interest Groups** and then click on the SIG of interest). An email addressed to the mailing list will be delivered to all members of that SIG. Note that when you reply to a mailing list email, by default you just reply to the sender. If you want to keep a discussion going, make sure you reply to the mailing list address. You can also send a message to the whole SIG through the website by using the **Broadcast** function (go to SIG details page and select the **Broadcast** header). This will send an email to all those in the SIG. However, this should be for information only communications

as this is sent from a 'no-reply' email address.

Does Synergy facilitate SIG meetings?

Synergy aims to support SIGs in meeting online and in person at the EHPS annual conference. Synergy can help set up an initial 'flash meeting' through the FlashMeeting website <http://fm.ea-tel.eu/> where members of the SIG can have an audio-visual discussion. Members without a microphone or a webcam will be able to listen and watch the meeting using PC speakers/earphones, and participate via the chatting function of FlashMeeting using their keyboard. Subsequent 'flash meetings' can be organised by the SIG itself. Synergy is also planning to provide the option for breakfast

meetings at future EHPS annual conferences for SIGs. The opportunity to request such a meeting will be announced around the time that the abstract acceptance is confirmed for that conference.

Why are there currently not many SIGs listed on the website?

As this facility has been newly created, few SIGs have been set up to date. Why not create one today and invite others in your field to join?

The Synergy Board ■