



Information Sheet
Mental Health and Online Dating

Introduction

It is estimated that 25 percent of relationships start online, and the average online dater spends, on average 90 minutes a day, on various dating apps.

Dating and relationships come in many forms. Deciding what type of relationship you want is important and expectations should be laid out from the beginning.

Some folks are looking for long term monogamous relationships, and others are looking for “friends with benefits” (FWB). Some folks are not looking for a sexual relationship at all and may be looking for friends to hang out with. It is important to note that some apps can be used as a front for criminal and harmful activity.

For some daters, messaging and texting only is enough and fits to their lifestyle. Some folks in the online community calls this a text-lationship. This is ideal for individuals whom are not interested in public events or actions and are content with only an online relationship. A textlationship provides a sense of belonging as well as a sense of control, being able to feel safe.

Online dating also gives us instant access to potential partners and research shows that it is possible to develop intimacy and meaningful relationships online. This is especially appealing for daters who have a specific “type” or are isolated. Others use online dating for an initial connection and as a tool to reach the goal of meeting in real life.

Online dating allows users to test out the waters and get comfortable with beginning a new relationship. Users may be looking for company, dating apps can connect you with like minded individuals which works well if you travel a lot or are maybe are not ready for a fully committed relationship.

Finding your match

A lot of dating apps have fill out forms to narrow your search. This is extremely convenient to search by age or maybe location. You should be careful not to be endlessly browsing and getting overwhelmed over all the choices. This can lead to feeling discouraged and frustrated. Be truthful with yourself while using dating apps and fill out to the best of your ability on what you are looking for. Remember to be honest, but not to disclose too much personal information.



Expectations

Expectations laid out in your bio is a perfect way to set up ideal matches. Say you do not like being active, but maybe you would prefer to be partners with someone who is active. Put it all in your bio, this removes the possibility of meeting and having false perceptions, which can be awkward.

Remember to post recent and real photos, humans are very visual by nature and you will get more matches with a photo. Filters are fun but don't over do it, nothing is more surprising than showing up to a date and not recognizing who you are meeting. Make sure your bio and picture are accurate but do not disclose too much information about yourself.

Safety tips

Meet somewhere you both feel comfortable and preferably in a public place. As an extra precaution, let a friend know where you will be. Avoid people who instantly suggest you come over to their place, or who seem overly pushy to meet you before chatting first.

Take care of yourself

Remember that dating apps are a tool. Spending too much time on dating apps can lead to self esteem issues. Online dating comes with a lot of unique ways to meet other people. We must be careful not to place our self worth by how many messages or matches we have. Used properly dating apps are very convenient and awesome to use.

Things to watch out for

Online dating can be exhausting. Be sure to take breaks and do something that you love.

If you are not enjoying the experience for any reason it is probably not worth pursuing.

Something called ghosting happens often within the online community and is very destructive to our mental health. Ghosting is when you have been dating and optimistic about the relationship growth, and then suddenly "they" stop calling or answering text messages and phone calls. Try not to take it personally. Stay positive and know when to take a break. Dating burnout is a real thing and it is important to take care of yourself.

Know your rights and responsibilities

Remember if you decide to undress that protection is best, and consent is key! It is also important to note that it is illegal to send an intimate image to other people if you are under the age of 18.