



Dating Safely Handbook



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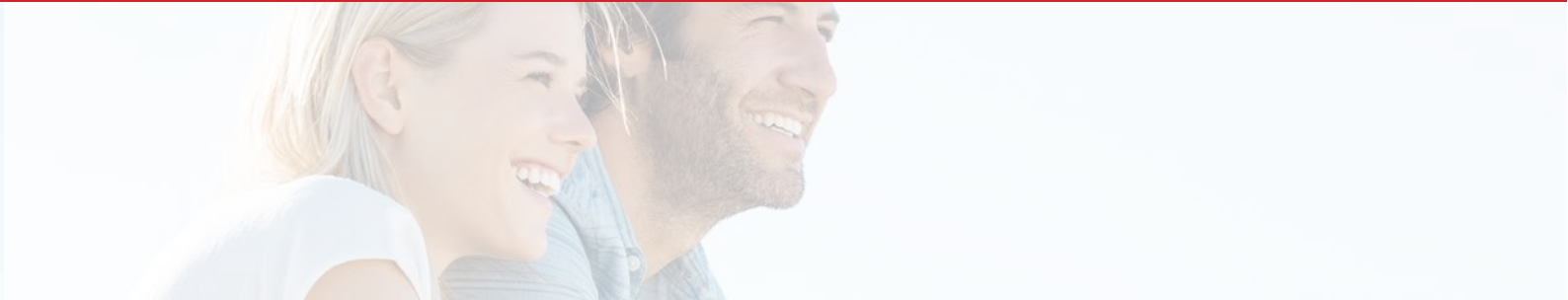
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INTRODUCTION



The Dating Safely Campaign: The Dating Agency Association's Commitment to Promoting Personal Safety.

Your search for a new partner is the beginning of an exciting journey; however, ensuring security within your personal life is essential.

Alongside The Dating Agency Association's stringent Code of Practice – which includes compulsory background checks on all clients - we require our member agencies to issue their clients with our Dating Safely Guidelines. We expect our member agencies to encourage a culture of wellbeing and respect between clients within an honest and transparent environment. Our Dating Safely Guidelines help to protect clients beyond the point of an initial personal



PROTECT YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION



Protect personal information: never give out your home address, bank account details or workplace address.

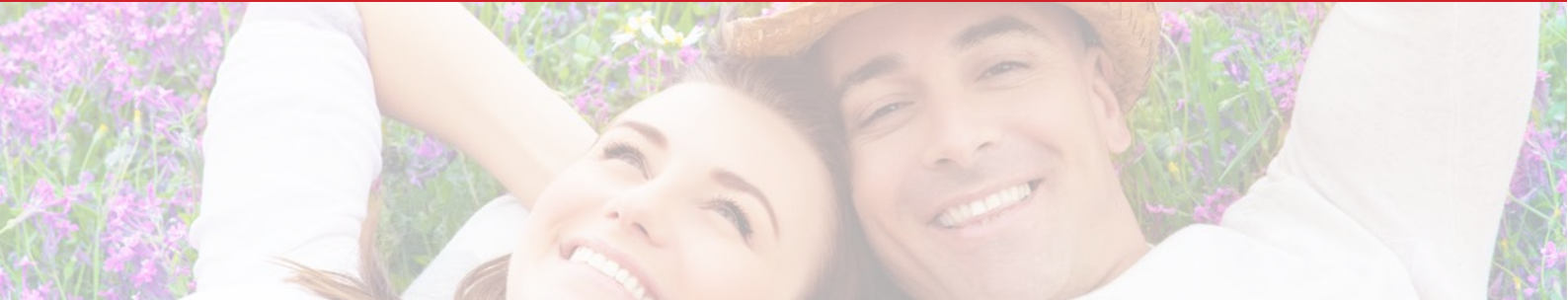
The Internet has transformed the ways in which we communicate with new people over the past decade. Numerous messages, emails and texts have often already been shared before we meet face to face. The easy intimacy of the written word can lead to premature feelings of trust and security: we are sharing more details of our lives with strangers than ever before in history.

Make meeting face-to-face a priority when getting to know a potential new partner. You need to be certain that an individual is truly who they say they are – and that you are comfortable in their company – before you start to allow genuine feelings of trust to develop.

Don't forget that until you have established a true connection, a stranger is still a stranger.



Personal Safety:



A Personal Responsibility

The Dating Agency Association insists that our member agencies demonstrate ways of working that show a clear attempt to safeguard their clients. However, alongside the policies and procedures of each member agency, our agencies also communicate clear behavioural guidelines to their clients.

Our agencies ask that clients treat each other with respect and integrity. Most importantly, they ask that clients protect their own personal safety.

Maintaining a level-headed attitude towards meeting new people is the key to ensuring you stay safe when seeking a relationship. This handbook provides simple common sense advice to ensure that your own wellbeing is always at the forefront of your decision making process.



Do not discuss your financial situation or assets. Any requests for money, or suggestions of 'get rich quick' schemes, should ring instant alarm bells.

When we meet a new and exciting potential partner, it's natural to want to be seen as the very best version of ourselves.

Success and affluence are sometimes attributes that we feel may attract people to us. However, it's important to remember that anyone with a genuine interest in you is unlikely to feel the need to be provided with excessive information about your bank account.

If a new person starts to ask questions about your financial situation or assets - or appears to be offering you ways to invest your money – take a firm step back while you assess whether there is a disingenuous motive.

By keeping your personal situation private until genuine trust has been developed, you are protecting yourself from potentially insincere people.



Be careful of the images you exchange:
never share a photograph you wouldn't
be happy with friends and family seeing.

We've all witnessed media figures being publically humiliated having shared intimate images irresponsibly. Yet, sharing pictures during the early stages of a connection has become a fairly commonplace practice. The instant intimacy of today's relationships can lead to some pretty reckless on-line behaviour across all age groups.

Remember, impulsive picture sharing can lead to your highly personal images being in the hands of

a stranger. Though there are now laws to protect us from others making our private images public, the damage has often already been done by the time we realise that an image has been shared.

Keep it simple: don't share images that you wouldn't want your friends or family to see.



Trust your instincts. If the type of information,
or images, you're being asked to share makes you
feel uncomfortable, cease communication.

If a potential partner is interested in the possibility of a genuine, lasting relationship, he or she will be happy to allow you to set your own boundaries. Never allow anyone to put you under pressure or attempt to manipulate you into behaviours that feel uncomfortable.

Always make safeguarding your own personal safety a priority. The healthiest relationships are built on understanding, acceptance and kindness. If a new connection appears to be lacking these qualities, take a step back and reassess whether this person is someone you truly want to invite into your life.



Report any disrespectful or concerning behaviour to your dating agency immediately.

The Dating Agency Association requires its member agencies to deal quickly and professionally with any safety or behavioural concerns. However minor your concern may seem, you must communicate the issue to your Dating Agency.

Our member agencies are committed to ensuring that you feel supported and protected throughout your membership. Your Personal Matchmaker will be fully trained in expected codes of behaviour, and how to escalate serious complaints.

Do not try to handle behavioural issues alone. By keeping bad behaviour a secret, you enable a perpetrator to continue acting inappropriately towards yourself and others.



MEETING IN PERSON



Adopt our Dating Safely Check-In Procedure to stay safe when meeting a stranger.

By following a few simple steps, you can safeguard your personal safety every time you meet a potential new partner:

1. Provide as much information about your date as possible to a trusted friend or family member.
2. Supply your trusted contact with:
 - a. Personal contact details for your date
 - b. The location of the date
 - c. A time that you will 'check in' with your trusted contact by.

3. Send a simple agreed message to let your contact know that you're home safely. Agree the procedure you'd like your trusted contact to follow if you fail to contact them by your agreed 'check-in' time.

In the unlikely event of an unpleasant scenario, the information you've provided to your trusted contact will be immensely helpful to law enforcement agencies. Imagine how this information could have helped in so many unsolved missing person cases. Make the Dating Safely Check-In Procedure a simple, routine part of your life.



Meet in a highly visible public location.

Always meet in a familiar, public location. Ensure that you know where you are and that you are able to leave easily if necessary.

First meetings should always be in highly visible locations: never be persuaded otherwise.

In line with the Dating Safely Check-In Procedure, always let at least one trusted friend or family member know where you have arranged to meet your date.

Be careful of your alcohol intake.

Many people use alcohol to help them relax in social situations. However, the big problem with drinking on a date is the speed at which our judgement can become impaired. Reckless options can suddenly seem quite acceptable to an alcohol-impaired mind. Put simply, a person who has consumed a certain amount of alcohol can become vulnerable very quickly to poor decision-making.

Ensure that what you consume is within your control by never leaving your drink unattended.

Remember, if you allow yourself to become vulnerable due to alcohol consumption, the damage may have been done before you realise your mistake. Protect yourself from the effects of alcohol every time you meet a potential new partner.



Do not return to the home address of someone you are meeting for the first time.

By returning to the home address of someone you have only just met, you are putting yourself in an extremely vulnerable position. There have been several high profile cases recently involving single people who have died at the homes of strangers they met on dating apps.

Stay safe and keep meeting places public.

Do not get into the personal vehicle of someone you are meeting for the first time.

As children, we are told never to get into the car of a stranger. This advice is worth remembering as an adult.

Once you are in the car of a stranger, you have lost a certain amount of control over your situation.

Ensure that you have the means to arrive and depart from your date independently. Park your car in a well-lit, public area, or ensure that you are using a safe means of public transport.



If at any time you feel uncomfortable or threatened, leave without hesitation.

It's important that you create a situation in which you are free to leave a date whenever you feel ready.

If anything about the situation is making you feel uncomfortable, do not hesitate to end the date.

If it's safe to leave alone, do so. If you feel that you need support, alert a person in a position of authority at your location, or the police, according to the situation.



Report any disrespectful or concerning behaviour to your dating agency immediately.

The Dating Agency Association's member agencies take the behaviour of their clients during face-to-face meetings extremely seriously.

Your Dating Agency will follow prescribed procedures when dealing with any negative feedback or concerns you may have. Do not hesitate to contact your Personal Matchmaker to report any issues. It's important that our member agencies are aware of any clients who behave inappropriately so that the matter can be dealt with quickly and professionally.

NOW IT'S UP TO YOU



The above guidelines are designed to protect your personal safety until you feel confident with your new connection. Those looking for genuine relationships are happy to take things slowly, allowing trust and affection to grow.

Your dating agency has a responsibility to promote behaviours that protect your personal safety... now it's up to you to implement them.

You deserve a genuine, fulfilling, long-term relationship. Allow yourself to enjoy this journey towards love and happiness while staying safe and in control at all times.

How Real-Life Singles Are Using The Dating Safely Guidelines...



Adopt our Dating Safely Check-In Procedure to stay safe when meeting a stranger.

“Meet new people in a public place. And give a close friend the info re. who you are meeting and where you will be .

Always watch your drink. If you’re not sure, politely go to the bathroom and pour it down the sink.”

Jamie Anderson
Writer, Actress
www.imdb.me/jamieanderson
www.jamieandersonfilm.com





"In 2012 my 15-year marriage ended. I was 40-something, suddenly single, and hadn't a clue about dating.

As it was I was never particularly "good" at it. Or so I told myself. While I had dated a lot prior to my marriage, I didn't seem to know "the rules." And now, I was informed, I would be navigating a whole host of new ones.

Last time I was "looking" was 1997.

No Tinder. No Grinder. No Match, J-Date or OK Cupid.

No texting. No sexting. No What's App-ing.

When I was participating in the world of online dating, it meant moving from written communication to phone or in-person as quickly as possible. This allowed me to get to know someone rather than the "idea" of them. It also lent itself to treating one another kindly and with respect. Let's face it, it's much easier to behave badly toward someone you've never met or hardly know. It meant meeting in public places until the time that I felt comfortable doing otherwise – which I learned the hard way. In the end it meant allowing myself to take a pass on online dating. To say no to a process that never felt in alignment with my ideas and ideals regarding creating a coupling. To something I didn't find particularly enjoyable, regardless of what "everyone else was doing."

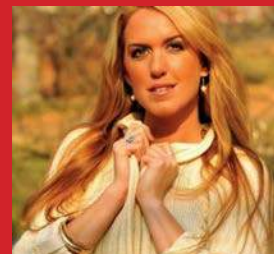
Lesley Pearl

Writer, Educator

www.awanderingjewess.com.

"Through making errors, I have learned to revise my dating checklist to better protect myself:

- 1) Commit to the boundaries I make for myself. For example, if I give myself a curfew when going out on date, I will not depart from the time I set.
- 2) I will get to know the man I'm dating, like a job interview, before I commit to the relationship. I have found the book, "Are you the One for Me?" by Barbara De Angelis, insightful in knowing what a healthy or toxic individual reveals before investing into a relationship.
- 3) I will make sure our first date is in a location where I feel safe and surrounded by a handful of people.
- 4) I will not let my date come home with me."



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