

FINDING THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

- ✓ 1. To help learners understand healthy and unhealthy romantic relationships.
- ✓ 2. To identify the desirable and undesirable characteristics in a dating partner.

20 to 30 minutes.

Chalkboard, papers and pens.

PROCEDURE

- 1 This activity is designed to get learners thinking about what characteristics they want in a dating partner. They should imagine that they are about to interview candidates who are to be their partner.
- 2 Ask learners to brainstorm the kinds of characteristics that they think an ideal dating partner has. Tell them that these descriptions should be limited to attitudes and behaviours and should not include spiritual or religious characteristics. They should also not include physical traits or material possessions. Write their answers on the board.

Expect answers such as:

- Fun
- Caring
- Loving
- Respectful
- Likes to go out
- Adventurous

If learners suggest superficial qualities, such as 'has lots of money,' remind them that you are asking for personal characteristics not material qualities and that someone can have a lot of money or be very attractive and still be a horrible person. If learners suggest negative or dubious characteristics such as 'macho' or 'always takes the lead,' ask them to think of situations where that may be problematic and why that may not be ideal. Ask them to rephrase or think of another 'ideal' that better captures what they want from a partner.

- 3 Now ask each learner to write a job advertisement for the position of boyfriend/girlfriend. When they have finished, ask a few volunteers to share their job adverts, and keep track on the board of the kinds of characteristics that they have included.
- 4 Tell learners that when you advertise a job, it is critical that you know what you are not looking for in a candidate, in addition to knowing what you want. Ask learners to go through a similar process by listing the traits that they would not want in a dating partner. Once they have compiled the list, ask them how they could identify these traits early in the relationship, or even before getting involved with that person.

- 5 Tell learners that it is often difficult to know what a person is really like until you get to know them better – often people behave quite differently with their partner than they do others. Sometimes though, there are clues that can let you know whether a potential or current partner is an ideal match for you. Some questions that you may want to think about are:

a. What do/would your friends think of this person?

b. What do/would my parents think of this person?

c. Can I open up to others about my relationship with this person? If not, why not?

d. How does this person communicate with me, and with others? Are they respectful?

e. What does this person think of **gender roles**, and how do those beliefs fit with my own?

f. How does this person resolve conflict?

- 6 Tell learners that finding an ideal partner is hard. Each relationship teaches us about ourselves, about the other person, and about what we want in a future partner. Encourage learners to choose the people they date wisely, and to recognise the signs of an unhealthy relationship. Refer learners to the Handout: Are you Headed for Trouble? (included in CH4 Ex 1 and Ex2) for more information.

TEACHER TIPS



General

This exercise focuses on helping learners know what healthy dating relationships are, and what attitudes and characteristics they do and don't want in their dating partner. This exercise allows learners to self-reflect on their current partnerships and assess whether these relationships are healthy or unhealthy. Even for those learners who are not in a dating relationship, this exercise could help them choose a better partner in the future.



Making the Link with Gender and Violence

This exercise helps learners reflect on and discuss healthy and unhealthy relationships. It provides an opportunity to reflect on worrisome

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behaviours and situations in which they may have been involved. Learners who are in abusive relationships may not realise that they, too, are victims of domestic or dating violence, and may not know what they can do to protect themselves. Learners who are perpetrators of dating violence (or are at risk of becoming perpetrators) may also not have identified that their own behaviour may be abusive. This exercise is a non-confrontational way of raising these issues.

This exercise could spark a realisation for learners that there is a disconnect between what they want in a partner and the person whom they are dating. Some learners may even realise that they are in an

abusive relationship. The teacher should be prepared to refer learners in this position to relevant local NGOs, and other resources of information and support.



Assessment Ideas

This exercise encourages personal reflection and therefore doesn't give rise to an appropriate assessment task.

