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Reboot your online dating safety [tactical activity]



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This is a **tactical activity** in which participants share safety tips and tricks for online dating. Participants will work in small groups or pairs to update their own online dating profiles and practices. Participants will share their different needs and preferences around dating apps, privacy and security. Participants will share and practice different tactics for increasing the privacy of their dating app use.

> ***Intersectionality note:*** *Facilitators, make space for people to share how their online dating considerations and practices relate to their gender and sexuality. Among your participants, how do gender and sexuality related to the apps people are using to date? How do they relate to concerns about privacy and safety?*

This activity has 2 parts:

- Sharing online dating and safety tips and tricks
- Hand-on: Reboot your online dating safety

Learning objectives this activity responds to

- an understanding of how mobile access and communications are gendered and intimate;
- an understanding of mobile communication safety from the perspective that mobile phones are our tools for both personal, private and public, movement communications;

- shared and practiced strategies and tactics for mobile safety to manage the impacts of our mobile communications on ourselves, our colleagues, our movements;

Who is this activity for?

People who are using dating apps and want to use them more safely.

Time required

This activity will require about **2-2.5 hours**.

> **Facilitator note:** The exercises take about 2.5 hours and we recommend taking a few breaks as you work.

Resources needed for this activity

- Internet access
- Mobile phones to update dating profiles
- Flipchart or whiteboard

Mechanics

Sharing online dating and safety tips and tricks

Ice breaker - 5 minutes

- Who is using a dating app, which ones? How did you choose it and why?
- How do you already think about your safety and privacy and take care of it?

Safer dating – 30 minutes

Before getting into the apps and hands-on with devices, facilitate sharing of dating safety tips between participants.

Ask:

- What is safe behavior to you while using online dating apps?
- What do you consider when deciding to meet matches face-to-face?
- What are the strategies you have in ¨knowing¨ that it is safe to meet someone?
- Do you have back-up plans for when things go wrong? Check-in time for a friend? Or letting a friend know where you are going, who you are meeting, etc?

Write this on a flipchart or somewhere visible for participants.

Share the following additional safety tips and ask participants to share and add:

Dating app (safety tips)

- Make sure your photo will not give more information, especially your location, the school you are studying in
- Use a secured and separate email address
- Don’t use a user name similar with your other social media account name
- Use a photo which is different from your social media account profile pictures.
- Don’t use personal information
- Be careful and deliberate when writing your profile on the dating app
- Offline follow up: Meet the person in a public place when meeting in person for the first time. If possible, inform a friend/family member about your meeting location and timing.
- Set a password on your applications when possible
- Password protect and encrypt your device

New models for dating

Are there any features you especially like about existing dating apps that you can look for in newer apps?

What possibilities and features do newer apps offer? (i.e., red-flagging users with bad reputation, documenting scammers, sharing tips about selecting matches).

In what ways are you already connecting with your trusted friends and community members around online dating?

Hands-on: Reboot your online dating safety - 60-90 minutes

Start with lightly Doxxing Yourself – see what information is available about your name in your dating apps. Using the information on your dating app profile, look for yourself on other platforms. Try searching for your username or information you share in your profile. Reflect on what information about you that is available outside the dating you don´t want to the dating app folks to know. Based on that, re-do your profile.

In pairs, go through the Safety Tips and update your profile. Share with each other and support your partner to point out if there is identifying information or if they can change more elements to be less identifiable and meet their own safety goals.

Reboot your pix

Check and replace any images including your profile and other account photos if they do not meet the safety tips you want to follow. Consider removing identifying metadata and removing identifying information about other people in the images.

Reboot your text

Check and rewrite your text if you are revealing more information that you would like to, considering your safety. Work with a partner to rewrite this if you want!

Set up a secure separate email address.

Shareback - 10 minutes

How was that? What was surprising? What was easy? What was hard? What are you doing to do next?

Facilitators: Are participants interested in sexting? Check out the safer sexting module.

Additional resources

Privacidad y seguridad en contextos conservadores: las apps de citas para mujeres de la diversidad sexual. Steffania Paola: https://www.genderit.org/es/articles/edicion-especial-privacidad-y-seguridad-en-contextos-conservadores-las-apps-de-citas-para

Self-Doxxing: https://gendersec.tacticaltech.org/wiki/index.php/Step_1#Self-Doxing

Dating App Safety Resources

- Grindr - https://help.grindr.com/hc/en-us/articles/217955357-Safety-Tips
- Planet Romeo - https://www.planetromeo.com/en/care/online-dating/
- Tinder - https://www.gotinder.com/safety
- OKCupid - https://www.okcupid.com/legal/safety-tips
- Hornet - https://hornet.com/community/knowledge-base/tips-on-how-to-stay-safe/
- Scruff - http://www.scruff.com/gaytravel/advisories/

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