

# DATING IN RECOVERY: OUTLINE FOR A SOBER DATING PLAN

## Ground Rules about People to Date

### Appropriateness of potential dates

#### *Suggestions:*

- “I will not date anyone I met through any inner or middle circle activity”.
- “I will not date anyone I met through an online ad that is suspect”.
- “I will not date anyone I met when they were dating a friend of mine”.
- “I will not date anyone who is more that a few years different from me in age”.
- “I will not date anyone where there is a significant power differential”.

What are your rules for how you will avoid obviously inappropriate people?

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### Who are your trusted advisors and how often will you check in with them?

#### *Suggestions:*

- “I will check in with (names of friends in recovery who have experience in sober dating.)”
- “I will have my sponsor meet the person or at least check in with sponsor or trusted persons before and after seeing potential date.”

Names of trusted advisors and plan for feedback:

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## General Rules Once You Have Started Dating

### Personalize these rules with notes that apply to you as dating progresses:

“I will ask that the person share their relationship history openly and honestly and will look for problematic patterns”.

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“I will not continue dating someone who is dating someone else or has recently ended a relationship that may not be completely resolved.

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“I will do a ‘red-light, yellow-light, green-light’ exercise with any dating partner i.e. 3 lists of attributes specifying positive (green) questionable (yellow) and deal-breaker (red) things I have discovered as I get to know the person. I will add to the lists as I go along and share it with my therapist, sponsor or other trusted advisor”.

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“I will be particularly alert to whether the person has the capacity to give intimacy, affection and commitment.”

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“I will be particularly alert as to whether the person is interested in relating in a serious way vs. being just seductive. I will ask pointed questions about what the person is looking for and be vigilant for vague answers”.

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“I will be vigilant about whether I am distorting my view of a person or relationship so as to pursue a sexual obsession”.

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“I will check in often as to whether the relationship is becoming addictive in any way for me including whether I am kidding myself about what I feel for them”.

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## **Ground Rules for When to Have Sex**

How long will you date before agreeing to have sex?

*Examples:*

“I will not have sex until I have had a chance to assess the person’s character and my own motives”.

“I will not have sex until I have gone on 6 dates”.

“I will not have sex until I have dated the person for 4 months”.

“I will not have sex unless we are \_\_\_\_ (committed, engaged, married)”.

List your rules for when you will have sex

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

What are your bottom line issues?

*Examples:*

“I will not have sex with anyone I could not commit to”.

“I will not have cyber sex, sexting etc.”

“I will not expect to bring my acting-out fantasies into the relationship in any way”

“I will not have sex with a sex addict who is not in good recovery”.

List your rules surrounding sex in recovery:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## **Ground Rules for Sharing Your Program Information**

***These will vary in little ways according to the specific situation but you should be prepared to:***

1. Share early in the dating relationship the fact that you have had sexual and relationship issues in the past and therefore need to proceed slowly.
2. Check in with your sponsor or therapist about how much to share and when before you do it.
3. Before you begin a *sexual* relationship you must share your acting out history in some detail (including your recovery activities) and allow the other person the opportunity to digest this information and decide how they feel.