



SCOPE Tip of the Week Member Newsletter

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Dating Do's and Don'ts

Dating can be a confusing land to navigate. It becomes even more difficult when the added stresses and burdens of school are added to the mix. Students have different expectations about relationships, monogamy, commitment and how much time should be spent together. Sometimes, this is an easy process when two people are able to share similar expectations about that for which they are looking.

Other times, expectations about a relationship can be a bit more poorly defined. One person is looking for a hookup. The other person is looking to the future.

The very nature of “testing the waters” to determine whether or not someone likes you is ambiguous. This ambiguity can lead to misunderstandings and hurt feelings. The following suggestions can help students better navigate the world of dating.

Start slow, build from strengths. One way to approach dating is to start slowly and test the waters with the other person. Too often there is a perception of “go big or go home.” Dating is about give and take, where two people develop a connection and determine if they have mutually agreeable goals. The caution is not jumping too far, too fast. Take your time and make sure that the person you like has similar feelings. If not, it may be time to move along.

Know thyself. What are you looking for in a relationship? It is surprising how many students aren't quite sure what they are looking for, but become upset when a dating partner assumes something about the relationship. One way to send clear messages to others is to know what kind of relationship you are looking for, whether it be a casual hookup or a long-term commitment.

Romantic vs. Unwanted. It can be hard to know where the line is between what one person would consider romantic and another may consider unwanted behavior. One way to try and see if your advances are welcome is to start small. If the small gesture is well received, it may be worth moving to some larger gestures. The other advice that is essential is to listen to a person who says “no” or “stop.” This is not a mixed message. It does not mean try harder.

Texting and Social Media. Texting and social media can make an already confusing situation even more so. Communication can become crossed or misunderstood. Students read meaning into quick versus slow responses. Flirting on social media doesn't always imply that in person contact would be welcomed. It is important to use caution when texting or using social media to see if someone is interested in more.

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