

# To Date or Not to Date?

## Objective

To help you clarify your thoughts about dating so that you can make decisions that are best for you.

## You Should Know

The media sends out constant messages to teens about the importance of dating and being in a relationship. Some teens feel that if they do not have a boyfriend or girlfriend, then there is something wrong with them. Peers, teachers, family members, or even strangers might ask you who you're dating or if you have "someone special" in your life.

This can feel like a lot of pressure, especially if you don't feel ready to date. It can also feel like pressure if you simply choose not to date because you aren't interested or have other things in your life that are more important. Or you might be exploring your sexuality and you're not sure how you want to express yourself romantically or sexually.

It's not wrong or bad to want to be alone or without a romantic partner. You may want to do this at some point, but that decision is entirely up to you.

This worksheet will help you explore your attitudes and feelings about dating. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. You may want to share your answers to these questions with someone else such as a parent, a friend, or a professional. But you may want to keep your thoughts private. That's entirely up to you.

## What to Do

What is your current relationship status?

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Are you happy with your current relationship status? How would you like it to be different?

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What is your relationship history? Have you dated anyone before? Describe.

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If you've never been in a dating relationship, how do you feel about that?

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Are there people in your life who are pressuring you or making you feel bad about being alone?

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If you're alone, what do you like about it? What don't you like?

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How do you like to spend your free time? What are your favorite activities?

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What are your short-term and long-term goals for dating and romance? Be honest.

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Here are some tips and strategies for avoiding the pressure to be dating or in a romantic relationship if that is what you prefer.

- Learn to speak up to people who pressure you, judge you, or make fun of you for being alone. You can tell them that you are fine just the way you are, or that you are focused on other things.
- Avoid getting defensive when people ask who you are dating. Most of the time they are just curious.
- Don't feel bad if people tease you or judge you for not being interested in dating. You know yourself best and need to do what you think is right for you.
- Write in a journal and explore your goals and dreams.
- Find clubs, groups, and extracurricular activities with like-minded people.
- Ask for help from teachers, counselors, parents, or relatives if you need to talk with adults about your concerns.
- Invest time and energy into building rewarding friendships.
- Limit your social media time! It can lead to problems when you constantly compare your life to that of others.
- Be kind to yourself. Practice self-compassion.

## Reflections on This Exercise

What did you learn about yourself and your goals in relationships?

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Who do you know who has the same attitude you have about dating?

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What do you think is the most important thing to remember about feeling self-confident about who you are and what you want from life?

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What could you do differently to make progress in this area?

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