

Risks of Online Dating

There is no question that the popularity of online dating has revolutionized the way potential couples meet each other. These days, it is not uncommon for the average single person to participate in an online dating service. In fact, this trend is fast becoming the norm. In 2004, it was estimated that residents in the U.S. spent more than \$460 million on online dating services.

It goes without saying that online dating is big business in America. There are many reasons why people find this method of meeting new people so appealing. For one thing, everyone is doing it! There are many online dating services and plenty of them offer free services.

The combination of curiosity and the desire to meet new, exciting people is what usually lures individuals to be a part of an online dating service community. But this new activity doesn't come without a price.

Sure it doesn't happen all the time, but just every now and then we hear horror stories about online dating services. Some of them are scary enough to keep casual observers away from these online dating services for good.

One of the problems facing the industry of online dating service is that its participants often misrepresent themselves in the profiles that they create. Not everyone tells the truth. People have been known to lie about everything, including their marital status. Some married individuals try to pass themselves off as single, while others lie about their physical appearance, age, economic status, and even gender.

For an inexperienced online dater, danger lurks at every corner. But there are some safety measures prospective participants can take to help guide them through a safe online dating experience.

Rule of the thumb: most online dating services that offer subscriptions are relatively safer than those that can be accessed for free. Paid membership sites offer a set of requirements and guidelines that aspiring members have to meet.

Some sites are so exclusive that anyone who wants to join has to undergo an intensive screening process first. Background checks are done on aspiring members to make sure the information they have given is true.

Some more safety tips when it comes to online dating:

1. Pay attention to the consistency of the information given by the persons you are corresponding with. This way, you may be able to catch them out in a lie.
2. Online daters should protect their identity. One of the greatest things about online dating is that it offers participants anonymity. Personal information like address, last name and phone number, is not revealed until the participant decides to do so. You should be extremely careful about divulging personal information that will make it possible for the people to locate you.
3. You should immediately cease communication with people who seem obsessed with acquiring personal information about you.
4. Always watch out for warning signs when talking to people, such as: the use of foul language, signs of anger for no apparent reason, elusiveness in answering direct questions, disrespectful remarks, etc. These are some of the symptoms that spell trouble. The person exhibiting these types of behavior may not be trustworthy, and continuing the relationship could be dangerous.
5. Once you agree to meet your date, don't ask them to your home, but meet in a public place that is well-lit, with plenty of other people around.

Online dating is similar to real life dating in the sense that individuals should always practice common sense and caution whenever they meet someone new. Even though the interaction takes place online, once you have revealed personal information about yourself, you can't take it back.

It is best to always use one's instincts and logic when it comes to dealing with other people, even when it comes to online dating. This is where some people fall prey to cheaters, deceivers, and even sexual offenders. They go against their better judgment. If something feels amiss, then this is probably a sign that something could go terribly wrong.

It is best to get out of this situation like this. As the saying goes: "Better be safe than be sorry". A saying that online dating service participant should always remember.