



Class 15 Guide: Dream Dating Partner

Pre-teach

In this lesson, students will learn about who is and is not safe to date. Students will also think about the qualities they look for in a dating partner. Many dating relationships start out as friendships, so it might help students to first discuss in class what they look for in friends, so they are better prepared to discuss what they look for in a dating partner. To accommodate students with higher and lower support needs, have a class brainstorm and write qualities on a dry erase board as students generate them as well as print out a list of qualities (such as “nice” or “funny”) with pictures for students to pick the ones they look for in a friend. Students could also draw their friends and the things they like about their friends.

Finally, in the days leading up to this class, you can also introduce the vocabulary from this lesson’s Important Words Sheet (see suggested definitions below). To enhance understanding, you can ask students to come up with their own definitions for vocabulary words or to provide a sentence or scenario using the new word.

Vocabulary terms and definitions

- Date: something two people do together to decide if they want to be in a romantic relationship
- Family: the people you are related to, such as mom, dad, brother, or sister
- Teacher: a person who leads a class
- Boss: the person who tells you what to do at your job
- Coworker: someone who works where you work
- Support staff: a person who gets money to help you with your disability
- Counselor/therapist: a person you talk to about your life
- Doctor: a person who helps your body stay healthy
- Religious leader: a person who leads services at a church, temple, or a mosque
- Partner: a person you are dating

Post-teach

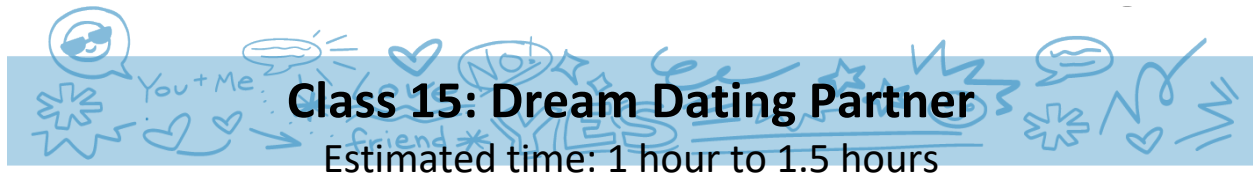
In SAFE’s experience, many individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities are greatly interested in dating and having long-term relationships, but may also be socially isolated. If dating is an important relationship goal for your student, it may help them to first make a plan, with your support, for meeting new friends. Many dating relationships start as friendships, and this may be a safer way for students to find a dating partner. Talk with each student about their interests and hobbies. Are they currently participating in activities related to these interests and hobbies? If not, could you help them make a plan to join an activity or group that excites them? Part of the

plan can include any steps required to formally join the activity/group, as well as a transportation plan. Perhaps you can even support the student in doing a trial run of the new activity and/or role play different interactions that might occur. You can look back at the questions from Class 12: Getting to Know Someone, for conversation starters, or review appropriate compliments in Class 13: Romantic Feelings and Flirting.

Discuss with students that it often takes a while for friendships to form, and for those same friendships to later develop into dating relationships. Help students set up reasonable time expectations. Remind them that dating partners need to be at least in the yellow circle on the Relationship Map—which means they should have known that person for several weeks or months before asking them out. Next week's class covers handling rejection, a key skill to learn as students seek out new dating relationships and friendships.

Finally, while we believe engagement, marriage, and long term romantic relationships are important, this curriculum does not address these topics. If your students are interested, you can have an open dialogue about engagement and marriage. Give them an opportunity to ask you questions. Points to emphasize include:

- Marriage is when two people say they want to be in a romantic and long term relationship for life.
- Married people are called "spouses," "wives," or "husbands."
- People of all sexual orientations and gender identities can get married if they want to.
- Some people want to get married, and some do not. Both are okay.
- Engagement and marriage are big decisions. Students should know their dating partner for a long time before they think about getting married. It's important to trust the person you are going to marry.
- If two partners want to get married, they can talk about it together. Sometimes, one person will propose, which means asking the other person if they want to get married. Sometimes they might give that person a ring, or get on one knee to ask, but other people don't do those things. Either is okay!
- Partners should talk about getting married first before either person proposes.
- If their partner says yes, the couple is engaged. People are usually engaged for many months before they get married.
- Sometimes marriages are not healthy for both people. In those cases, people may choose to get divorced. Divorce is when two people say they no longer want to be in a romantic relationship for life.



Class 15: Dream Dating Partner

Estimated time: 1 hour to 1.5 hours

Objectives

Students will:

- Understand who is and is not appropriate to date, including understanding where someone should be on the Relationship Map before asking them on a date.
- Discuss safety when dating in-person or online.
- Explore the qualities they are looking for in a dating partner.

Materials

- Dry erase board and markers or chart paper and makers
- Pens/pencils for all students
- Blank index cards
- Class Healthy Relationship Toolbox
- Class Healthy Relationship Tools (I Statement, Relationship Map, NO!, and Consent Check-In Tools)
- Computer
- Projector
- Projector screen
- Class 15 PowerPoint
- Printed copies of Class 15 PowerPoint for all students (one slide per page)
- Printed copies of Dream Dating Partner Worksheet for all students

Class Preparation (5-10 minutes)

Give each student a copy of the PowerPoint so they can follow along and take notes. We found that student understanding increases when they have two options for viewing information: on the screen at the front of the room and on their own printed PowerPoint.

Display and discuss slides 1-4.

Never Okay to Date (10-15 minutes)

Display and discuss slides 5-10. Give student's time to process the information, and check in periodically for questions.

Meeting Someone to Date (5-10 minutes)

Display and discuss slides 11-15. Give student's time to process the information, and check in periodically for questions.

Brain Break (5 minutes)

Display slide 16. Use one of the suggested brain break activities from the slide notes, or come up with your own.

Dream Dating Partner (20-25 minutes)

Display and discuss slides 17-21. Slide 18 includes the instructions for the Dream Dating Partner activity. For this activity, students will need the Dream Dating Partner Worksheet. See template at end of lesson plan.

Dream Dating Partner Talk (5-10 minutes)

Display and discuss slides 22-23.

Questions (5 minutes)

Display slide 24. Collect any notecard questions from students. Before your next class session, research and prepare answers to students' private questions.

Exit Ticket (5 minutes)

Use slides 25-27 to check for student comprehension of major class topics.

Closing (5 minutes)

Display and discuss slides 28-30.



Dream Dating Partner Worksheet

My Dream Partner

What is your partner like? (nice, funny)

How do they make you feel?

What do they care about? (family, church, animals)

Write or draw the three most important things to you in a dream dating partner.

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for the user to write or draw their response to the prompt above.

