



## Online Dating

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Many young adults with disabilities are looking for ways to meet other people and start dating. I know a lot of young adults have trouble finding people to date that they can meet in person, so online dating becomes an option. I personally met my husband online so I have some suggestions on how to do so safely and hopefully make it work for you! Here are my tips for healthy, fun online dating!

**Figure out what website you might want to use.** You have probably seen many commercials about online dating websites, like eHarmony.com, match.com, etc. You might want to ask people you know who have used them what they think. I used eHarmony and it worked for me, but there are different people on different sites.

**Make your profile.** Your profile is your opportunity to tell people about your background and your likes/dislikes. A lot of people with disabilities are unsure of whether to put their disability on their profile. I did not, but as soon as I started talking to someone I liked, I told him about it to see how he reacted.

**Look at the communication process.** On your profile you usually can't leave your contact information or talk to people without paying for the service. I know eHarmony has free communication weekends from time to time so you can talk to people without paying. However, if you want to talk to more people more often you might want to look into how much each website charges. Once you start talking to people on the site you might get



comfortable enough with someone to give your email address or phone number. Just be careful! Don't give out any information about where you live because you don't want people to be able to find you at this point.

**Meet people in person.** If you start talking to somebody you like and want to meet in person, make plans to meet. The most important thing to remember is to be safe. Always meet someone in a public place like a restaurant or shopping mall. Make sure you have your own transportation there whether you are driving yourself or taking a bus. Don't get in a car with the person on the first date because you don't know him or her yet. Give as much information as you are comfortable with about your disability when you feel ready. If they ask you questions that you don't want to answer, let them know that you don't want to give them the information yet.

**Decide if you want to stay in contact with the person.** If your date goes well, set up a second date or let the person know you will talk soon. There are no rules as to when you can call a person to set up a second one. You might decide that the person you met isn't somebody who fit what you are looking for in a relationship. That is okay! Just be honest and say it was nice to meet him or her but you don't think you are well-matched. It can be intimidating to meet new people, especially someone you might start a relationship with. Just be yourself and be patient. The right person will love you for who you are and not expect you to change. Once you meet someone you fit well with, be honest about your needs and what he or she can do to support you.



For more information, you can use the following sites:

- [www.dating4disabled.com/](http://www.dating4disabled.com/)

This website is like eHarmony but strictly only has profiles of people with disabilities. Obviously if you have a disability you can date anyone, however, if you are more comfortable dating someone with a disability as well, this might be a place to start.

- [www.disabledpassions.com](http://www.disabledpassions.com)

This website provides you with access to a bunch of different dating sites for people with disabilities at no cost.

- [www.bestdatingsites.com/disabled-dating](http://www.bestdatingsites.com/disabled-dating)

This website provides multiple dating websites as well as reviews from people who have used them. I wish you the best of luck finding someone to share your life with! Remember to have fun, be safe, and enjoy the venture!