

L'ANONYME

Activity

guide

for educators



sentourer.ca

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Cheat sheet:

Recruitment cycle

The use of the masculine form is preferred to refer to pimps, since statistically this role is predominantly occupied by men. The same applies to the role of recruiter, which is mainly held by women. However, it is important not to exclude the possibility that people of other genders may also occupy the roles of pimps or recruiters. While gender dynamics play an important role in situations of sexual exploitation, they do not constitute an absolute rule.

For more activities related to the recruitment cycle, visit our website at sentourer.ca and go to the “Toolbox” section.



1 Initial situation

Agency +  - Vulnerability

At this stage, the targeted person has not yet met the pimp and/or the recruiter. This is before any initial contact. Certain individual risk factors may make them more vulnerable, while others are related to broader societal influences and peer dynamics.



Society

- **Normalization of pimping:** A double standard persists: pimping is sometimes trivialized or glamorized (e.g., the term pimp can mean to upgrade or enhance something), while people experiencing exploitation are stigmatized, rendered invisible, or judged, making prevention and awareness efforts taboo.
- **Lack of resources:** Services aimed at preventing sexual exploitation and supporting those affected or at risk remain insufficient.
- **Sexist dynamics:** Gender stereotypes encourage dominance and the pursuit of power among boys, and submissiveness among girls, reinforcing power imbalances within situations of sexual exploitation.



Family and peers

- **Family difficulties:** If a person has little contact with their family, or if the relationship is conflictual or unsafe, they may turn to others to meet their basic needs (food, shelter, money, affection, etc.). Pimps and recruiters are attentive to this type of situation.
- The person’s family or peer group may have **ties to criminal networks**.



Youth

- Financial difficulties
- Desire for recognition: for example, dreaming of becoming famous (influencer, dancer, model, etc.)
- Need for validation: seeking someone who can fill emotional gaps, whether romantic, familial, or friendship-related
- Placement in a youth protection center (DYP)
- Past or current experiences of running away
- Mental health challenges
- Low self-esteem



Youth (continued)

- High importance placed on money and/or material possessions
- Family rejection: particularly common among youth from the 2SLGBTQIA+ community
- Academic difficulties that may lead to dropping out of school
- Strong peer influence
- Being on the autism spectrum: difficulties identifying warning signs, a tendency to trust others easily, and a lack of adapted sexuality education

2 Contact



It is during this phase that the targeted person meets the pimp or recruiter. This encounter can happen in various ways and in different locations. The pimp or recruiter uses a strategy focused on building trust, while trying to identify one of the “vulnerabilities” mentioned earlier. For example, are they looking for someone to help launch their career? Are they experiencing family conflicts?

Running away is one of the most significant risk factors, as it exposes the person to heightened vulnerability; weak or absent connections with supportive figures, lack of financial resources, and, in some cases, no stable place to stay. Therefore, pimps and recruiters often make contact with potential targets when they are in this situation.

Where can this encounter take place?

- **Private places:** Parties, homes, hotels, Airbnbs, etc.
- **Public places:** Subway stations, bus stops, parks, shopping centers, bars, schools, youth centers, etc.
- **Online:** Dating apps, social media (TikTok, Instagram, Telegram, Snapchat, etc.)

Forms of pimping

A pimp manipulates or coerces another person into providing sexual services. This term applies to anyone who facilitates or profits from the sexual exploitation of others.

There are **three different approaches**, or rather three types of relationships:

- 1 **Friendly/Romantic relationship:** This person may present themselves as a friend or romantic partner—and sometimes genuinely is. It also happens that someone who is being sexually exploited recruits other friends without fully understanding the risks, as they themselves are being manipulated. The romantic approach is more commonly used with girls, while the friendly approach is more often used with boys. While the approach based on seduction and love has been widely portrayed in films and TV series, it seems to be losing popularity today: those involved report that the “business” approach is now more commonly used.

Friend

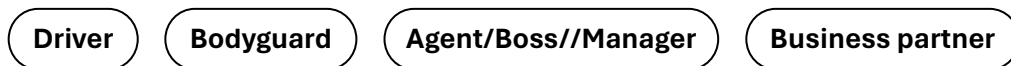
Boyfriend/girlfriend

- 2 **Business relationship:** In this case, the pimp presents themselves as an agent or a business partner. They may try to sell a supposed career in modeling, dance, or as an influencer. They can also recruit them by explicitly framing the exchange of sexual services for money as a professional opportunity.

This is a particular stance, both legally and in terms of recruitment dynamics. There should be no legal interventions if an arrangement is presented as consensual, boundaries are (seemingly) respected, there is no apparent exploitation, and all parties involved are adults. Some individuals who engage in the exchange of sexual services choose to have a driver or a bodyguard to work under safer conditions. This third-party benefits from legal immunity in the absence of any coercion, when the person offering sexual services consents and that all individuals who are involved are 18 years of age or older.

Les personnes impliquées dans l'échange de services sexuels indiquent que la relation d'affaires est la tactique de recrutement la plus fréquente.

People involved in the exchange of sexual services report that the business relationship is the most common recruitment tactic.



3 Abusive relationship: The relationship is clearly unequal. The violence is more overt and less subtle.



3 Honeymoon



Seduction and love approach

Once a bond of trust and affection is established between the pimp and their target, he makes the person feel like they are the most important in their life, giving them their full attention, offering expensive gifts, exclusive outings and/or compliments. The pimp presents himself as the ideal partner and claims to be the only one who can provide such a lifestyle. This tactic is a form of emotional manipulation known as **love bombing**. This approach often obscures warning signs that may arise during this phase.

Business relationship approach

The pimp tries to strike a deal with the targeted person. To persuade them, he promises lucrative contracts, money, or fame, among other things.

Regardless of the approach, a gradual desensitization to coercive sexual activity takes place within the relationship. This can occur through invitations to highly sexualized parties or by encouraging the person to visit a strip club or an erotic massage parlor. At this stage, the targeted individual is not yet forced to participate in these activities: the goal is to normalize and make unequal and coercive dynamics in the world of sexual services seem ordinary, with the aim of exploiting them later.

It is also at this stage that targeted individuals may be **drawn into criminal activities**. In the case of street gangs, they are often encouraged to take part in illegal activities. According to our clinical observations, in 2025, the resale of vaping products emerged as a particularly common tactic. This approach fosters a sense of belonging. For youth lacking stable, supportive figures, such incitement can be very appealing and may lead them to engage in criminal acts to maintain that sense of inclusion. Introducing them to criminality also facilitates manipulation: gangs make these youths complicit in offenses, giving them leverage to later threaten exposure to the authorities. While warning signs may already exist, the perceived benefits (having their needs met and even exceeded) often cause the red flags to go unnoticed.

4 Pay back



It is usually at this stage that a strong sense of discomfort sets in. The targeted individual feels indebted to what has been given to them previously. The manipulation can be subtle: “With everything I’ve done for you, you could at least do me a little favor...” The benefits remain, but their role changes: they become a tool to get something in return.

At this stage, sexual demands emerge or escalate. There is often an illusion of choice: the requests aren’t presented as explicit orders and may still seem negotiable. Yet a clear power imbalance has already taken hold; despite the appearance of control, the relationship is no longer equal.

Pimps rarely stop at a first refusal. They persist, reframe their demands, and adjust their strategies to get what they want. Some use threats or intimidation, targeting their family or friends, and/or resort to blackmail regarding intimate photos or videos.

Another common tactic is introducing substances. By providing drugs, they create a dependency, positioning themselves as the person the victim must rely on for access. The targeted youth may come to see the pimp as their only source, strengthening the control exerted and making it far more difficult to break free.

5 Sexual exploitation

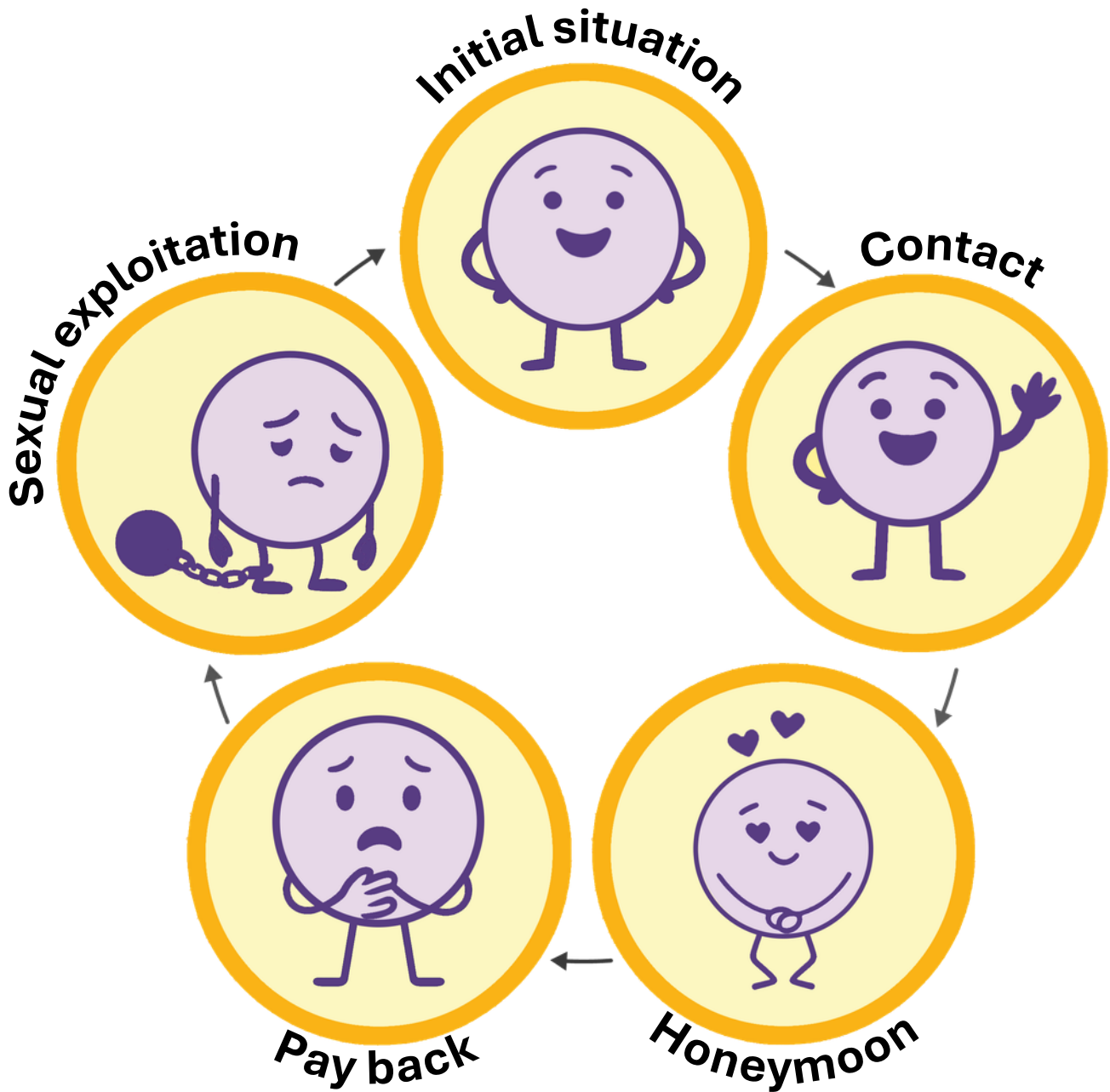


Once forced sexual exchange occurs, it constitutes sexual exploitation. This does not mean the person cannot experience a sense of control or autonomy. In fact, the perceived benefits (attention, money, material goods, a sense of belonging, or notoriety) can always coexist with (and can appear to justify) the costs. This is one reason why individuals in situations of sexual exploitation often remain trapped in the cycle.

The pimp requires the person to earn a minimum daily income, with consequences if this target is not met. He may suggest that the individual is free to leave, provided they repay their so-called “debt.” This debt is, in reality, fictitious, often enormous, and virtually impossible to repay.

Cheat sheet:

Recruitment cycle



Cheat sheet:

Forms of violence



Physical violence

This involves causing injury or pain to frighten or control someone. It can also take less direct forms, affecting a person's physical integrity, their environment, or property, for example, throwing someone's phone against a wall. Physical violence is the most visible form of abuse.¹



Verbal violence

This occurs when someone uses words to gain power over another person, through insults, shouting, or giving orders. Like all other forms of violence, its purpose is to assert control by intimidating or humiliating the other person.¹



Psychological violence

This type of violence is used to control other people. It often occurs through words and can take many forms: constant criticism, belittling, distorting reality, causing someone to doubt themselves, manipulation, isolation, etc. It can also be expressed through a person's attitude, such as sulking or crying. It is difficult to detect because it is more subtle and develops gradually.¹



Sexual violence

It occurs when sexual consent is not considered, not respected, or is not valid (see the section "Sexual Consent" on the next page). It can take different forms: unwanted touching, non-consensual sexual activity, sharing intimate images, sexual harassment, exhibitionism, etc. It can also involve other types of violence (use of technology, physical force, manipulation, etc.).¹



Financial violence

This involves controlling the other person's financial resources. For example, demanding that they hand over all their money so the other person can manage the finances, preventing or controlling their spending, restricting access to financial resources, etc.



Cyberviolence

Any form of violence that involves the use of technology (sextortion, cyberbullying, monitoring someone's movements through phone location tracking, monitoring conversations through text messages, etc.).

Cheat sheet:

Sexual consent

Sexual consent is the agreement a person gives to their partners at the time of participating in a sexual activity. This consent must be given **voluntarily**; it means the decision must be:



Free consent

Everyone is free to give their consent voluntarily, meaning they do not feel pressured, manipulated, or forced to participate in any sexual activity.



Informed consent

Everyone must have the ability and the necessary information to make an informed decision. For example, a person who is asleep, intoxicated, or not fully aware of the risks involved cannot give consent. Other factors, such as the age of the partners, may also invalidate consent.



Enthusiastic consent

Each person must show that they want to participate in the sexual activity. Enthusiasm is expressed through both verbal and non-verbal behaviors.



Reversible

Reversible consent means that a person can withdraw or change their agreement at any time, without needing to provide a justification.

Legal aspects

In Canada, the legal age of sexual consent is **16 years old**. From this age onward, a person can legally consent to sexual activity with an older partner, regardless of the partner's age. However, for **anyone under 18, consensual sexual activity must not involve a relationship of dependency, authority, or exploitation** with the partner. Once a person reaches 18, such a relationship no longer legally affects their ability to give sexual consent.

Legal exceptions do exist regarding sexual consent for youth aged 16 and under. However, strict age-difference limits apply. Any situation that falls outside these limits is considered sexual violence, even if the other conditions of consent appear to be met.

11 years old and under:

Cannot consent to sexual activity.

Ages 12-13:

The age difference between partners must be less than 2 years.

Ages 14-15:

The age difference between partners must be less than 5 years.



Authority relationship

A power imbalance between partners (teacher, coach, employer, etc.).



Dependency relationship

A dynamic in which one person relies on another to meet their basic needs (food, safety, water, money, etc.).



Sexual exploitation

A dynamic in which one person coerces another into exchanging sexual services for financial or other gain.

BETWEEN THE LINES

Rules



1 to 5 players



About 20 minutes



Starting at 12 years old

Learning objective

Between the lines is an educational game designed to raise youth's awareness of the risk of sexual exploitation. The goal is to help them recognize the warning signs that appear in the recruitment cycle, while encouraging them to reflect on the early indicators of violence in intimate and sexual relationships.

Goal of the game

The goal of the game is to rank the scenario cards in order, from least to most risky of sexual exploitation recruitment.

Materiel

- 50 scenario cards
- 1 hybrid card
 - QR code linking to the rules on the front
 - “+” symbol on the back
- 1 hybrid card
 - Short answer key on the front
 - “-” symbol on the back

Gameplay

1. Place the “+” and “-” cards at opposite ends, leaving enough space between them to place 10 scenario cards that will be drawn during the game.
2. Place Scenario Card #1 – the only yellow card – in the center. This card will serve as a reference, representing a **moderate** recruitment risk.
3. Shuffle the scenario cards, then randomly select 10. Taking turns, draw a card and read the scenario out loud. Place the card among those already laid out, deciding whether it depicts a higher or lower risk than the previously placed cards.
4. Once all the cards have been placed, check the back of the **card** “-” to see if the sexual exploitation risks were correctly assessed. Refer to the detailed answer key below if needed.



For the educator:

Intervention strategies

While this game is designed as a playful introduction to the warning signs of sexual exploitation, it can also be used to explore participants' risk tolerance and identify risk factors related to sexual exploitation and violence in intimate relationships.

The scenarios are independent of one another, which explains the variations in the terms used to describe relationships (partner, boyfriend, dating, etc.).

Many scenarios remain fairly vague in their context. This allows participants to reflect on the risk and protective factors that could influence the level of danger in each scenario. Some cards may be considered more or less risky depending on the reasoning provided.

- > What would make Maya safer?
- > What would make Maya less safe?

All the Scenario cards feature Maya, a fictional female character. This highlights common gender dynamics in cases of sexual exploitation. You are encouraged to explore the impact of these dynamics in your follow-up questions, especially when some characters are gender-neutral.

- > Does the level of risk remain the same if the protagonist or antagonist is a boy? A girl?

Using third-person scenarios also allows participants to take a step back and better assess the level of danger in certain situations. Risk assessment is sometimes lower when participants place themselves directly in the scenario.

- > Would you consider this scenario just as dangerous if you were in Maya's place? Why?



Scenario cards

detailed answer key

★ Low-risk

★★ Moderate-risk

★★★ High-risk

Moderate-risk scenarios

These scenarios can be seen as yellow flags, signs that may raise concern without necessarily confirming the presence of sexual exploitation. At this stage, maintaining and strengthening a trusting relationship with the youth is essential to have a better understanding of their behaviors and creating a safe space that supports disclosure. It is important to be transparent about any concerns and to avoid jumping to conclusions or making judgments. The accumulation of multiple warning signs may indicate a shift toward a high-risk situation.

High-risk scenarios

These scenarios suggest the presence of serious warning signs of sexual exploitation. Such indicators should not be taken lightly, and appropriate support or referral is required. A harm reduction* approach is strongly recommended in this context. Developing a safety plan aimed at reducing exposure to danger is the preferred strategy. In the case of a minor, reporting to the Director of Youth Protection is required if their safety is compromised or if a situation of sexual exploitation is confirmed.

Harm reduction

Harm reduction is about providing individuals with the information and tools they need to make informed choices for themselves. The aim is not necessarily to eliminate the behavior altogether—although that remains an option—but rather to promote safer practices that minimize risks and reduce potential consequences for the individual and/or the broader community.

1

★★★

Maya leaves her house without letting anyone know.

Not telling anyone means that no one knows where she is, who she is with, or how long she will be gone. Recruitment can occur in situations where the targeted person is isolated or difficult to locate. When no one knows her whereabouts, it becomes harder for someone to provide help quickly if she finds herself in a dangerous situation.

2 ★

Maya's friend treats her to a manicure for her birthday and suggests they get matching sets.

It's common for friends to do each other's nails with matching colors or designs. Therefore, a **single instance of this type of activity does not indicate a recruitment risk**. However, it is known that some pimps encourage their targets to wear a specific nail color as a way to identify them. The concern, then, is not the manicure itself, but rather the person providing it and the intentions behind it.

- What's the difference between card #9 and this one?
- Would the level of risk change if Maya's friend were older?

3 ★★

Maya gets invited to an Airbnb party where everything's paid for. She hardly knows anyone there.

Airbnb parties are a fairly common recruitment scenario. The luxurious and private nature of these gatherings, combined with the presence of alcohol and drugs, can increase a person's impressionability, especially since substance use could make Maya more vulnerable. Not having friends or peers at the party is also a risk factor, as it's harder to find support when there are few trusted people around.

- Would the risk be the same if Maya knew the other guests?
- What safety precautions could Maya put in place if she decides to attend the party?

4 ★

Maya's partner insists on meeting her family and friends.

The fact that a partner wishes to integrate and respect their significant other's preexisting social circle is a reassuring sign in a relationship. Here, there does not seem to be any intention to isolate Maya. Commitment is a sign that the relationship is evolving in mutuality and equality.

Be careful! Even if a partner seems enthusiastic, it's important to respect each person's pace, avoid putting any pressure, and ensure you're truly ready before taking this step. Consent is always essential.

- If her partner spoke only negatively about her friends and family upon meeting them, would that change anything?

5 ★★

A stranger offers Maya a ride at the bus stop.

Although this may seem like an altruistic offer, it's also possible that the stranger has targeted Maya as a vulnerable person and wants to take advantage of her. Pimps often initiate contacts that appear harmless, or even friendly, to build a trusting bond.

6**Maya finds herself at a party where alcohol, drugs, and money are being exchanged.**

Although this isn't always the case, the exchange of money at a party could be a sign that sexual exploitation or criminal activities are taking place. Additionally, substance use could make Maya more vulnerable to potential violence, whether it's physical, sexual, or psychological. In fact, a pimp might even offer drugs to create a sense of debt, pressuring Maya to provide sexual services to repay it.

- What can Maya do to protect herself at this party?

7**After a night at a club, someone Maya has just met invites her to an after-party.**

Afterparties could facilitate sexual exploitation recruitment: pimps often rely on the exclusive nature of these gatherings, as well as the party atmosphere, to impress and isolate their targets. Additionally, the fact that it takes place at a stranger's home means the location is unfamiliar, which makes the situation even more risky.

- If Maya decides to go to the afterparty, what red flags would indicate an unsafe situation?

8**Maya's friend pressures Maya to hang out at her boyfriend's, even though he makes her feel uncomfortable.**

It's important to trust your instincts: many people who have experienced sexual exploitation report having an 'inner voice' that warned them about the danger of certain situations. Feeling uneasy isn't necessarily a sign that her friend's boyfriend wants to recruit her, but it's still important to pay attention to the signals your body is sending and to reflect on the source of that discomfort. Openly discussing the situation with her friend could help Maya better understand what's happening and avoid potentially risky settings.

- How could Maya approach the situation with her friend?

9**Maya's boyfriend offers to pay for her manicure, but only if his initials are visibly included.**

Having initials painted on a manicure seems to be an identification strategy. Pimps will sometimes require their targets to display distinguishing marks, such as tattoos or specific clothing colors. This is intended to reinforce a sense of affiliation while establishing that the targeted individuals 'belong' to them. Additionally, giving a manicure as a gift can be characteristic of the honeymoon phase. This seemingly generous gesture, that falls under love bombing, is actually a manipulative tactic used to mark the person, while gradually creating a sense of debt.

- What's the difference between card #2 and this one?

10**Maya's partner tries to convince her to sneak out after curfew.**

Going out like this not only means breaking the rules set by Maya's parents or guardians, but also that no responsible adult would know where she is or who she's with. This creates a situation that could make recruitment easier, while reducing the support her loved ones can offer. Moreover, breaking these rules can lead to conflicts with her family or friends, leaving her even more isolated.

- What's the difference between card #1 and this one?

11**Maya posts a Snapchat selfie saying "Fuck my parents." She receives a message from someone she doesn't know: "Family problems are always tough, come blow off steam at my place."**

Family difficulties are a significant risk factor in sexual exploitation. By highlighting these issues, a pimp can exacerbate the tension within the family to further isolate the targeted person. Providing her with a place to stay gives them more control and increases opportunities for recruitment. Such messages are typically sent during the 'contact' phase of the recruitment cycle.

In 2026, some people who have experienced sexual exploitation report that Snapchat is frequently used for recruitment, particularly because of its disappearing messaging. Some youth accept friend requests from unknown accounts, believing they are interacting with peers. Snapchat also allows users to share their location, send photos, and tag a specific place in a post. This feature becomes especially risky for those who post stories indicating they are looking for new friends, a party, or any other type of meeting, as it makes it easier for recruiters to locate and approach them.

- Is the level of risk the same if the message comes from a friend?
- Is the level of risk the same if the message comes from a new partner or new friend?
- How can someone protect themselves on apps like Snapchat or Instagram?

12**Maya's partner refuses to have sex without a condom because their last STBIs test was a while ago.**

This shows that Maya's partner values their sexual health. It is not a sign of infidelity or a lack of trust. It simply reflects someone taking responsibility for their one's own sexual health as well as for their partner's.

13 ★★

At a party with friends, Maya shares her sexual experiences. Her friend’s boyfriend responds: “If you’re gonna give sex for free, you might as well make some cash while you’re at it.”

If Maya were a minor, encouraging her to exchange sexual services for money would automatically constitute sexual exploitation. Even if the comment is made in a lighthearted tone, it appears intended to normalize the objectification and commodification of her body. It trivializes sexual exploitation by presenting it as a financial opportunity.

In the hypothetical scenario where Maya is of legal age, this comment could be interpreted as an encouragement to engage in sex work*. However, the fact that it comes from a third party promoting this practice is more likely to trivialize, or even desensitize, sexual exploitation. There is a significant risk that this idea is conveyed with an exploitative intent rather than with the aim of recognizing or supporting Maya’s agency in exchanging sexual services. Truly well-intentioned motives in this kind of discourse remain rare.

- If Maya is of legal age and appears interested in sex work, how can she ensure that she remains in control and avoids being exploited?

Sex work



This refers to sexual services provided in exchange for compensation, in which all parties are consenting. The details may be negotiated (limits, price, actions, etc.).²



14 ★★

Maya’s friend introduces her to a group of older people who often attend “private parties”. She feels flattered to be invited, even though she doesn’t know anyone.

It is a vulnerable situation for Maya to find herself at a party where she knows almost no one. One can also question why a group of older people is inviting younger girls: is it to take advantage of their impressionability?

- What conditions would increase or decrease the degree of risk?

15 ★

A friend of Maya’s invites her to a pole fitness class. After the class, Maya feels proud of pushing herself.

Pole fitness is distinct from sex work and sexual exploitation. It is a sport that can promote physical health and empower those who practice it.

- What is the difference between an invitation to a pole fitness studio and an invitation to a strip club?
- What is the difference between card #20 and this one?

The guy Maya spoke with at the bus stop yesterday decided to wait for her after school without letting her know.

This scenario suggests that this stranger may have potentially targeted Maya and is attempting to initiate encounters without her consent. It is not simply sexual exploitation: the situation could also present a broader risk of sexual violence. Meeting someone without their knowledge or prior consent, or trying to obtain information to track their schedule or location, constitutes sexual harassment* and should never be taken lightly.

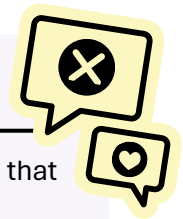
- How can a stranger gain access to such information, and should we be concerned? *Highlight the dangers of sharing personal information, both on social media and with new acquaintances.*

Sexual harassment

unwanted and/or repeated sexualized behaviors (words, actions, or gestures) that harm a person's physical or psychological integrity.³

Here are the forms of sexual harassment⁴:

- Catcalling
- Spreading rumors
- Targeted and persistent attention (insistent compliments, repeated solicitations, unwanted proximity, etc.)
- Criminal harassment
- Asking personal details
- Repeated questioning
- Sexually suggestive jokes



Maya receives a Snapchat friend request from username “Big.moneyyxxx.”

This username seems intended to impress potential targets by flaunting wealth and is typical of someone looking to attract or recruit people on Snapchat.

In 2026, some people who have experienced sexual exploitation report that Snapchat is frequently used for recruitment, particularly because of its ephemeral messaging. Some youth accept friend requests from unknown accounts, believing they are interacting with peers. Snapchat also allows users to share their location, send photos, and tag a specific place in a post. This feature becomes especially risky for those who post stories indicating they are looking for new friends, a party, or any other type of meeting, as it makes it easier for recruiters to locate and approach them.

- How can one protect themselves on social media platforms such as Snapchat and Instagram?

18**Maya's new boyfriend treats her to a very expensive trip for her birthday.**

The risk in this situation comes from the fact that the gift is expensive and takes Maya away from her usual environment. A gift that appears generous could hide malicious intentions, especially if the destination and details are unknown. It is easier to put someone in risky situations when they are unfamiliar with the itinerary, other travelers, language spoken at the destination, context, or any other relevant information. The gift could also create a sense of obligation, where Maya might ultimately feel pressured to comply with her partner's requests.

- Would the risk be the same if it were a long-term boyfriend?
- Would the risk be the same if it were a new female friend instead of a boyfriend?
- Would the risk be the same if Maya knew the destination ?

19**Maya's partner talks openly about their sexual desires.**

This can be a sign of open and casual communication about sexuality, which is a positive indicator for intimacy and trust in romantic relationships. While it is important to communicate sexual boundaries, it is equally important to share desires to nurture sexual intimacy.

- How can Maya differentiate between open communication of sexual desires and desensitization to exchanging sexual services?

20**Maya's boyfriend is a bouncer and asks her to drop by while he's working. When she arrives, she discovers it's a strip club.**

If Maya were a minor, going to a strip club would be illegal. The establishment's staff would not be allowed to admit minors, therefore, such an invitation would be a red flag. Even if Maya were 18 or older, this situation would reflect a desensitization to the exchange of sexual services. Some strip clubs can also be sites of sexual exploitation. It would be concerning that her boyfriend does not check whether she feels comfortable in this space, which could put Maya in a potentially uncomfortable situation and at risk of sexual violence.

- What is the difference between card #15 and this one?
- If Maya's boyfriend tries to recruit her, what might his next attempts look like? What should Maya watch out for to avoid being manipulated?

21

Maya’s friend is telling her about the sugar babies dating site she just joined: “It’s such easy money, you just let them take you out for dinner, that’s it.”

If Maya were a minor, sugaring would be illegal. That being said, even if Maya were of legal age, this demonstrates a typical scenario of desensitization to sexual exploitation: her friend is normalizing sugaring encounters and using the trust between them to make Maya lower her guard.

Moreover, it is well known that sugar baby apps are used by pimps who aim to introduce youth to sexual exploitation by creating financial dependency and a sense of debt. A common misconception suggests that no sexual activity is required in sugaring arrangements and that the person remains fully in control. While such boundaries can sometimes be respected, many people report experiencing sexual coercion from sugar daddies/mommies. Initial meetings may seem lighthearted and respectful, but over time, a sense of obligation can develop. In other cases, sugar babies experience a gradual reduction in benefits (gifts, outings, money, etc.) of which some become dependent, potentially feeling pressure to cross their personal limits.⁵ On the surface, consent appears to be respected, but this is actually a subtle manipulation strategy: consent obtained through pressure or guilt is not valid consent.

- What signs should Maya watch for to avoid being recruited or becoming financially dependent of them?
- How can Maya set her boundaries if she decides to create an account?
- If Maya needs money, what are some ways she can address this need?

22

Maya’s date gifts her a lingerie set.

Although this is a sexually suggestive gift, there is no indication that it will be used as a means of coercion in the future. Maya remains free to wear the outfit or not. If she feels uncomfortable wearing it, she must be free to refuse.

- In what context could this gesture be a sign of exploitation? For example, if it is used to force her to wear it for photos or to show it to others.
- How can one ensure that giving an erotic gift won’t make the person uncomfortable?
- What is the difference between card #25 and this one?

23

Someone’s chasing Maya in the subway, trying to get her Snapchat. “I’m not taking ‘no’ for an answer”, he says.

The person pursuing Maya is not respecting her consent and is forcing her to give her personal information. It can be expected that such coercion could occur again later in the relationship. While this behavior may seem flattering, it is in fact sexual harassment*.



See card #16 for the definition of sexual harassment.

24**Maya's boyfriend gifts her clothes that are out of her comfort zone.**

Even though this scenario is not explicitly coercive, Maya's boyfriend is testing her boundaries without respecting them. It can also be assumed that these clothes are more revealing, which desensitizes her to the exhibition of her sexuality. This is a subtle behavior that puts pressure on Maya.

- What is the difference between card #22 and this one?
- Can a gift be taken back?
- Is it possible to refuse a gift?
- Can something be demanded in exchange for a gift? *A gift is a donation, meaning it is not possible to require something in exchange. If someone intends an exchange, this must be clearly stated before the recipient accepts what is offered.*

25**Maya's friend frequently asks Maya to drop by her job at a massage salon. She says it's all fun, no fuss.**

It is not legal for minors to be in erotic massage parlors. That being said, even if Maya were of legal age, the situation should be approached with caution. It could be a strategy aimed at normalizing or desensitizing the exchange of sexual services for future gain. The trust Maya would have towards her friend could be exploited to lower her vigilance. To fully understand the context, it would be essential that Maya carefully considers the conditions surrounding the invitation: Is her friend being insistent? Does Maya feel comfortable? Are her boundaries clearly respected?

- What other places could be used to desensitize someone to the exchange of sexual services?
- What is the difference between card #15 and this one?
- If Maya's friend tries to recruit her, what might her next attempts look like? What should Maya watch out for to avoid being manipulated?

26**Maya's new friend points out that she's way too pretty to have so little followers on TikTok and Instagram.**

This comment could very well be harmless, but it could also be the start of a recruitment strategy. In that case, the friend might encourage her to engage in sexualized online behaviors, which could then be used to desensitize and recruit her. **A single incident of this type does not necessarily indicate a recruitment risk, but it does call for persistent alertness to other potential warning signs.**

- Is the level of risk the same whether the friend is a boy or a girl?



27**Maya often receives suggestive or sexual comments from her friend's boyfriend.**

This is typical of desensitization to coercive sexuality. It seems inappropriate for a friend's boyfriend to make such comments frequently. Introduction to sexual exploitation is facilitated if the targeted person is already accustomed to inappropriate remarks from the individual attempting to recruit them. It may be helpful to discuss this with her friend. Additionally, unsolicited and inappropriate sexual comments are a form of sexual harassment*.

Moreover, his behavior could be humiliating for both Maya and her friend, depending on their relationship agreement. If her friend and his boyfriend are monogamous, this behavior shows a lack of respect and fidelity toward his partner.

- How can Maya address her discomfort with her friend? How can she prepare for this conversation?
- Should Maya communicate her discomfort to her friend's boyfriend? If so, how? In which context? ?



Voir la carte #16 pour la définition et des exemples du harcèlement sexuel.

28**At a party, a stranger compliments Maya's body.**

Commenting on a stranger's body is rather risky: some people may feel flattered, while others may feel uncomfortable or uneasy. However, there is no indication that this comment will lead to coercive actions. The level of risk depends on the nature of the comment: a sexualized comment (for example, about the breasts or the butt) can be concerning. On the other hand, many compliments (for example, about someone's smile, energy, or clothing style) are flattering and harmless. **A single incident of this type does not necessarily indicate a recruitment risk.**

- How can someone attract another person's attention for the purpose of flirting? Which comments are appropriate, and which are inappropriate and why?
- How can someone reject another person's advances?

29**A drug dealer offers Maya a discount in exchange of a blowjob.**

If Maya were a minor, this would automatically constitute of a case of sexual exploitation, as it involves an exchange of goods for sexual services. If she were of legal age, this transaction could desensitize her to sexual exploitation. Depending on her desire to use substances and her financial situation this offer could also constitute a form of manipulation. Therefore, a dependency to drugs would represent a risk factor.

- What other things could be offered in exchange for oral sex? Food, housing, rent, clothing, invitations to events, etc.
- Would the level of risk be the same if the exchange involved something else? A vape? Clothes? Food?

30

Maya's friend's boyfriend offers her an easy way to make money: she just has to stay on the lookout while he steals a vehicle. He adds that everyone in the gang has already done it.

A strategy frequently used to recruit individuals for sexual exploitation is introducing them to other illicit activities. The pimp can desensitize the person to the criminal world environment and create a relationship of authority and financial dependence. These become levers to draw them into the exchange of sexual services.

Another strategy frequently used in gang contexts is creating a sense of belonging through activities and commitment. This feeling of belonging can be very important for those who do not experience it with their family and/or friends. Some individuals may be willing to engage in criminal activities or sexual exploitation in order to be accepted into the group.

- How can Maya express her discomfort?
- Could Maya remain in this group of friends without participating in criminal activities?

31

Maya is seeing a guy who says he's 17. One day she finds out he's actually 29.

If Maya were under 16, this relationship would be prohibited by law because the age gap is too large. That being said, even if Maya were above the legal age of sexual consent in Quebec, such a significant lie invalidates her consent, which would no longer make her consent fully informed. Lying about one's age is a strategy used by pimps to strengthen the trust of their targets and lower their vigilance. A relationship that begins with this kind of breach of trust cannot be based on respect, trust and mutuality.

- What are good reasons to lie about one's age? *There are none.*

32

Maya is pressured to take drugs without knowing what it is. She is told, "Trust me, it's fun. You won't regret it!"

Refusing to disclose the drug being offered to Maya prevents her from making an informed decision. Additionally, pressuring her does not allow for free consent. This contributes to desensitizing Maya to situations where consent is not respected, where she feels uncomfortable, and where she lacks control. Furthermore, many drugs reduce users' inhibition and vigilance, while others carry a high risk of addiction. Maya will not be able to take necessary precautions if she does not know the substance she is consuming. Finally, some individuals could take advantage of her vulnerable state to commit sexual violence.

33

Two of Maya's friends strongly insist on her going on a date with their older friend she doesn't know.

If it is necessary to pressure Maya into going on a date, this is a sign that her consent is not valid. Additionally, one might question whether the age difference between Maya and her potential date could create conditions for impressionability and manipulation.

The fact that Maya's friends are unable to respect her consent is concerning and already creates an unequal dynamic between them. Why are they so insistent that Maya meet their friend? They could be acting as recruiters by encouraging her to meet an older man, who might turn out to be a pimp.

- What is the difference between card #39 and this one?

34

Maya is invited to a party at an Airbnb. Once there, she notices several men going in and out of the same room and exchanging money.

Airbnb parties are places where sexual exploitation can easily occur, given the private nature of these gatherings. The comings and goings and the presence of money suggest a high likelihood that someone could be exploited during the event, and that pimps/recruiters may be present. Even if sexual services are not exchanged, criminal activities still appear to take place, which is a risk itself.

- What should Maya do in this situation?
- If Maya decides to stay at the party, how could she protect herself from the risk of sexual violence?

35

Maya's boyfriend wants to know her location at all times.

It is essential to maintain personal freedom in a romantic relationship. If Maya does not want to share her location, it is crucial that her boyfriend respects her decision and her individuality. However, if Maya chose to share her location, this would not justify her boyfriend controlling and monitoring her.

- For what reasons might someone want to check another person's location?
- For what reasons might someone want to share their location?
- If only one partner shares their location, is this a concern?
- Does someone who doesn't want to share their location (or even their passwords) have something to hide?

36

Maya's date flaunts luxury items to impress her.

While this isn't automatically a sign of sexual exploitation, pimps often draw people in by suggesting that associating with them could lead to a glamorous lifestyle. A single incident of this kind doesn't necessarily indicate a high risk of sexual exploitation, but it emphasizes the importance of staying alert.

- Why are luxury items appealing? What messages do they convey?
- What is more important than money and luxury in a relationship?

My love ideals

My love ideals tool aims to help youth develop critical thinking about the elements perceived as important when sharing intimacy with another person. You can find it and **download it for free on our website**, sentourer.ca.



37 ★

The person Maya is dating asks if she's open to trying new things like BDSM or anal sex.

This can be a sign of open and casual communication about sexuality, which is a positive indicator of intimacy and trust in romantic relationships. Kinky fantasies are not an indicator of a risk of sexual exploitation. However, it is essential to respect all partners' boundaries regarding these practices.

- How can someone share their sexual desires without forcing or manipulating their partner?

38 ★★

An acquaintance offers to let Maya stay with them for free after seeing her walking alone late at night. "And I live right by your school", they add.

This resembles a typical scenario of contact in sexual exploitation. The pimp could isolate Maya from her social and/or family environment, establish a dynamic of control and surveillance, and create a sense of debt. It is also concerning that this person knows which school Maya goes to. It is important to question how this information was obtained. Est-ce que Maya devrait accepter la proposition?

- Should Maya accept the offer?
- What factors might encourage Maya to accept the offer? What are her alternatives?

39 ★★

Maya's friend pressures her to have sex with their friend, whom she has only met a few times.

This scenario is typical of a recruiter to desensitize the target to coercive sexuality. Maya is being pressured by her friend to have sexual contact with someone she knows little about, who could potentially be a pimp. When pressure is involved, consent is never valid. This situation would also put Maya at risk of sexual violence.

- What is the difference between card #33 and this one?

40 ★★

A modeling agency sends Maya a private message on Instagram to recruit her.

While such a message could be legitimate, some pimping rings disguise themselves as modeling agencies to target youth. It would be crucial for Maya to confirm the agency's legitimacy and talk it over with trusted people. She should not navigate this new environment on her own.

- If you receive a message like this, what do you do? Who do you talk to about it?
- Besides modeling agencies, what other fake fronts might be used for recruitment? *Collaborations with influencers, product ambassadors, meetings with people who talk about money, travel, etc.*

41 ★★

Maya receives a private message on TikTok from an influencer who offers her a collaboration for a new lingerie brand. She would also be invited to the launch party, where there would be lots of celebrities.

While such a message could be legitimate, some pimping rings send these messages through recruiters. It would be crucial for Maya to verify the legitimacy of the event and discuss it with trusted people. She should not navigate this new environment on her own.

- Which card is riskier, card #40 or this one?
- If you receive a message like this, what do you do? Who do you talk to about it?

42 ★

During a date, Maya’s partner suggests splitting the bill 50-50.

In this scenario, Maya’s partner offers a fair financial arrangement that supports her independence.

- Does the guy always have to pay on the first date?
- Does splitting the bill at the end of a date necessarily mean there won’t be a second date or that the other person is no longer interested?

43 ★ ★

Maya’s friend tells her she should make a Tinder account, even though she’s not 18 yet.

It is not allowed for anyone under 18 to have a Tinder account. These restrictions exist to prevent abuse and ensure a safe environment for users. Maya’s friend is pressuring her in a way that could expose her to potential unequal relationships. This is not only a risk of sexual exploitation but also a broader risk of violence in romantic relationships.

- What methods do minors use to date?
- How can you ensure your safety during a first date with someone you met online?

44 ★ ★

Maya’s partner asks her to send intimate photos showing her face, promising “anything she wants” in return.

It is not recommended to send intimate photos that show one’s face, as such images can later be used for sextortion*. Offering Maya “anything she wants” is exaggerated and constitutes a manipulation strategy. Sextortion can occur immediately after exchanging intimate images, but it can also happen later on and done more subtly. Such strategies may be used by a pimp.

Sextorsion

“Sextortion (or sexual extortion) is a form of online blackmail in which a person threatens to share another person’s sexual image or video with others if that person refuses to send money or provide additional sexual content.”⁶

Law regarding sharing intimate photos (“nudes”)

Creating, possessing, publishing, or distributing intimate images without someone’s consent is a criminal offence. This material may depict a nude person, certain body parts, or explicit sexual activity.⁷

Warning: If any of these actions involve a minor, the perpetrator could be charged with distributing child pornography, even if the minor consented to sharing the images.

Law regarding sharing intimate photos (“nudes”) (continued)

Furthermore, no minor is allowed to share, possess, publish, or receive sexual images, even if the photos are of themselves. These laws were passed to protect young people.⁸

Despite being illegal, this practice remains common among adolescents: nearly one in five youth has sexted (Mori et al., 2022). There is a small exception: minors may record their own intimate images or videos, as long as no one who did not participate has access to them. Additionally, the law tolerates two minors to consensually exchange images; meaning it should not be punishable as long as consent is present.⁹

How to take “nudes” safely



Since youth participate in this activity regardless of the law, it is essential to raise awareness and provide them with tools to promote safe practices.

We suggest a playful approach to guide their learning. Using the illustration, ask them to identify the elements that are unsafe. You can specify that there are 10 mistakes to find. A **printable version is available** in the appendix.



45 ★ ★ ★

Maya’s partner offers to sell her phone, promising to replace it with a new iPhone.

This scenario is characteristic of the “honeymoon phase” in the recruitment cycle. This seemingly generous gift could actually serve as a lever of control, creating a sense of debt and giving the pimp the right to monitor the use of the phone. For example, the pimp might demand access to the youth’s location or monitor their conversations, justifying this excessive control by claiming they paid for the iPhone.

- For what malicious reasons might Maya’s partner want to give her a new phone?
- Would the level of risk be the same if it were a long-term boyfriend?

46

Maya is invited to her friend's boyfriend's place and notices that several people, including him, have guns strapped to their belts.

The possession of firearms may indicate that the friend's boyfriend's circle is involved in illicit activities, potentially including sexual exploitation. Maya and her friend may feel pressured to engage in activities beyond their personal boundaries if they sense that their safety is at risk.

- For what legitimate reasons might someone carry a weapon at their waist? *Legitimate reasons for carrying a weapon are rare and generally limited to individuals who are legally authorized (such as police officers) or for hunting. In a party setting, there are therefore very few valid reasons to carry a weapon; it is a red flag and a justified reason to question the situation, or even to leave.*

47

Maya wakes up from a party disoriented, with no memory of the evening's final hours.

It is inferred that Maya experienced a blackout following heavy consumption the night before. Such a state makes her more vulnerable to various forms of violence, including sexual violence. It would be important for her to speak with people she trusts who were present at the party to understand what happened during the rest of the evening. It is also necessary to question what was consumed: is it possible that substances were given to Maya without her consent?

- When would this situation become high risk? *If Maya consumed little or nothing the night before, it is possible that someone put a substance in her drink. It is always possible to seek help from the police. An investigation may be conducted. Often, more than one person is targeted (through non-consensual substance use and sexual violence) in these situations.*
- How could Maya create a safety net in case she experiences another blackout?

48

Maya's boyfriend demands that she pays him back for the hair appointment he treated her to last week.

This event is characteristic of the repayment phase in the cycle of sexual exploitation. A sense of debt is created by pretending that something previously offered must now be repaid.

- Can a gift be taken back?
- Is it possible to refuse a gift?
- Can someone demand something in return for a gift? *A gift is a donation, meaning it is not possible to require something in return. If an individual intends for it to be an exchange, this must be clearly specified before the other person accepts what is being offered.*

49



A friend of Maya's asks her to join their vape-selling business.

A strategy frequently used to recruit individuals for sexual exploitation is to first involve them in other illicit activities. For example, selling vapes as a minor would constitute an illegal activity, after which the pimp can desensitize the targeted person to criminal behavior and create a relationship of financial dependency.

- What other criminal activities could be introduced to desensitize or involve Maya?

50



Maya's partner demands that all their conversations remain exclusively on Snapchat.

Although Snapchat's discretion may be appreciated for various reasons, pimps often favor this means of communication in order to avoid leaving incriminating evidence of their illegal activities. This single incident does not allow us to conclude that he is a pimp, but it is something to keep in mind, as it raises concerns about his intentions.

- What intentions or meanings might lie behind the desire to keep conversations confidential?

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Appendices



My love ideals



How to take a “nudes” safely

My love ideals

Write down the characteristics you look for in your romantic partners. Think about the physical, psychological, and social traits you would like them to have, and then rank them in order of importance.

What is essential



What is important

What is enjoyable



My love ideals



Follow-up questions

What is essential

This is where the core, non-negotiable foundations of any relationship belong, whether it's romantic or not: **respect, communication, feeling valued, trust, consent, safety, equality, and freedom.**

What is important

These are the things that are personally important to you, even if they may not matter to everyone. These are preferences that can shape your interest in someone. For example: **sharing the same religion, having similar future goals**, or wanting a partner who's **independent**. Certain physical traits might also be important to you. However, keep in mind that even if someone doesn't fit your preferences, you should always express your lack of interest respectfully.

What is enjoyable

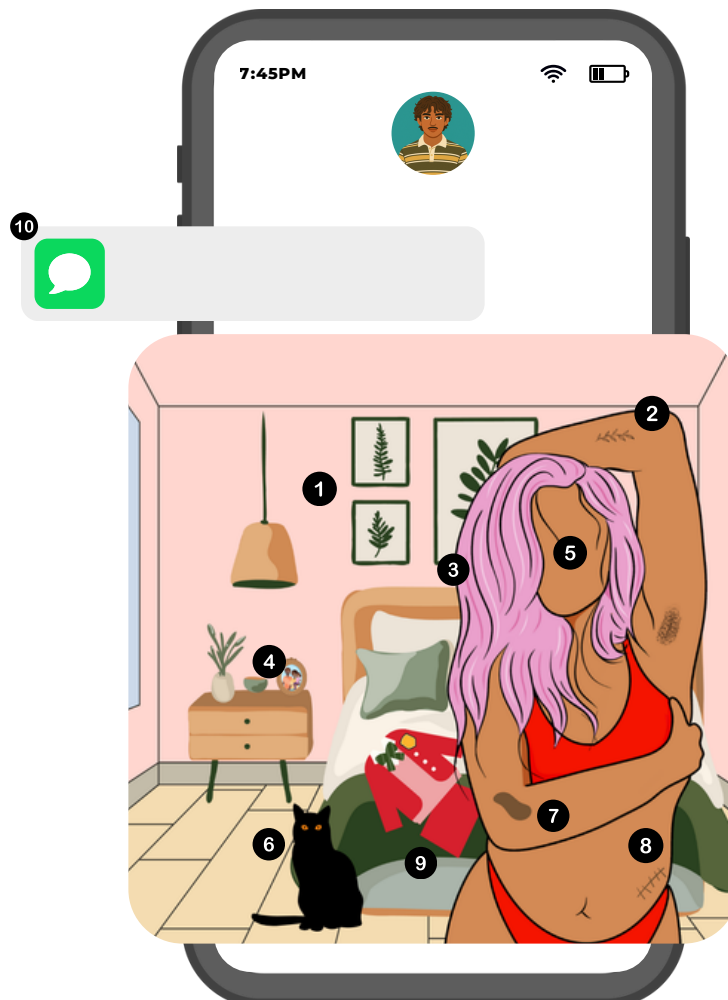
There are aspects you might appreciate in your partners without needing them to be absolutely essential. For example, **sharing hobbies, living nearby**, or having **similar tastes** can be nice, but they aren't requirements for being happy in a relationship.

Questions to spark a discussion

- > Is it possible to have multiple people in your lives who meet different needs?
- > Is it realistic to expect your partners to match your ideals 100%?
- > On the other hand, should you stay in a relationship that doesn't suit you?
- > What are the limits of what you should accept?
- > If you're in a relationship that doesn't meet 100% of your criteria, is it possible to change your partner?
- > If you have to express your needs and boundaries, does that make the relationship less "authentic"?
- > Does everyone express love in the same way?

7:45 PM





Answers

- 1 Recognizable background**
It can be identified. It's better to use a neutral, hard-to-recognize background.
- 2 Tattoos**
Tattoos make a person easily recognizable. It's recommended to hide them or remove them with an editing app.
- 3 Distinctive or colored hair**
Unique hair color or style makes a person easily recognizable.
- 4 Family or friend photos in the background**
Avoid showing photos in the background. A simple, neutral background reduces the risk of being identified.
- 5 Face**
It is better to not to show a face in the photo.
- 6 Pets**
Pets can make a person recognizable, as they may be identified.
- 7 Birthmarks**
Unique marks are easily recognizable. Avoid showing them in the photo.
- 8 Scars**
Scars are unique and easily identifiable. It's best to avoid displaying them in the photo.
- 9 School uniform or school logo**
These can make it easier to identify the person and reveal their location.
- 10 Unsafe app**
Using apps where photos can be saved or screenshotted (e.g., iMessage) is not safe. It's preferable to use apps with limited functions (e.g., Snapchat) that allow single-view photos. This isn't a perfect solution, but it reduces risk.

7:45 PM

