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Online Dating

Online dating has drastically changed modern “dating culture” within the past ten years. The attitude towards using internet dating website and apps has changed as well in recent years. Use of dating services has become more accepted as well as expected by young people. People are no longer ashamed to have dating profiles but rather, are looked down upon if they are not on these sites. According to *Pew Research Center*, almost sixty percent of U.S adults say online dating is a good way to meet people while close to twenty-five percent says it makes one look desperate (Smith and Anderson). These dating apps, websites and services becoming accepted by society around them makes people more likely to use them.

This widespread use of dating websites and apps is causing a common behavior through most modern single people. Online dating is making individuals more self-centered and more physical appearance oriented when it comes to seeking new relationships. Online relationships can be riskier and more likely to not be successful than a traditional relationship. According to *Psychology Today*, research from Michigan State University shows that relationships that begin online are almost thirty percent more common to split up within the first year compared to relationships that began with a face-to-face meeting (Anderson). With people becoming more dependent and self-absorbed into their cell phones dating culture has taken a turn. Dating has become viewed as more of online shopping rather than an experience of building a relationship with someone who is right for you and your life.

As certain seasons or holidays come near such as Christmas and especially Valentine's day, modern society tells single individuals they need a partner to truly enjoy that time of year. This time of year is referred to as "Cuffing Season". *Independent* magazine defines cuffing season as, the time of year between September and February where people desire to be tied down or cuffed to a serious relationship (Petter). Individuals wish to experience all the winter holiday festivities with a partner and cuddle up with someone during the cold months. Single people can begin to panic and the need for single individuals to find a date becomes more important than ever. Trying to fill this social expectation can get some into a forced dating situations out of loneliness that becomes unhealthy. Dating apps are fast and easy way to find a last minute date, all it takes is a few swipes on a dating app and a clever pick up line can land someone a last minute date with ease. During the cuffing season scramble single people turn to their cellular devices to fill this urgent need for a relationship. But this new way of making a last minute relationship is also influencing the way people interact and treat others when searching for potential partners.

A clear example of these rather rude actions is called "Ghosting". This can occur when someone who is dating another person for any amount of time, they could be together for two days or two years. It does not matter, but they end the relationship by cutting off all communication, not giving any explanation or reason why. *Huffpost* states, that over twenty-five percent of women and close to thirty-five percent of men have both ghosted someone and been ghosted themselves (Borgueta). Ghosting can be an extremely hurtful way of ending a relationship because the other partner never gets closure on what they did wrong or what part of the relationship caused the it to fail. It can be extremely damaging to one's self esteem and it is a very selfish way of getting out of a relationship. An article from *Huffpost* says, "Relationship

research shows that ghosting (a.k.a. avoidance) is the worst way to end a relationship, according to the recipient, and can actually lead to bigger confrontations down the line.” (Borgueta). If an individual gets ghosted and in result is hurt by the experience than any future accidental meetings will become more unpleasant then if the relationship was dissolved in a more mutual way. Ghosting is a cowardly way to end a relationship, it is to escape the guilt one might feel of breaking someone else’s heart. Although the “ghoster” does not see the emotional pain they have cause to the ex-partner that does not mean no damage has been made.

Modern dating culture and dating apps are shaping the way young people view love and the idea relationship. Young people are being influenced by expectations they see in modern media and film along with expectations they have seen through peers. *Tinder* is a very popular dating app that feels like almost every young person has installed on their phone. Dating apps like *Tinder* can make people prioritize one's appearance. The app is designed to where they first thing a user sees when they open the app is someone’s picture. The user swipes through hundreds of profiles and they make instant judgment off mostly their appearance. The user can either swipe right when they view the profile pictures to “like” them or the user also has the option to swipe left if they do not want to be matched with them. If two people swipe right on each other than they will match and be able to have a texting conversation with each other. The problem that these style of apps are creating is that users are shaping their idea partner based off of picture. The user falls into a pattern where physical attraction is the number one thing they search for as they scroll through profile after profile.

Physical attraction can be an important trait to look for when getting to know if someone is “partner material”. But more people focus on the person’s appearance over his or her personality. *Spectator magazine* discusses the way people can meet through these dating services

affects the relationship that follows the first date. The University of Texas in Austin conducted an experiment where a class was asked to rate each other on attractiveness at the beginning of the semester and then again at the end after knowing each other for three months. The results had changed in different areas across the board. After the semester had ended the students began to build real relationships and discovered people's perception of a person's appearance had changed for better or for worse. (Sherine). Outward appearance is not the sole factor in attraction between two people, yet most dating apps solely focus an individual's image or on how attractive they are. Dating apps are creating unsteady relationships that are only based on the physical attractions towards each other. These relationships are unable to last through the difficulties all couples go through because they are simply commonly incompatible.

Some argue that dating apps are helping make more relationships than ever. Finding a date is now fast and easy thanks to dating apps, people can now find a date just by swiping through their dating app without the fear of the possibility of face to face rejection. A person's cell phone can act as a shield from the anxiety and embarrassment a real life setting can present. *Newsday* magazine states, Modern technology are aiding these mobile apps become much more customized to the user. Using the wide reach of social media sites such as Facebook to make better love connections, while also protecting privacy more accurately (Altherr). Although people are going on more and more dates can be a positive, the real issue dating apps are causing is the actions that happen after the first date. As a result, people are being coupled with other who are not right for them and later breaking up causing heartbreak on both ends.

Dating apps are not only causing failing relationships but also creating a new selfish behavior to young dating people. According to *Esquire*, men and women's behavior on the apps are also very diverse, Men will swipe right on close to half the women's profiles he sees. While

on the other hand women will only like a man's profile almost fifteen percent of the time. The number of men on dating apps are much larger than woman. There are apps that have a male-female ratio of 70 to 30. Females tend to not be as active on dating apps (Black). Men and women use dating apps like *Tinder* or *Bumble* very differently. This causes a vastly different experience for each gender while using these apps.

Modern day hook up culture is another reason that People are thinking less of other's personal feelings and more of their own desires. The attitude towards having sex with strangers is also becoming more accepted and acted out by people of all ages. The *American Psychological Association* defines hookups as, "brief uncommitted sexual encounters between individuals who are not romantic partners or dating each other". Hook up culture describes the way hooking up has become more acted out when it comes to young single individuals going out and trying to meet new people. The perception of hooking up with someone you just met is becoming more positive, almost thirty percent of women reported having positive feelings after a sexual encounter with a stranger. While over fifty percent of men also reported they experienced positive feelings the morning after a hookup (Garcia). Something that this data does not touch on is the aspect of after the two strangers have parted ways. An individual can be happy after a night of sexual interaction, but hook-ups end with the two parting ways and hopefully never speaking again to avoid the awkward tension between the two. A few days after the encounter an individual can feel negative feelings after looking back on the night.

Although the numbers of People who view hookups as positive continue to climb, the numbers of People who feel guilt or sadness afterwards is high as well. *The American Psychological Association* states, that after a study was conducted over seventy percent of women agreed with feeling guilty after sexual encounter with a stranger and over thirty percent

of men also agreed with feeling guilt and embarrassment after a hookup. This study also reported that college students that felt guilt and embarrassment the morning after experienced more symptoms of depression and loneliness after a hookup (Garcia). Hooking up can result in positive emotions afterwards or negative depending on the individual. But the effect of guilt and embarrassment seem to have more serious mental impacts like depression or loneliness. Rather than feeling good about yourself because you got laid.

Apps or websites like Tinder and Match.com have changed the way individuals treat the “dating games” for the worse. Although dating services are not totally to blame the mix between technology and society’s new standard has cause the experience of dating to be altered. Actions such as “ghosting” have become a rampant and common way of trying to find love. These behaviors mixed with society’s expectation to be in a relationship, hook up culture, and cuffing season make. The physical attraction is more important to people on the prowl than finding someone who is compatible with their partner’s personality. This problem is creating unstable, unrooted and unhappy relationships.

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