

Getting to know you: More and more seniors try dating websites

By LAURA BAUMBAUER
Creators Syndicate

There's a whole new world of dating with changing rules and ways to meet. "Courting" isn't the same as it once was, and the avenues to get a date are as abundant as they are confusing. A popular way to find love — or a companion — is through the Internet.

More and more baby boomers are turning to the Web. Gordon Scott Edwards documents his online dating adventures in his book, "Internet Safari: Finding Love Online at 65." Another source of inspiration and advice is "The Boomer's Guide to Online Dating," by Judsen Culbreth.

But how does one get started on the path of online dating?

Finding one or two reputable dating websites is key to finding love. There's always Match.com or eHarmony, though more niche websites targeted at those in their golden years have sprung up. Dating For Seniors, 50YearsPlus.com and BabyBoomerPeopleMeet.com are a few.

It doesn't hurt to put a profile on more than one

site, especially if the sites are free. Take advantage of free trials and expand the options.

After signing up and before checking out the profiles of other singles, time needs to be spent on your profile. Be as informative as possible, though, according to Culbreth, keep it real, too. When answering questions about height, weight, looks, occupation and children, "be absolutely honest. You can't recover from misrepresenting yourself."

This honesty also applies to your search and what you want in a partner. One of the great things about Internet dating is searching for exactly the type of person you want. While writing truths about yourself, write about your preferences, even the obscure. It's good to be open-minded, and it's also nice to find someone who loves Rocky Road ice cream as much as you or who takes miniature golf to new levels.

When choosing a username or tag line for your profile, keep in mind how it appears to others. Would you be attracted to an 85-year-old named Bad-Boy22? Or someone with



FINDING THE RIGHT ONE: When caution is used, online dating sites can be a way to meet people.

a vulgarity in his or her name? Unless this is part of your reason for online dating, think about the message that is sent in a name and profile.

Another nice aspect Culbreth points out about Internet dating is not every person who shows interest needs a response if the sparks aren't mutual. That's especially true if there are lots of responses from people who clearly

didn't read your profile or if their interests don't match yours at all.

There are plenty of fish in the Internet sea, and there isn't a reason to catch ones that don't fit your net. However, it is nice and polite to respond and express a lack of interest.

Photos are great expressions of you and others, and they reduce uncertainty. According to *Online Dating Magazine*, profiles

with photos are viewed more often than ones without photos. Honesty helps here, too. Misrepresentation in a photo may cause a first date to be a last date. Be cautious of anyone unwilling to send a photo even after some communication, and anyone who sends a photo that doesn't resemble him or herself at all.

There are other things to be careful about besides

photos. New risks exist with online dating, including coming across scammers and liars.

Some married people pretending to be single search for fun, and some people are dangerous. As long as caution is used, adventures in Internet dating can be safe and fun. There are some simple things you can do to make sure this happens.

Online Dating Magazine recommends guarding your anonymity. This means not placing information about where you live, a home phone number or specifics about a workplace.

Wait on giving this information, and do not get picked up or dropped off at home. It's also never a good idea to give your real name or your profile to someone you don't know well.

When you go on a date, always let someone know where you'll be, and avoid secluded areas. Follow your gut instinct. There isn't any obligation for you to continue to see someone if there's discomfort.

As long as honesty and caution are used, dating online is a fun way to meet a lot of people, no matter the age of the person.

Learn to manage behaviors of those developing Alzheimer's, dementia

As someone develops dementia, it can cause changes that include confusion, irritation or behavioral difficulties, leaving caregivers, partners and family members feeling stressed, irritable or helpless.

By learning to understand the meaning behind the actions, it is easier to stay calm and deal effectively with the challenges that arise.

Each person is an individual, with their own preferences and character traits. However, certain

forms of behavior are particularly common in people with dementia.

If the person you are caring for has difficulty expressing himself or herself in words, the unusual behavior may become more extreme.

By working out what each behavior means, and finding ways to overcome the problem, the situation can become more manageable.

Here are coping tips:
 ■ Understand behaviors are not deliberate.
 ■ Is the behavior really a

problem?

■ Put yourself in their situation.

■ Offer reassurance.

■ Behavior is a means of communication, e.g. pain, urinary tract infection, etc.

■ Distract the person with calming activities, e.g. music, pets, etc.

■ Take care of yourself.

■ If some behaviors are particularly irritating, such as repetitive behavior, make an excuse to leave the room for a while.

■ If you find the person's behavior really difficult to

deal with, ask your doctor for advice about how to handle it.

If you or someone you know would like information about Alzheimer's/dementia care, call Autumn Grove Cottage at 713-870-1393 or visit the community's website at www.autumngrovecottage.com.

TOUCH MAKES A DIFFERENCE:

Interaction with pets can help calm someone with Alzheimer's or dementia.



PHOTO COURTESY OF AUTUMN GROVE COTTAGE

Independent Retirement Living

Established tradition of excellence for the past 35 years



TREEMONT Retirement Community

Established for 35 years.

Peace of mind for you...

comfort and tranquility for them.

Treemont Healthcare Nursing & Rehab

713-783-4100

Call Ann and Schedule A Tour Today 713-783-6820

- Located on 9 wooded acres
- Minutes from The Galleria
- 3 Delicious Meals Daily
- Weekly Housekeeping
- Emergency Call System
- Social Activities
- Oak Lined Patio Areas
- Scheduled Transportation
- Utilities (Except Telephone and Cable)
- Home Care/24 hour Nurse on Call
- Home Health/Medicare Services

2501 Westerland Drive @ Westheimer, Houston, TX 77063

713-783-6820 | www.treemont.com