

Sober (Slow) Dating Plan (example)

Use this as a starting point to develop your own plan. Delete anything that is not relevant for you in your own unique situation.

Bottom lines

- First: do no harm.
- No romance if it can't be a long-term relationship.
- No more than one date per week.
- Minimal phone and text contact - just to arrange dates.
- Radical honesty - no people pleasing - no withholding.
- Mutual desire to go slow and see where things lead.
- No sexual activity for at least 30 / 60 / 90 days and not before a sober conversation about the relationship and an agreement about exclusivity.
- Avoid fantasy and enmeshment. Realness and spaciousness. Self-care comes first.
- Acknowledge red flags and deal breakers.
- No alcohol on dates.
- Willingness to end things if needed and not 'ghost'.
- Checking when I am seeking validation and acceptance.
- Set, hold and respect boundaries.
- It's okay to make mistakes - own it, share it, forgive it, learn and move on.

Needs

- No smoking/drugs.
- No active addiction.
- No unavailability (uncontrolled mental illness, self-medicating, addiction etc).
- Family in Australia.
- Does have / doesn't have children. Doesn't want / does want children.
- Balance of spirituality and rational beliefs.
- Personal development focus.
- Owning their shadows.
- Similar styles (sexual, professional, intellectual, physical/activity, social, communication, hobbies, humour).
- Physical attraction.
- Unconditional positive regard (non-judgemental and unconditionally loving).

Dating

- Don't be in HALTS.
- Breathe.
- Listen to them - don't make up stories.
- Light friendly and fun - don't over disclose - boundary setting.
- Watch for red flags.
- Be prepared to say 'no'.

- Check how you feel about yourself - good or bad?
- Have a backup plan - willingness to leave - serenity prayer.
- Meet in public - 1-2 hours first few dates - pay for yourself.
- Dress appropriately.
- No kissing on the first date.

After the date:

- Bookend the date - call sponsor / fellow immediately before and immediately after.
- Expect new areas of addiction to come up - use the tools of recovery.
- "Right-size" the sexual feelings - don't act on them.
- "Wait three days".

Disclosure

- By the third date - before emotional bonding occurs - let them know you are in a 12 step program for healthy relationships.
- Both get tested before having sex.

Healthy Breakups

- List of things that aren't working (eg unwillingness to meet the agreements / not respecting boundaries).
- Talk to sponsor - take time and don't just cut and run.
- Use the support around you. Have a process and look at options (eg break or trial separation).
- Make a choice together.
- Work out if it is avoidance or discernment.

My sexual 'moves' and progression

- How do I want to progress? What is sex to me?
- Long hugs / cuddles with clothes on.
- Hand holding.
- Kissing on the couch, hands above the belt, clothes on.
- Clothes on 'dry humping'.
- Later, below the waist, clothes off, go to the bedroom.
- Any sort of genital penetration.