Filling Out Your Profiles On Dating Apps: Why or Why Not?

If getting healthier is on your 2021 To-Do list, consider including how dating apps can help.

February 4, 2021 By Building Healthy Online Communities

Being honest about your STI status and testing habits is key to preventing the spread of HIV and STIs. Dating apps can make it really easy to do so, just under half of all users complete all the sexual health options in their profiles.

Although they may be worried about sharing information about their sexual health, which in some areas may be riskier than in others, there are also a number of real advantages that are important to keep in mind as you decide how much to share. Here are some of them:

1. Get awkward conversations out of the way. For many people, having conversations in person - whether it's about what you like to do in bed, your HIV status, whether you like using condoms or not, have an undetectable viral load or are on PrEP - can be hard, or feel like it's interrupting the moment. Putting that info right out there on the app for others to see can be much easier.
2. Find what you're looking for. Maybe you're into only people who are into oral sex, or who are looking for a one-night stand, or are on PrEP. Being able to search for those profiles can make it much easier to find that Mr. or Ms. Right when it comes to those preferences.
3. Set expectations. People change their own sexual health strategies -- they start condoms when they didn't before, got tested, r go on PreP, or get their viral load to be undetectable. Some apps offer testing reminders - that's also a good time to review what you've written down and make sure it still reflects what you do. Many apps provide links to free STI self-test kits. (22% of gay men on apps have never been tested.)
4. Help the community. When a user sees that others are taking PrEP or have gotten tested recently, it not only allows them to make informed decisions about what they'll but can also encourage them to complete their profile or remind them that they're overdue for an exam.

We hope this information helps you decide what to do. And for more information about sexual health — from what makes good sex to how often to get tested — check out bhocpartners.org.

This post is by Building Healthy Online Communities (BHOC), a consortium of public health leaders and gay dating website and app owners who are working together to support HIV and STI prevention online. Key site and app owners who have collaborated with BHOC include Adam4Adam, BarebackRT, Black Gay Chat, Daddyhunt/Mr X, Dudesnude, Gay.com, Grindr, GROWLr, Hornet, POZ Personals and SCRUFF.

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