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## Relationship Game

This game is best played with a smaller group of individuals (between 2-10 people), but could be altered to play with larger groups or individuals in a one-on-one setting. It was created to be played with those with developmental disabilities in an effort to provide accurate and positive relationship information.

Depending on the group you are working with, you can take cards out of the deck that you do not think are appropriate or that you do not want to discuss at the time.

### **What you will need:**

- The deck of relationship cards. Each card has a characteristic and/or quality of a person on it.
- The green flags (yes, go, thumbs up) and red flags (no, stop, thumbs down) – these can be found in a separate document called, *Red and Green Flags for expressing thoughts, feelings and opinions*

### **How to play the game:**

Prior to beginning the game, each participant will be given a red and green flag. The facilitator will explain that the flags will be used to express individual opinions on the qualities being discussed.

In the first version of the game, the facilitator will go around the room and flip over three relationship cards for each participant. Flip the cards for one participant at a time to avoid distractions. Read the cards out loud so the participant and other group members can follow the discussion. Ask the participant, “Judging from these three qualities do you think you would like to date this person?” You can tailor this question to meet the needs of the group. For example you could ask, “Would you like to be this person’s friend?” Participants will indicate their answer with the flags provided. It is ok if participants put up both flags; be sure to discuss why two flags may be appropriate.

If the participant would like to see this person again, they will hold up their green flag.

If the participant does not want to see this person again, they will hold up their red flag.

If the participant cannot decide, the entire group can help them by raising the flag that reflects their opinion. It is common for the whole group to participate even if the participant is not hesitant about their decision.

If they decide to date or get to know the person better they keep the cards in front of them. If they do not want to see the person again you take the cards away. If you choose you can ask the entire group their thoughts.

Once everyone has had a turn you can stop here or you can continue with another round. If a participant has no cards in front of them flip over three new cards and ask the same questions. You can do as many rounds as you like until the cards are all used up.

In the second version of this game, participants are not asked individually about a set of three cards. Instead, the facilitator will show all members of the group the same card and read it out loud. Each participant will then lift a red or green flag to show if they would be interested in being friends, or being in a relationship, with someone who exhibits the characteristic.

As you flip through the cards and the participants make decisions ask them questions about why they are making the decisions they make. There is often debate between participants about whether a quality is positive or negative. Friendly and constructive debate can benefit participants and open their minds to new ideas and feelings.

Be sensitive about gender and sexual orientation. Do not assume a person is heterosexual or assume what gender they are. Use the words person or individual, instead of him/her or he/she. For example, "This person brags a lot", instead of "He/She brags a lot."

You may have to define a term for the group. If you are unsure whether everyone knows the definition of a word you can ask the group, "Does anyone know what \_\_\_\_\_ means?" Signal participants to indicate their answer with the red or green flag.

Once you are finished playing, you can ask participants if there were any qualities that were not discussed but that they think are important.

### **Other variations:**

Depending on the group, you can take all cards to do with sexuality and intimate relationships out of the deck. Play the game the same way but ask, "Would you want to be friends with this person?" Discuss what it means to be a good friend and why friends are important.

Large group: Break the large group into smaller groups to play as described above. This only works if you have multiple facilitators who can deal the cards.

Individual Session: If you are working with an individual in a one-on-one setting the game will be played similar to the second variation discussed. Provide the participant with the two flags and read the relationship game cards aloud (no restrictions on number of cards).

Ask participant about their decisions and discuss if the characteristic is healthy; why or why not.