



## 4MNet Group session of 16/4/21

**Topic: Relationships** – Starting the fire; kindling and keeping the fire going;  
putting the fire out when things are not going well and enjoying and appreciating being single.

### Starting the fire

#### What do you look for in a relationship – The 4MNet Love-List/LoveFesto

##### First things first...

It's important to Love yourself first, know your self and remember that you are more than an HIV status. If you love yourself, then you are more likely to attract people who will love you in turn.

#### The Love-List

##### The 7 Fs

- ♥ 'Fizzical' attributes & attraction (is there a physical & sexual buzz between you? !)
- ♥ Friendship (are you friends with each other? Do you like each other's friends?)
- ♥ Finances (will your partner support you as best they can now and in the future?)
- ♥ Family (will your partner's family support you & vice versa?)
- ♥ Future plans (discussing / sharing / agreeing)
- ♥ Mutual AFFirmation! (Do you tell each other what you appreciate about each other regularly?)
- ♥ Fun (Do you have fun and laugh together regularly?)

#### The SWOTs

Strength & Shoes

Weaknesses & Width

Opportunities & Openness

Threats & Trust

## Other qualities

- ♥ Honesty
- ♥ Respect
- ♥ Love
- ♥ Open to exploring in the bedroom
- ♥ Responsibility
- ♥ Smells nice
- ♥ Playful funny enjoys jokes
- ♥ Outgoing
- ♥ During these pandemic times – does a potential partner having had a vaccine matter?

## Looking for Where do you find love?

### First things first...

- ♥ Try thinking about it as you would approach buying an outfit – ie looking for/choosing an outfit in the sales rack vs looking for/choosing an outfit in the just in/new collections.
- ♥ It's also important to be mentally prepared, have boundaries and know what you want.

## Where do you find love?

You can find love in all sort of places, and in all sorts of ways. The world is your oyster!

### Some suggestions include:

- ♥ Stepping out looking good
- ♥ Online dating
- ♥ Through friends and family introductions
- ♥ Art galleries
- ♥ Libraries
- ♥ Stopped in the street/on the bus/train/airport... planes trains & automobiles, the list is endless
- ♥ Knowing what you like – men, women or both
- ♥ Church
- ♥ Gym
- ♥ Learn something new
- ♥ Engage in activities outside/beyond your circle
- ♥ Change your fishing pond

## Keeping the Fire going

Little things matter, being aware of them and also doing little things for each other

- ♥ Mutual affirmations (saying thank you often, saying what you like about them)
- ♥ Active in bed-be open to exploring
- ♥ Be spontaneous

- ♥ Understanding
- ♥ Communication
- ♥ The love language
- ♥ Tap into their interests
- ♥ Change your hook-up/lovmaking locations
- ♥ Have a back-up plan

## Putting the fire out safely

### First things first...

Making a decision to leave a relationship or leaving a relationship is not easy. Often times there are many things to consider, and for some it involves children and for others it involves intimate partner violence. One of the key things to remember is that however tough the situation is, it's important to talk about it to a trusted friend or family member, and to ask for help. This is important so that you can either end/or leave a relationship safely. Your safety matters.

### Some 4M Resources on communication and relationships and responding to conflict

You might want to take a look at the document we shared last year on [this](#).

We also held 2 webinars on Communication and Relationship Skills. In part 2 of that webinar, we talked about how our brains work, how anger can be like a volcano with layers of fear, hurt and need inside it; and we talked about 'I'-statements. To access this and all the webinars in the series, click [here](#).

### Things to think about include:

- Avoid conflict
- Logistics such as when to leave safely, and access to children
- Keeping friendships where possible
- Don't stay, just because you have kids
- Try diplomacy
- Move when you feel safe
- Consider your mental health
- Make a list of what you want and don't want
- Think about why you are leaving
- If able to, have a separate back account and always try and put aside a little money for a rainy day
- Seek guidance from both sides of the family if you feel this would be helpful

## Celebrating being single

### First things first...

There are many reasons why many of us are or choose to be single. Whatever your reason, it is okay to be single. And it is okay too to be happy and to celebrate being single.

### Some suggestions include:

- ♥ Please yourself: Go out, treat yourself
- ♥ Do things you love: Girls' night out, drinks with friends, shopping or window shopping if funds do not permit, travel.
- ♥ One-night stands/hangouts/sex buddy (safely)
- ♥ Invest in a BOB (Battery Operated Boyfriend) and sex toys
- ♥ Pleasure yourself
- ♥ Date nights with yourself – nice lingerie, nice dinner, nice evening in.
- ♥ Don't let your sexuality go
- ♥ Self-care is key

## Some elements of a good relationship/marriage for those who choose

- ♥ Connection
- ♥ Commitment
- ♥ Giving
- ♥ Respect
- ♥ Trust
- ♥ Intimacy

***'Love one another, but make not a bond of love: Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls.'*** Taken from [On Marriage](#) by Khalil Gibran