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**Workbook  
Assignment**

*Problem People*

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**Overview**

This lesson introduces dating partners to behavior issues that can cause problems in relationships. Some personality characteristics are very negative and do not change. If these behavior patterns become evident when dating, it would be best to choose another partner.

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**Objectives**

- ◆ Participants will be able to identify six personality patterns that cause problems in relationships.
  - ◆ Participants will discuss why these characteristics are important to watch for.
  - ◆ Participants will analyze typical patterns of problem people.
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**Vocabulary**

characteristics  
unchanging

patterns  
influences

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**Key Concepts**

- Personality characteristics are relatively stable over time.
  - People behave in patterns that are predictable.
  - Some behavior patterns are negative and damaging.
  - Negative patterns are a warning sign for the relationship.
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**Preparation for  
Lesson**

Instructor will need:

- Worksheet *Problem People*
  - Overhead transparencies **Problem People (2)**
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**Teaching the  
Lesson**

Begin the discussion by looking at the problem behaviors listed in the student workbook. Point out that there are people who do not make good dating or marriage partners. They have personality traits that are difficult to work with. Read through the list together

and ask the participants to note whether they have met or dated someone who demonstrated any of these behaviors.

- Tell the participants that these personality types are real. A person's behaviors in a relationship are very important. If someone shows consistent behavior patterns that disrupt the harmony of the relationship it will be continue to cause problems. When negative interpersonal behaviors are part of a person's personality, the patterns probably won't change.
- Signs of problem behaviors can be present in adolescence. The personality issues get in the way when the person tries to develop relationships with others.
- Using the overheads **Problem People**, tell the participants that there are different kinds of problem personalities. Discuss the six personality types and their characteristics described on the overheads.
- Assign the workbook pages 23-25, and ask the participants to work together to determine what statements and behaviors might be expected for each of the problem personalities.

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## LECTURE NOTES:

First impressions are exactly that. When individuals start dating they are usually on their best behavior. Initially there is always the risk that one of the partners may decide that the other partner isn't measuring up to expectations. It is therefore important to understand that behaviors observed at the beginning of the relationship may not last. A person's true nature may remain hidden for awhile. For that reason, it is a good idea to date someone for a long time before making any decisions regarding a permanent commitment. Some personality characteristics do not become evident until the relationship has been on going for a period of months or even years.

There are a number of negative personality patterns that are known to disrupt the flow of a relationship. When people demonstrate these patterns it is a warning. Dating couples may be heavily invested emotionally in each other before one or the other begins to notice behaviors that are having a negative impact on the relationship. When intense emotions are involved, it is easy to ignore important signs and believe that the problems will go away if two people love each other enough. For some personality issues this is not the case.

Personality problems are characterized by behaviors that are disruptive and unchanging. Individuals who demonstrate the negative behaviors are generally unaware that they have them. They do not take responsibility for their actions and usually blame others for the problems they encounter. Problem people tend to choose partners who are passive and want to please. Individuals can avoid poor choices for partners when they become aware of problem people patterns.

The six problem people chosen for this lesson are: Watch Me (attention-getter), I'm the Best! (self-important), Help Me! (dependent), I Don't Trust You (paranoid), Out of My Way! (uncaring bully), and On the Edge (impulsive).

Dating partners should be aware that these personality characteristics are present as early as the adolescent years. If they are dating someone who demonstrates any of these patterns on a consistent basis, the relationship is probably headed for trouble. Participants in this lesson will try to analyze what types of verbal clues and behaviors would be typical of each of the problem people describe.

# PROBLEM PEOPLE

Do not date someone who has problem behaviors. The problem patterns are usually present throughout the life of the relationship but may be missed or misunderstood if a person is not aware of them. It is important to know what problem behaviors look like so that you can make wise choices about whom to date.

## HAVE YOU EVER MET SOMEONE WHO:

- ◇ Demonstrates wide mood swings?
- ◇ Seems to have trouble controlling impulsive behaviors?
- ◇ Is easily angered by insignificant things or events?
- ◇ Lies, manipulates or injures others but doesn't feel sorry?
- ◇ Believes that his/her issues are always more important than yours?
- ◇ Is unable to make decisions and ends up following the opinions of others.
- ◇ Needs a lot of attention from other people?
- ◇ Is highly critical of the actions or motives of others?
- ◇ Can't trust anyone? Believes that others are out to get him/her.
- ◇ Is highly controlling of your time, actions, and friends?
- ◇ Always needs "proof" that you are sincere or honest?

**Look on the following page to see descriptions of typical problem people.**

In this exercise you will find descriptions of different problem people. Write what you think this person would likely say or do to others.

**1. WATCH ME!**

This person always needs attention. He/she will do anything to be noticed. If they don't have people around them, they feel let down.

Typical behaviors?

Typical statements?

**2. I'M THE BEST!**

This person thinks they are better or more important than anyone else, just ask them. Your needs are never as important as theirs.

Typical behaviors?

Typical statements?

**3. HELP ME!**

This person doesn't believe he/she is capable of doing things. It is hard to state an opinion or make a decision. They are usually influenced by others.

Typical behaviors?

Typical statements?

**4. I DON'T TRUST YOU!**

This person usually accuses others of lying or having something against them. They want to control and restrict the activities of others. They don't have many friends.

Typical behaviors?

Typical statements?

**5. OUT OF MY WAY!**

This person doesn't care about the rights of others. They will take advantage of people and situations but don't feel guilty if someone else gets hurt because of them.

Typical behaviors?

Typical statements?

**6. ON THE EDGE!**

This person likes to take dangerous risks and is impulsive. It's hard for this person to follow through on plans or promises.

Typical behaviors?

Typical statements?