

## ‘Virtual dating’ and how the coronavirus is changing the romantic landscape

Welcome to dating and sex during the [coronavirus](#) pandemic. Dating apps have struggled; after all, the whole point of dating is to physically meet someone.

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But what does virtual dating mean?

One way to do it is by reinventing the speed date. Dawoon Kang, cofounder of Coffee Meets Bagel, says the app has begun hosting virtual meetups for 10 to 15 members at a time, consisting of a video call moderated by a company representative. A participant who is interested in another can email the representative; if two people feel sparks, the representative connects them.

Coronavirus is also upending what we thought were the ground rules of dating in the digital age. Pre-coronavirus, texting someone to set up a date was fine, but calling a person, let alone video-chatting before a date, was tiptoeing toward creepy.

Not anymore. By the end of February, JWed, a Jewish dating app, was an early adopter of in-app video chat. Bumble [pushed](#) its video chat and voice features, allowing users to talk to a date without breaking shelter-in-place mandates.

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“The one thing I’m certain about is that the longer this prolongs, the longer this will be a permanent shift,” Kang says. “People want to virtually connect.”

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