

Anger at TV show with big age difference couples

31st May, 2019



A TV channel in the UK is under fire from members of the public for one of its programmes that follows the lives of couples with a big age difference. Viewers have accused the Channel 5 series Age Gap Love of "normalising grooming".

The complaints came after a show that documented the relationship of a couple who got together when the man was 44 and his partner was 16. The man was originally a friend of the 16-year-old's mother. He became friendly with the daughter when she was a child and started dating her when she turned 16. After this episode was aired, the channel received a flood of complaints from viewers who slammed the show for "making this concept seem normal".

The couple in the show are married and have two children. He is now 47 and she is 19. The man said: "I was concerned what people would think. It's a big gap. It's a generation gap. So it's like, what are people going to think?" His wife also spoke about the relationship. She said: "The age doesn't really bother me. It never has done. I don't see him as an old man, or my dad, or anything like that. He's just sensitive - like a big teddy bear." She added: "I've always wanted to have a family, so I just thought he would be the perfect man." Life has not been easy for the couple. When they first started dating, they received a lot of abuse from neighbours and the local community and had to move to another city.

Sources: mirror.co.uk / thesun.co.uk / liverpoolecho.co.uk

Writing

Age is just a number. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

TV channel / under fire / couples / complaint / relationship / dating / concept / normal / married / generation gap / age / sensitive / teddy bear / family / perfect / neighbours

True / False

- a) There was a fire at a TV channel in the UK. T / F
- b) A TV show followed the lives of a couple with a 44-year age difference. T / F
- c) The man in the show was the friend of a girl's mother. T / F
- d) The couple started dating when the girl turned 18. T / F
- e) The couple are now married and have two children. T / F
- f) The man said his wife loves teddy bears. T / F
- g) The couple said life hasn't been easy for them. T / F
- h) Neighbours of the couple were unhappy with their relationship. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------|
| 1. channel | a. trouble |
| 2. difference | b. initially |
| 3. accused | c. ideal |
| 4. originally | d. worried |
| 5. aired | e. gap |
| 6. concerned | f. thoughtful |
| 7. bother | g. broadcast |
| 8. sensitive | h. station |
| 9. perfect | i. relocate |
| 10. move | j. blamed |

Discussion – Student A

- a) Is age just a number?
- b) What do you think of the 28-year age difference?
- c) What do you think of a 44-year-old man dating a 16-year-old?
- d) What do you think of a 44-year-old woman dating a 16-year-old?
- e) Would you ever complain to a TV show?
- f) What do you know about grooming?
- g) Do you think this show is 'normalising grooming'?
- h) What advice do you have for the couple?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. A TV channel in the UK is under | a. relationship of a couple |
| 2. members of the | b. from viewers |
| 3. a show that documented the | c. like a big teddy bear |
| 4. After this episode was | d. public |
| 5. received a flood of complaints | e. the perfect man |
| 6. It's a generation | f. fire |
| 7. The age doesn't | g. from neighbours |
| 8. He's just sensitive - | h. gap |
| 9. just thought he would be | i. aired |
| 10. they received a lot of abuse | j. really bother me |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What would you say if you were the 16-year-old's parent?
- Do you prefer older or younger partners?
- What is the oldest person you would date?
- Is a 28-year age gap OK if the people are over 40?
- What famous people have much younger partners?
- Should there be a law on the maximum age difference in couples?
- What questions would you like to ask the couple?

Spelling

- the lives of eloupcs
- normalising ioggomrn
- The tanmosiclp came after a show
- After this edospei was aired
- received a foodl
- making this pcctoem seem normal
- doecnrcen what people would think
- It's a otneigrena gap
- spoke about the prhtnielsoia
- He's just itevenssi
- a lot of ubaes from neighbours
- the local unmctoimy

Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. e	3. j	4. b	5. g
6. d	7. a	8. f	9. c	10. i

Role Play

Role A – Similar Age

You think being the same age is the most important thing for a successful relationship. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): same hobbies, same dreams or same religion.

Role B – Same Hobbies

You think having the same hobbies is the most important thing for a successful relationship. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): same age, same dreams or same religion.

Role C – Same Dreams

You think having the same dreams is the most important thing for a successful relationship. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): same hobbies, same age or same religion.

Role D – Same Religion

You think having the same religion is the most important thing for a successful relationship. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): same hobbies, same dreams or same age.

Speaking – Relationship

Rank these with your partner. Put the most important things for a relationship at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| • same dreams | • similar age |
| • similar personality | • same hobbies |
| • same religion | • same education |
| • same nationality | • shared housework |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	T	d	F	e	T	f	F	g	T	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.