"Safety vs. Justice: New Risks with New Features in the Dating Scene"

A dating app company is considering implementing a new criminal background check feature that would allow users to screen potential matches before meeting them. The proposed system would partner with a background check provider, whose founder argues that 'the biggest indicator of future abuse or violence is a history of these types of behaviors.' The company believes this feature could enhance user safety in an era where meeting strangers through digital platforms has become commonplace.

During initial consultations, experts have highlighted complex challenges. While past violent behavior can sometimes predict future acts, researchers note this relationship isn't straightforward. For instance, some individuals with violent charges are actually victims of domestic violence who acted in self-defense. Additionally, the criminal justice system contains inherent biases against Black and brown communities, suggesting such background checks could amplify existing discrimination. Statistics show that only 31% of sexual assaults are reported to police, questioning the tool's potential effectiveness in preventing harm.

1. Identify Direct and Indirect Stakeholders.
2. What are the social, cultural, economic and environmental contexts where the design will be used?
    a. What assumptions about safety may be embedded in this solution?
    b. How does this feature interact with existing social biases in the criminal justice system?

3. You are apart of the user design team which is considering the following:
    a. Should the company continue, modify, or remove this feature based on user feedback and expert analysis.
    b. Brainstorm alternative design concepts would achieve the goal of enhancing safety

4. What are key values at stake and value conflicts?
5. What are the gaps of knowledge that would need to be investigated to make a more informed decision ?

References:

Bhuiyan, J. (2022). "Tinder Now Offers Criminal Background Checks, but There's a Big Problem." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, www.theguardian.com/technology/2022/mar/11/tinder-criminal-background-checks-problems.