

## PLAIN ENGLISH

# Romance Scams

**Finding friends online can be fun. Sometimes, that friendship can turn to love.**

Sadly, some people later discover that the person they have been talking to online isn't who they say they are.

These people may use your feelings for them to try to get you to give them money or private information.

Once they have it, they may use this to pretend to be you or steal from you.

When this happens, it is called an online scam, and the person doing it is a scammer.

**Here are some tips to help you avoid being scammed:**

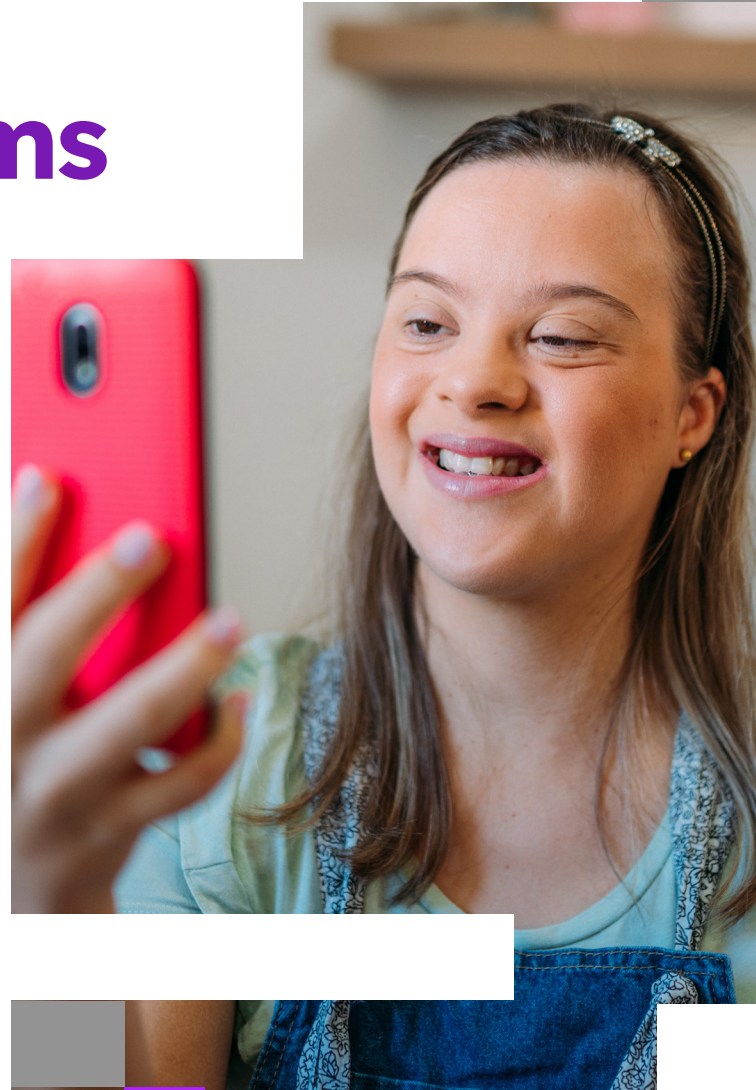
**1. Your online friend may not be who they say they are.**

Scammers can pretend to be someone else to make you want to talk to them. They will ask questions to find out what you like and are interested in. They may pretend to like the same things as you to make you like them. They may also tell you they love you soon after you start talking.

**2. Some people online claim to be a celebrity to trick people.**

Be careful if someone contacts you and says they are a famous person. They may have seen you say something online about liking a particular actor, singer or celebrity and pretend to be them to make you trust them.

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**3. Be careful if someone makes excuses not to meet you face-to-face or video chat with you online. They may not be a real person.**

The photo you've seen may be fake and possibly a photo of someone else taken from the internet. If the person you are talking to keeps finding a reason not to video call, stop talking to them and talk to someone you trust for advice.

netsafe

#### **4. Don't tell or send any personal information.**

This includes:

- login details or passwords to your social media accounts,
- bank or savings account numbers or passwords,
- your date of birth,
- your phone number,
- your address,
- your passport number.

#### **5. Don't send any money.**

Scammers may tell you about problems they or their family are having that need money to be fixed, hoping you will offer to give it to them.

They may even ask you for money for a specific reason, such as for a train ticket so they can travel to meet you. They will sound like they mean it because they may have done this before with someone else and are good at lying. Do not be embarrassed if you believed them.

#### **How to get help.**

If you are worried your online girlfriend, boyfriend or someone you're dating may be a scammer:

- Don't give them money.
- Tell whānau or friends you know and trust in real life.
- Talk to Netsafe for free and confidential advice on what to do next.

Netsafe can offer support and advice for people who have lost money in a scam, or think they are about to.



## **Get Help**

Call toll-free on 0508 638 723, text 'Netsafe' to 4282 or email [help@netsafe.org.nz](mailto:help@netsafe.org.nz). You can report a scam to [report.netsafe.org.nz](http://report.netsafe.org.nz)