

## Online Romance Scams

Many lonely hearts have turned to the internet to find love and companionship. Unfortunately, what they find instead is heartache and diminished bank accounts. The internet is crawling full of scammers eager to take advantage of people.

### Follow these tips to Avoid Online Romance Fraud/Scams

- **Be Skeptical of Unsolicited Contact:** If someone you don't know contacts you online and expresses romantic interest immediately, be cautious. Scammers often create profiles to lure victims.
- **Verify Their Identity:** Conduct a reverse image search on their profile pictures to see if they use stolen photos. Use services like Google Images or TinEye.
- **Avoid Sharing Personal Information:** Do not provide sensitive personal information, such as your address, phone number, or financial details, to someone you haven't met in person.
- **Be Cautious with Requests for Money:** Be extremely wary if someone you met online asks for money, even if they have a seemingly plausible reason. Scammers often create emergencies to manipulate you.
- **Take Your Time:** Don't rush into a relationship. Scammers often create a sense of urgency to get you to act quickly without thinking.
- **Discuss with Trusted Friends or Family:** Share your online relationship with someone you trust. They can provide an objective perspective and help identify red flags.
- **Be Wary of Overly Flattering Language:** Scammers often use flattering language and profess deep feelings very quickly to build a false sense of intimacy.
- **Use Secure Platforms:** Engage in online dating through reputable and secure platforms that have verification processes and safety measures in place.
- **Check for Red Flags:** Be alert for inconsistencies in their stories, reluctance to meet in person or via video chat, and any pressure to move the conversation to private or less secure channels.
- **Educate Yourself About Scams:** Stay informed about common scams and tactics used by fraudsters. Awareness is a key defense.

### Resources for Further Protection

- **Federal Trade Commission (FTC) - Romance Scams:** FTC Romance Scam Information
- **AARP Fraud Watch Network:** AARP Fraud Watch Network
- **The Better Business Bureau (BBB) - Scam Tracker:** BBB Scam Tracker
- **Cybercrime Support Network:** [Cybercrime Support Network](#)
- **National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) - Online Safety:** NCMEC Online Safety

By staying informed and cautious, seniors can better protect themselves from online romance fraud and enjoy safer online interactions.

**If you are a victim, contact your local law enforcement agency.**