

HOW TO APPROACH A LOVED ONE

WHO IS INVOLVED IN A ROMANCE SCAM

Managing the sensitive conversation with a loved one involved in a romance scam demands a thoughtful and compassionate approach. Here are important factors to consider when discussing this challenging situation with them.



Prepare Yourself

- **Assess Your Mental State:** Before beginning the conversation, check your emotions and mindset. Ensure you're prepared to offer non-judgmental support. It's okay to take time to reflect and seek advice from professionals if necessary.
- **Research Romance Scams:** Learn about common romance scam tactics and psychological dynamics. Knowing these will help you spot red flags more easily.
- **Rehearse the Conversation:** Practice expressing your concerns to refine your approach and ensure clarity in the discussion. Rehearse potential scenarios to prepare what you'll say.
- **Be Ready for Multiple Conversations:** Recognize that it may take multiple discussions to free your loved one from the scammer's grip. The scammer presents an appealing story that's difficult to let go of. Understand you can't force them to see the truth; many victims only realize the scam after certain triggers prompt them to accept it.
- **Two Steps Forward, One Step Back:** The scammer will attempt to hinder any progress made with your loved one. When confronted, they'll manipulate the situation, portraying the intervening loved one as dishonest or envious.



Choose the Right Time and Place

Selecting a neutral location for a discussion where neither individual feels they have the advantage of being on "home turf" is crucial for fostering a sense of equality and minimizing defensiveness. It's important to ensure the chosen place provides privacy and where both parties feel physically and emotionally secure. This could be a public park, a study room at a library, or a quiet coffee shop.



Acknowledge the Relationship

Despite the deceptive nature of romance scams, it's crucial to understand that the victim dedicated substantial time and effort to nurturing what they believed to be a genuine and intimate relationship, investing countless hours each day. This investment wasn't solely in terms of time and energy but also encompassed their emotions, trust, and vulnerability. The sudden realization of betrayal and the shattering of trust can evoke profound feelings of loss and grief. Your loved one is not just grappling with the end of a relationship but also with the devastating realization that the connection they cherished was built on deceit. Moreover, the embarrassment stemming from being deceived and manipulated adds another layer of complexity to their emotional turmoil.



Seek to Understand and Choose Your Words Carefully

When discussing a romance scam with your loved one, prioritize a supportive atmosphere through shared discovery, making them feel less defensive and more receptive to your assistance. Engage in open dialogue seeking to understand their thoughts and emotions without bias. If needed, relate by reflecting on your own relationships, considering the potent emotions love can evoke. Additionally, recognize that romance scams are a crime, with the perpetrator bearing responsibility for their deceitful actions and exploitation of the victim.

When communicating with a romance scam victim, be mindful of language nuances to avoid misunderstandings. For example, rather than asking if they “know” the person they’re dating online, inquire about any in-person meetings to assess the depth of their relationship accurately.

Here are some thoughtful considerations and questions to guide your conversation with your loved one:

- Have you met the person you’re dating online in person?
- Let’s list the promises they’ve kept versus the ones they’ve broken.
- Have you thought about journaling your relationship journey, including both highs and lows, for clarity?
- Have you reviewed your past texts and emails with this person to gain perspective? Over time, memories of conversations can shift or fade, making it beneficial to review them for clarity.
- Have you attempted to verify their identity? We can research together.
- Have you recently made any financial transactions at their request?
- Do you feel uneasy about money matters after interacting with them? Our instincts often serve as a valuable guide in such scenarios, advising us to proceed cautiously and consider further investigation.
- Are you concerned about potential contact from banks or law enforcement? If so, it could suggest an inner sense of unease.
- Do you notice any discrepancies between your actions and your usual behavior?
- Are you struggling with doubts but find it hard to address them alone due to emotional ties? I’m here to help and support you.

If your loved one is experiencing a romance scam, head over to FightCybercrime.org/Romance-Scam-Recovery-Group for support and guidance.