Providing Support
Supporting romance scam victims once they realize they have been involved in a romance scam can be emotionally challenging for family and friends as they witness their loved ones navigate the aftermath of betrayal and financial loss. The realization that someone close to you has been targeted and deceived by a scammer can evoke feelings of shock, anger, and helplessness. Family and friends often grapple with their own sense of guilt or responsibility, questioning if they could have done more to prevent the scam. Here are some things to consider as you continue to support your loved one after they have realized and accepted that they have been affected by a romance scam.

Continue to Listen without Judgment
Once your loved one realizes they were involved in a romance scam, they will feel a mixture of emotions. Continue to keep in mind that they are not only dealing with financial loss—they are also mourning the death of a relationship. The relationship was real even though it was based on the scammer’s lies.

Immediate Action Steps
Once your loved one has accepted they were involved in a romance scam, there are immediate action steps they need to take to protect themselves. Consider helping them with the following:
- Gather and organize all documentation related to the scam (Texts, emails, pictures, records of money transactions, etc.)
- Contact any financial institutions that were involved in the scam.
- Monitor credit reports and financial accounts for suspicious activity.
- Advise them to consider placing a freeze on their credit.

Remain Vigilant
Even after implementing immediate action steps, it’s vital to remain vigilant against potential threats. Scammers will likely try to use stolen information to perpetrate further crimes against your loved one. In order to prevent revictimization, help your loved one with the following:
- Implement multi-factor authentication on important accounts.
- Update privacy settings across various platforms.
- Enable automatic updates for enhanced security.
- Change all passwords. Consider using a password manager to ensure you create strong, unique passwords for every account.
- Educate them about recognizing phishing attempts.
Assist in Reporting
Help your loved one to report the scam to relevant authorities and platforms. Reporting not only creates a record for future reference but also aids in preventing further victimization and assists law enforcement in apprehending perpetrators. It’s important to remember that your loved one might hesitate to report their romance scam to authorities due to feelings of embarrassment or reluctance to relive the traumatic experience. Don’t pressure them to report before they’re ready. Consider suggesting that they report a little at a time. This approach can make the process more manageable and empower them to take control of their recovery at their own pace.

Encourage Professional Help
Consider suggesting your loved one seek guidance from a counselor specializing in emotional trauma. Counseling can aid in processing complex feelings and figuring out strategies for healing and moving forward. It’s important to acknowledge the psychological manipulation your loved one endured and emphasize how professional support can help during their recovery.

Stay Involved
Maintaining open communication and offering ongoing support is vital. Loneliness and isolation can make victims vulnerable to revictimization, which highlights the importance of your presence as a trusted support network. By staying involved, you provide crucial emotional support and you can help mitigate the risk of your loved one being revictimized by scammers.

Prioritize Your Own Self-Care
Remember to prioritize your own well-being throughout this process. Supporting a loved one through the aftermath of a romance scam can be emotionally taxing. Seek support from counselors or support groups if needed to ensure you can provide effective support while safeguarding your own mental health.

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