



Dating and romance scams

The set-up



You develop a special connection with someone who seems really interested in getting to know you.

The hook

You want to help them with a financial problem they mentioned.

The sting

Heartbreak and loss, when your new love disappears with your money.

What a dating or romance scam looks like

You are looking for friendship or love. Who can blame you? So when you are told about a successful dating service, or someone starts connecting with you, of course you're interested.

Dating and romance scammers are very cold and cruel about taking advantage of you. They can lower your defences, then take your money. Because you trust them, you could be prepared to give them an incredible amount of money. Then they will take the money and run.

Variations on dating or romance scams

Dating website scams

The scammers set up a profile on a dating website and structure it so that you pay for every message you send and receive. The scammer will then start showering you with vague, pre-written messages. If you look carefully at these messages you will notice they do not have much to say about you at all. They could have been sent to anyone. They have been. You keep accepting the charges because you believe that these messages come from a real person who really cares.

Scammers can also abuse legitimate dating sites, by forming a relationship with you, then tapping into your compassionate side. They will claim to be terribly poor, or someone in their family is facing a crisis that can only be solved with money. Directly or indirectly, they will ask you to help. They will keep the connection going until they have drained as much from you as you can give ... and then they will disappear.

Dating sites can also be the gateway to Nigerian-style scams. After establishing a rapport with you, the scammer may even try to show their own generosity by sending you gifts. Once you trust them, they will suddenly start telling you about a large amount of money they need to transfer out of their country. They will then ask you to send the money needed to get the transfer going. As the scam unfolds, you will be asked for more and more money to cover the taxes and fees necessary to free up the money. When your money finally runs out, so will your new love connection.

Protect yourself from dating or romance scams

Be very wary if:

- You start building a rapport with someone on a dating site or via email, and then they send a photograph. The photo is probably of a model who knows nothing about this scam, and the image is being sent out to thousands of people like you.
- Their messages start professing feelings very early on in the relationship, before they really get to know you.
- Their messages may be vague, poorly written, repetitive and do not say much about you personally.

- They start talking about financial issues in their messages. They may try to put you off your guard by claiming to be wealthy, but then start talking about a particular financial need or crisis. Eventually, you will be asked to help out.

Help protect others from dating or romance scams

If scammers have tried to reach your money through your heart, please share your story with us. We will treat your report in the strictest confidence and remove your personal details before posting your story on our site.

[Report your scam story to us.](#)