How To Prevent an Online Romance Scam

Recognize the signs to avoid being a target

by Chase (Paid Content)

The leaves are changing colors, the holidays are approaching, and it’s the perfect time of year to cozy up with that special someone. However, romance scams targeting older adults are on the rise. With online dating apps and social media platforms, scammers are increasingly taking advantage of seniors looking for love or companionship.

A romance scam occurs when someone creates a fake profile, showing fake romantic interest in another individual, and then lures the victim into a scheme to defraud them. Scammers can then manipulate the victim’s emotions and exploit the victim’s trust.

Here are four ways to help recognize and prevent a romance scam.

Be suspicious if you haven’t met in person

This is the most obvious red flag. It’s crucial to be cautious when meeting someone you’ve met online. It’s a good idea to meet face-to-face in a public place, but even that can’t guarantee your safety.

Online profiles may not be what they seem

Most scammers often impersonate someone else and will likely never meet you in person. In addition to putting your name and phone number on their profile, you should also be aware of your location. Online profiles are usually not showing their face or location. Be suspicious about sharing any personal information.

Don’t send money and do your research

There’s no bigger red flag in a romance scam than someone who asks you to “wire” or mail money directly. If you’re ever asked to wire money or use a web-based service, it’s likely a scam.

Trust your gut

If it feels off, it probably is. A romance scammer may pressure you to “trust” them. Be aware of your instincts and follow them. If you feel uncomfortable, it’s best to walk away.

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