

I've made a new friend online.

But I'm worried.

What do I do?





Read this booklet with someone who supports you.

You don't need to read it all at once.



Are you worried about who you are talking to online?

**Online** means on the internet.



Are you worried about what they are saying or doing?



Is someone asking you to say things or do things that make you feel uncomfortable?



There are people who can help you.

Tell someone you trust.



The internet can be a great way to keep in touch with people and to find out information.



But sometimes people online are not honest.



Some people use the internet to do things that are illegal.

**Illegal** means against the law.

Some people use the internet to trick you.



This booklet will explain what to do if you are worried about who you're talking to online.

It will tell you how to get help.



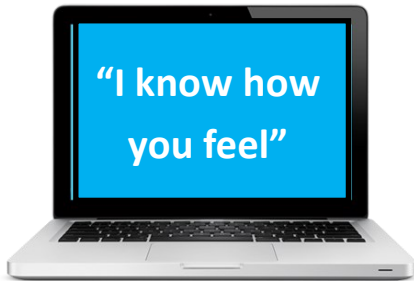
**I've made a new friend online.  
But it doesn't feel right.  
What can I do?**



If someone wants to harm you they might start by saying or doing things to make you like them.

They could:

- Say nice things to you and make you feel special



- Say they understand your problems



- Tell you they love you



- Say you can stay with them

**Sometimes online people are not who they say they are.**

They pretend to be your friend.

They want you to trust them so they can get you to do things they want.



## How does harm happen online?



If someone has your email address or your mobile number they can use it to trick you.



When people are online or texting they can pretend to be someone else.

You might not know who you are really talking to if they are lying.



Someone you think is an online friend might not be a friend at all.

Someone who is trying to trick you might send you a photo or video they say is them when it isn't.



A real friend would never harm you on purpose or make you feel scared.

A real friend would never force you to do something you didn't want to.



## Always think before you send or share information online.

Be very careful about sharing any personal information online.

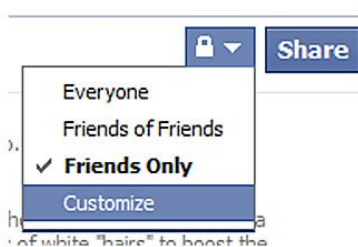


Personal information means things like your address, phone number, date of birth, email or where you go to college or work.



This can be on any websites, including games, dating sites or social media.

Social media means sites like Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.



Check your privacy settings.

Change your settings so that only your real friends can see what you post.

Ask someone you trust to help you.



Don't put anything online that you wouldn't want anyone to see.



Check if your phone has 'GPS'.

This means if you send an email or a photo, it will show where you are or where the photo was taken.

Someone could use this to find out where you are.



## What is sexting?

Sexting is sending sexual messages, or naked pictures or videos of yourself that show your private body parts.

Someone might ask you to be naked on a webcam. A webcam is the camera on your computer.

Someone might record you on the webcam and not tell you.

Someone might ask to take control of your webcam. Never agree to this.

## What if I have already sent them sexual pictures?

Try not to panic.

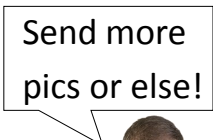
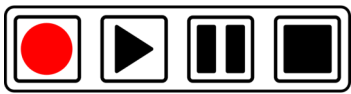
Ask them to delete the picture and not to pass them on to anyone else.

They could threaten to put your pictures online unless you send them more pictures or do other sexual things.

They might tell you to give them money to stop them sending the pictures to other people.

This is called blackmail. It is a crime.

If this has happened to you call the Police on **101** or ask someone to help you do this.



# How do I know if what is happening is wrong?



It is wrong if someone makes you do dangerous or sexual things online you don't want to.

It is wrong if someone tells you to do things that are against the law.



They might:

- Keep asking you to give them your phone number or email
- Make you feel bad if you say 'no'



- Send you lots of messages online or by text
- Start to send sexual messages that make you feel uncomfortable

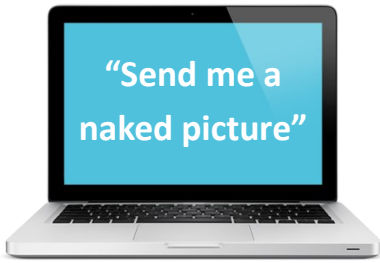


- Tell you not to tell anyone what's happening



- Say they will hurt you if you tell anyone





If anyone says things to you online that make you feel uncomfortable, this is wrong.

You don't have to do what they say.

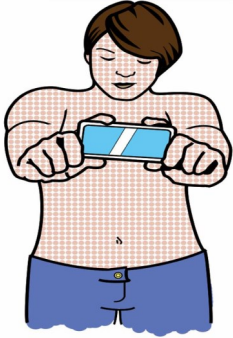


Image credit: The Corner

No-one should make you do sexual things you don't want to.

This is sexual abuse and it is a crime.



If someone tricks you into doing dangerous or sexual things online this is called '**online grooming**'.

## What if they want to meet me?

Arrange the meeting with the online friend in a public place because this is safer than meeting in private.

Take someone with you.

Always tell someone you trust if you are going to meet an online friend. Tell them the plans.

Agree you will call them once the meeting is over so they know you are safe.



I will call you, so you know I'm ok



# Being groomed is never your fault



If this is happening to you:

- You might not realise you are being groomed



- You might think the person is your boyfriend or girlfriend



- You might feel scared or embarrassed



- You might feel that you have done something wrong



You are not alone.

Help and support is available.



## How can I get help?

Sexual abuse is difficult to talk about.

If you are being forced to do something dangerous or someone is making you have sex with them:

**SPEAK UP. TELL SOMEONE YOU TRUST.**

You could tell:

- The Police
- A doctor or nurse
- A social worker
- A friend
- Your support worker
- Your advocacy worker



or get someone to help you to call one of the numbers on the back page of this booklet.

# Who can help?



If you are in danger call Police on **999**.

If it is not an emergency call Police on **101**.



For advice and help call your local Social Work Service.

You can find the number for your area online at:

<https://www.mygov.scot/social-services/>



You can also get advice and help from 'Stop It Now! Scotland'

**Call: 0131 556 3535**

Available Monday to Friday 9am-5pm.  
Standard rate.



Their website is: [www.stopitnow.org.uk/scotland](http://www.stopitnow.org.uk/scotland)

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