

Looking for Love? Do not fall victim to a romance scam.

Be Smart - Don't be a scam victim!

Online fraudsters come up with various kinds of vicious schemes to trick potential victims - ranging from fake loan and job offers, inheritance, lottery and free online tickets, to name but a few.

While just about anyone can fall prey to such tricks, there is one scam that targets a particular group of people – those looking for love or companionship. Romance scams, sometimes called catfishing, is a scammer's way of reaching out to the victim, with offers of friendship at the onset, which quickly evolves into a declaration of love.

Online dating may have been around for many years, but the surge of social media has now also become another common way for romance scammers to target potential victims. Using dating websites, Facebook, and other social media platforms, scammers are creating fake profiles to meet and interact with their victims.

Very often, after gaining the trust of their targets, the fraudsters quickly get them to use a different form of communication such as email or texting. After learning about their victims' lives, and building confidence through daily texting and even sending small gifts at times, it does not take long for the con artists to start asking for money.

It is most likely that you have been targeted by a romance scam if:

- You meet someone online and they do not waste any time in declaring their love for you
- Profile picture of the person looks unrealistic or different from the description of himself/herself
- 'Online date' seems to be in a hurry to communicate more privately either through email, messenger, or phone.
- Poorly written messages
- You are being urged to keep the romance to yourself
- The 'online date' is always promising to show up, but keeps coming up with excuses
- The prospective partner starts asking for money to resolve some financial trouble, sometimes citing death or sickness of family members

Tips to avoid falling prey to romance scams:

- Be cautious of people you meet online
- Be alert to notice badly written messages, or inconsistencies in the stories you are told
- Be very careful before sharing your personal information, and even pictures, with a person you have never met before – it can be used to blackmail you
- Ask questions about suspicious looking photos & inconsistent stories
- Be suspicious of someone promising to visit you but never comes, and always has an excuse
 - Never send money to people you have never met in person, once money is sent it cannot be recovered

Protect yourself, protect your money and most importantly protect your heart!



If you think you have been targeted by a romance scam you can also seek advice from:

The Central Bank of Seychelles on: 4282000 or
The Financial Intelligence Unit on: 4383406/4383407 or



enquiries@cbs.sc
enquiries@gov.sc

**Be on the lookout for more information about how to spot a scam.
Always remember: If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!**

