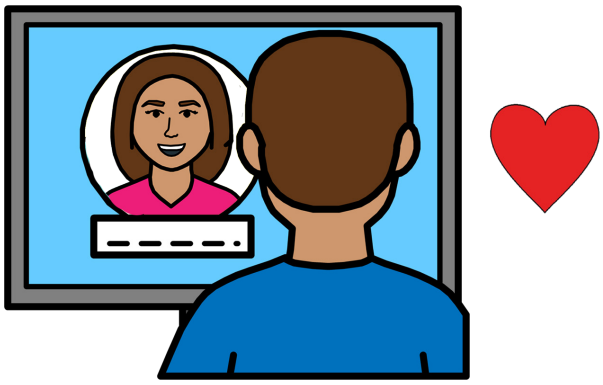
Australian Government

online safety grants program
esafety.gov.au



How to stay safe when dating online

Scope

Easy English

Blue words

Some words in this book are **blue**.

We write what the blue words mean.

Help with this book

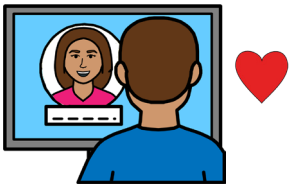
You can get someone to help you

- understand this book

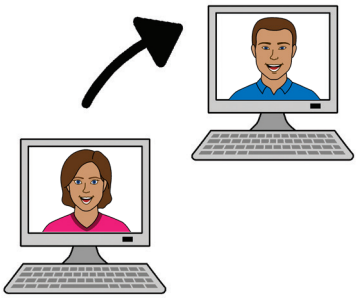
- find more information.

Contact information is at the end of this book.

About this book



This book is about how to stay safe when dating online.



Online dating is when people meet online and start a romantic relationship.

Do you feel unsafe right now?

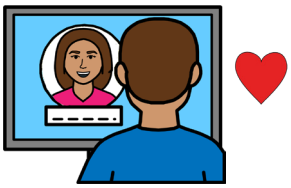
If you do **not** feel safe or are in danger right now

- call Triple Zero

- ask for the police.

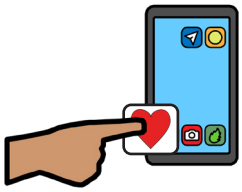
Call 000

What is online dating?



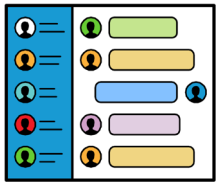
Online dating is when people meet online and start a romantic relationship.

If you are old enough to use online dating, you can meet people through

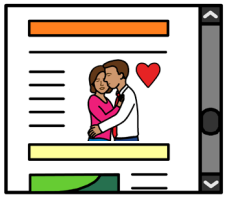


- dating apps

- online games

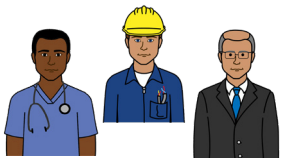


- chat platforms



- other websites.

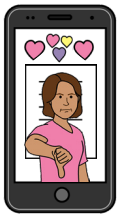
What can be good about online dating?



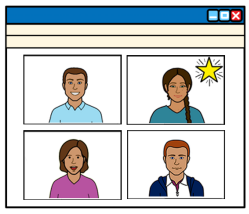
Online dating can give you more choice and control over your relationship.

For example, you can make a profile that shares

- what you like



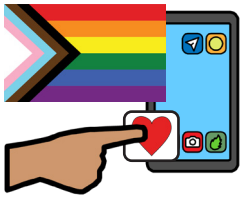
- what you do not like.



Online dating lets you

- meet new people

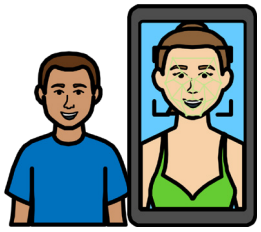
- get to know someone before you meet them in real life.



You can also pick dating apps that match your sexuality and gender.

What are the risks with online dating?

1 People can use fake profiles



Not everyone you meet online is who they say they are.

People can **catfish** you.

Catfishing is when someone pretends to be someone else so that they can trick you.

Someone might trick you so that they can

- hurt you

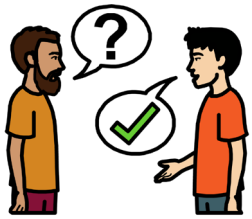
- steal your money.

2 People can steal your personal information

Sometimes people use online dating to steal someone's personal information.

Someone might use personal information to get into your online accounts.

3 Things can move too fast



Consent is important in good relationships.

Consent means you say **yes** to something.

To give consent you **must**

- understand what you are saying yes to

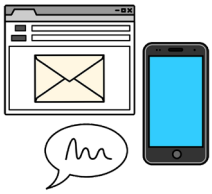
- not feel pressure to say yes.

4 People can cyberstalk you

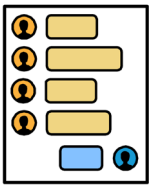
Cyberstalking is when someone keeps track of you online and makes you feel uncomfortable.

For example, they might

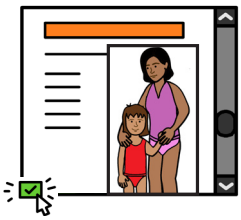
- use your personal information to find you



- try get your attention



- message you a lot



- post things about you.

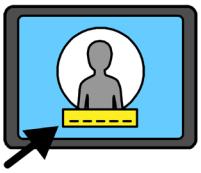
5 People can blackmail you

Blackmail is when someone says that they will do something bad if you do not do what they say.

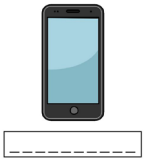
For example, someone might say they will share a naked photo of you if you do not send them money.

How can you stay safe when online dating?

1 Check your privacy settings

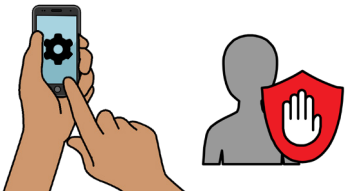


Sometimes you will need to share personal information to sign up to online accounts.



For example, your phone number.

Sometimes apps will let you share your location.



You can stay in control of what people can see by changing settings in your account.

You can find out how to change settings in different apps on the eSafety website.

Website

esafety.gov.au/esafety-guide

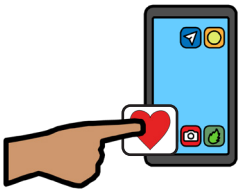
2 Take your time to build trust

You do **not** have to share everything about yourself when you first meet someone online.

You can talk about things that are not too personal when you first meet someone online.

For example, your favourite music.

3 Use a dating app to chat

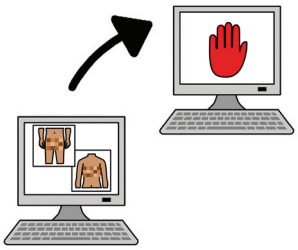


It can be safer use a dating app to talk to someone you do not know.

Dating apps can help you if you need to make a report.

For example, if someone is blackmailing you.

How can you stop naked photos or videos being uploaded?



You can block naked photos or videos of you from being uploaded online.

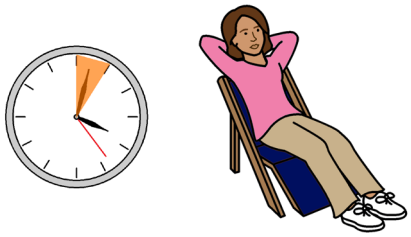
Take It Down

Take It Down can help you block people from sharing naked photos or videos of you online.

Website takeitdown.ncmec.org

What should you do if something is wrong?

1 Take a short break

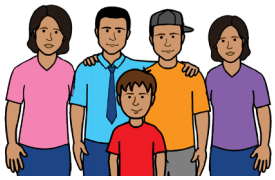


Sometimes it is a good idea to take a short break from the screen.

A short break can give you time to think about what to do next.

2 Talk to someone you trust

If you need support to feel safe or you have a problem, you can talk to an adult that you trust.

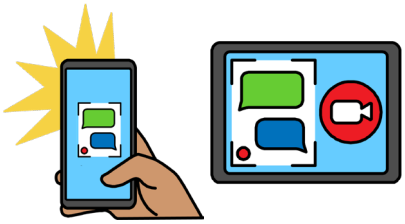


For example, a parent or carer.

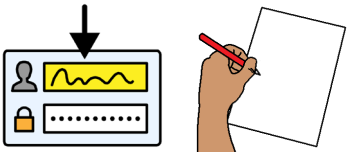
3 Collect evidence

Evidence is proof that something is true.

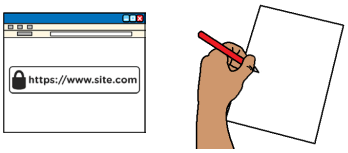
You can get proof in different ways.



You can take screenshots or recordings of what made you feel unsafe.



You can write down the username of the person who made you feel unsafe.



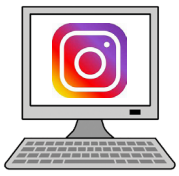
You can write down the URLs or links to where you felt unsafe.

You can write down how long you have felt unsafe for.

4 Report the problem

Report online

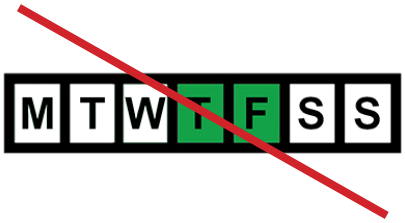
Report to the online service where it happened.



For example, Instagram.

You can use the eSafety Guide to help you report.

Website esafety.gov.au/esafety-guide



eSafety can help if you have **not** had any help from the online services after 2 days.

You can make a report on the eSafety website.

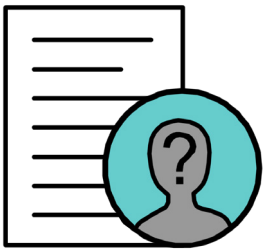
Website esafety.gov.au/report/forms

Report to the Police

If it is **not** an emergency you can call your local police.

Call 131 444

Report to Crime Stoppers



You can make an **anonymous** report.

Anonymous means you choose **not** to say who you are.

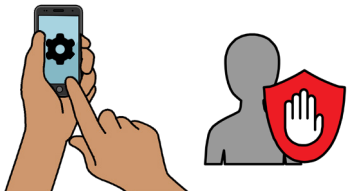
Call 1800 333 000

Fill in a form

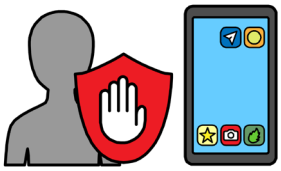
report.crimestoppersvic.com.au/summary

5 Stop contact with the person

Do not communicate with the person.



You can change settings to block the person.



You can use the eSafety Guide to find out how to block on different apps.

Website esafety.gov.au/esafety-guide

Remember to collect evidence before you block the person.

Where can you get more support?

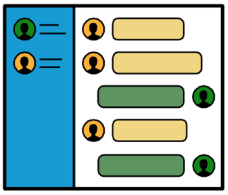
There are free support services you can use to talk about any problems you have.

Kids Help Line

For people 5 to 25 years old.

Call, chat or text for free anytime night or day.

Call 1800 551 800



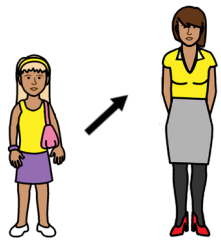
Online chat kidshelpline.com.au/get-help/webchat-counselling

13 YARN

For First Nations people of all ages.

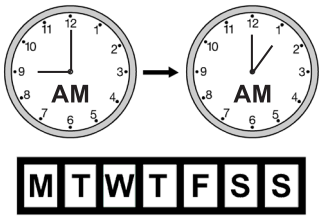
Call or chat for free anytime night or day.

Call 13 92 76



Headspace

For people 12 to 25 years old.



Call or chat for free every day from

9 am to 1 am Melbourne time.

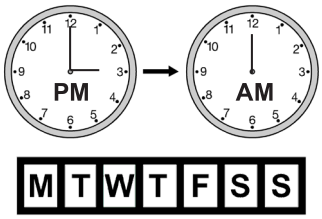
Call 1800 650 890

eheadspace
Online Counselling Service

Online chat eheadspace.org.au/online-and-phone-support

Q Life

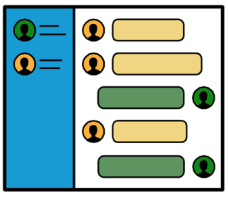
For LGBTIQ+ people of all ages.



Call or chat for free every day from

3 pm to 12 am Melbourne time

Call 1800 184 527



Online chat qlife.org.au/resources/chat

More information

For more information about online dating go to the eSafety website.

For young people

Website

esafety.gov.au/key-topics/staying-safe/online-dating

You can go to the eSafety website for more options about where to get support.

Website

esafety.gov.au/counselling-support-services

If you need help with English

Use the free Translating and Interpreting Service or TIS to make a phone call.

You can call the TIS in your language.

Call 131 450

Give the TIS officer the phone number you want to call.

If you need help to speak or listen

Use the National Relay Service to make a phone call.

You must sign up to the service first.

Website accesshub.gov.au/nrs-helpdesk

Call 1800 555 660

Notes

Notes

Notes

Scope Australia acknowledges the Commonwealth's support of the Online Safety Grants Program and the eSafety Commissioner's support of the "Be Safe Online" project.

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