

Introduction

Relationship scams involve a person developing a relationship (which may be romantic, a friendship, or based on a common interest) with an individual they believe is real and genuine, but who is motivated to:

1. Deceptively access money
2. Obtain identity credentials
3. Commit other crimes (for example involving the relationship scam victim in money laundering or investment fraud)

Anyone can become involved in a relationship scam. While it is possible for relationship scams to occur through physical meetings or engagements, most relationship scams begin online. IDCARE has also seen investment scams and employment scams turn into relationship scams.

Prevention checklist

How can I avoid a relationship scam?

- ☐ Discuss your growing friendship with trusted friends or family.
- ☐ Try to remove emotion from decision making no matter how caring, engaging or persistent the friend or prospective partner is.
- ☐ Do a reverse image search on their profile photos to check if they have been used on other sites with different names or locations (such as [Tineye](#) which is free, or [Social Catfish](#) where you will need to pay for an account).
- ☐ Be cautious when sharing personal pictures or videos, especially if you've never met the person before. Scammers have been known to blackmail people using images previously.

Sharing & Disclaimer

IDCARE is a not-for-profit and registered Australian charity.

© Copyright Identity Care Australia & New Zealand Ltd. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this document, IDCARE disclaims any liability to any person with respect to any actions performed or not performed as a result of the contents of this document.

Detection checklist

If you are concerned that you, or a someone you know, may be involved in a relationship scam, this checklist may help:

The more boxes you tick, the more likely it's a scam.

- ☐ The relationship started online, not in person.
- ☐ Communication quickly switched to an encrypted or private messaging platform.
- ☐ The person expresses strong feelings soon after first communicating with you.
- ☐ You are encouraged to keep the relationship secret from your family and friends.
- ☐ You are asked to send money.
- ☐ There are conversations about investing and you are encouraged to get involved.
- ☐ Plans to meet in person never happen due to last minute problems arising, for example, they are suddenly unable to access funds, a family member becomes sick, or there are difficulties encountered in their journey to see you – this is commonly accompanied with a request for money.
- ☐ You have received no photos of the person you are communicating with, or they are of poor quality, or when doing a reverse-image search the individual uses a different name.
- ☐ The person claims to be from Australia, New Zealand or another high-income country, but is currently located overseas (most likely for work).
- ☐ You are asked to receive or transfer goods or funds on the person's behalf.

Sharing & Disclaimer

IDCARE is a not-for-profit and registered Australian charity.

© Copyright Identity Care Australia & New Zealand Ltd. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this document, IDCARE disclaims any liability to any person with respect to any actions performed or not performed as a result of the contents of this document.

Response checklist

If you, or someone you know, has been involved in a relationship scam, the below checklist outlines some measures you can take to prevent further harm.

- ☐ Cease all communication with the scammer.
- ☐ Tell a trusted person what has happened if you need support as you work through the financial, emotional and practical recovery.
- ☐ Advise your bank(s) of the relationship scam (if this information was provided).
 - Notify the relevant document issuing organisations for any of the credentials that the scammer may have accessed. Common credentials include:
 - Driver licence
 - Passport (Australian passports contact [DFAT](#) on 131 232, for NZ passports contact [DIA](#) on 0800 22 50 50)
 - ATO details (Australian residents call 1800 467 033) or IRD details (NZ residents call 0800 257 777)
 - RealMe details (NZ residents call 0800 664 774 or online at [RealMe](#))
- ☐ If you have provided government issued identity documents, contact both credit reporting agencies for your [credit reports](#) and to request a [credit ban](#).
- ☐ If you have sent or received money or goods online, provided remote access to your computer, or shared credentials online that would enable identity theft and fraud, you can alert police through:
 - [ReportCyber](#) (in Australia)
 - Call 105 or [online](#) and choose "Report a Police non-emergency" (in New Zealand)
- ☐ Contact your GP if you feel you need additional support and strategies to deal with the stress of your situation.
- ☐ Be aware that you may see an increase in scam attempts.

For additional support or information, contact IDCARE:

Submit [Get Help Form](#) | 1800 595 160 (Aus) | 0800 121 068 (NZ)

Sharing & Disclaimer

IDCARE is a not-for-profit and registered Australian charity.

© Copyright Identity Care Australia & New Zealand Ltd. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this document, IDCARE disclaims any liability to any person with respect to any actions performed or not performed as a result of the contents of this document.