



#internetsafety
#publichealth5-19service



Online Grooming FACTSHEET

WORRIED ABOUT A FRIEND?

Has your friend met someone new online? Worried they might not be who they say they are? There are some strange people out there so if your friend has a new partner they only know online you're right to be concerned.

Perhaps it seems like they're not telling you everything. Or are things moving really fast? Maybe their new friend seems too good to be true?

It can be really hard to tell the difference between someone genuine and fake online, but if your friend is chatting to someone who is trying to abuse them then here are some warning signs.

5 Warning Signs:

1. Have they suddenly become very secretive?

Have they stopped showing you their text messages or social profile? People who abuse will try to stop young people telling their friends and family about the relationship.

2. Are they distant?

There are lots of reasons why this might happen but if your close friend has become distant this could be a sign someone is trying to control them

3. Have they mentioned someone older?

There are adults who use the internet to try to have sex with young people. They can be very clever at convincing a young person that they are in a relationship. Remember, sex and relationships between young people and adults can be very harmful.

4. Are they sad or withdrawn but won't say why?

If something is going on with your friend online it might be really upsetting them. They might feel trapped, like they can't talk about it. Let them know you are there to listen.

5. Are they unable to switch off from their mobile or social media?

Lots of us find it hard not to check our phone or the internet but if your friend gets worried or stressed when they can't, this can be a sign someone is controlling them.

How to help.....

Listen don't judge; if your friend opens up to you, listen to what they have to say and how they feel. Make sure they know that you're there for them if anything goes wrong. Tell them that you will need to tell a trusted adult if you think they are in danger.

Think you know? Make sure your friend understands the risks of chatting to people you meet online. Talk to them about how easy it is to lie online, why relationships with people much older are a bad idea.

Show them how to get help; if things do go wrong your friend can always report to CEOP. Whatever has happened CEOP will understand. They will be able to help and your friend won't be in trouble. Show them how to make a report and encourage them to add CEOP website to their favourites.

Tell an adult you trust; if you think your friend is in danger you should always tell an adult you trust, phone the police on 999 or report to CEOP. Even if they've asked you not to tell anyone - you should never keep a secret if it puts your friend in danger.

Organisations who can help

Childline; www.childline.org.uk is a free help line for children and young people, you can contact them about anything, no problem is too big or too small. Whatever the worry is, it's better out than in. This service is private and confidential unless; you ask them to tell someone else, they believe your life or someone else's life is in immediate danger, you are being hurt by someone in a position of trust who has access to other children for example a teacher or Police officer. Or you tell them that you are seriously harming another young person.

Call them on 0800 1111. This number does not show up on phone bills.

CEOP www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre helps young people who are being sexually abused or are worried that someone they've met is trying to abuse them.

If you have met someone online, or face to face and they are putting you under pressure to have sex or making you feel uncomfortable you should report to CEOP.

If someone is;

Making you have sex when you don't want to

Chatting about sex online

Asking you to meet up face to face if you have only met them online

Asking you to do sexual things on webcam

Asking you for sexual pictures of you

Making you feel worried, anxious or unsafe

If this is happening to you, or you're worried that it might be, you can report this to CEOP.

Useful Websites

www.healthforteens.co.uk

www.nspcc.org.uk

www.thinkuknow.co.uk