

ONLINE GROOMING: WHAT IT IS AND HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

WHAT IS ONLINE GROOMING?

It is when someone becomes friends with a minor online in order to control and take advantage of them for a sexual purpose, whether online or in-person. You need to be prepared, because it is a growing issue in Canada — and it can put you in real danger.

HOW DOES IT HAPPEN?

All encounters are different, but it can happen like this:

- Someone approaches you online — it can even be someone you know
- They may use a fake profile to pretend to be someone they're not
- They try to build a connection with you by talking about things you're interested in
- They may give you gifts or compliments
- They may exploit existing relationships with your friends or online groups
- Once they gain your trust, they will sexualize the relationship by talking about sex or trying to engage in sexual touching or activity
- They may even ask you to meet in person



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Use your privacy settings
- Be aware that they may be someone you know and think you can trust, even someone you think you are in a relationship with
- Keep personal information private — like your name, phone number, where you are, and details about your life
- Trust your gut and never do anything that makes you uncomfortable — it's **always** your choice and it is never too late to say no
- Never arrange to meet someone you don't know or do know but have suspicions about
- Block or break off contact
- Tell your parent or another safe adult
- If safe to do so, keep a record for evidence
- Report it to [Cybertip.ca](https://www.cybertip.ca)
- Know it is not your fault — it's not ok for adults to give sexual attention to teens

Learn more at Canada.ca/childexploitation

**IT'S OK TO INTERACT WITH
PEOPLE ONLINE, BUT NOT
FOR THEM TO MAKE YOU
FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE.**