

# Teens and Tech: Warning Signs with Online Dating

techsafety.org.au

*Please note that the contents of this document should not be regarded as legal advice. The information contained within is relevant as of August 2025.*

Dating apps are a common way to meet new people. However, it's important to recognise that abusers can and do use these platforms to cause harm and exert control, just like they might IRL (in real life).



Just like relationships IRL, respect, communication, and boundaries are important. This includes relationships with our family, friends, or partners.



In a digital space, abusers or harm can look a little different. Abusers may use tactics such as catfishing, harassment, or coercion.



Trust your instincts! If something feels off, it's okay to block that person, stop engaging, or report them to the platform. Before taking action, it is important to stop and create a safety plan, on your own, or with a frontline worker or a trusted adult.

Here are a few warning signs you can use to better protect yourself while navigating these apps:

## Too Much Pressure

The person rushes the relationship, pressures for in-person meetings or personal photos before you are ready, and may use guilt-tripping, love-bombing, or manipulation to make you feel obligated.

## Manipulation or Aggression

They react with anger, threats, or insults when you enforce a boundary, express disinterest, or say no. They may also try to isolate you from your friends, family, or support systems.

### Boundary Pushing

They ignore your stated boundaries, such as pushing for explicit conversations or photos, revisiting topics you've asked to avoid, or disregarding your comfort levels entirely.

### Financial or Emotional Manipulation

They ask for money, financial details, or other resources. This sometimes comes with fabricated stories or emotional manipulation to gain your sympathy or trust.

### Communication Red Flags

Their information doesn't match up, they avoid answering basic questions, or they frequently make excuses to avoid video calls. They may refuse to verify their identity or meet in a safe and public location.

### Excessive or Demanding Requests

They demand access to your social media, location, or other private information and may exhibit obsessive or controlling tendencies, like constantly messaging you or acting jealous when you spend time with someone else.

**Remember:** you deserve to feel safe and respected online and offline. Trust your instincts, and don't ignore red flags. For more tips on staying safe while dating online, visit [techsafety.org.au](https://techsafety.org.au).

### Acknowledgement

This handout has been created by Wesnet under licence from the National Network to End Domestic Violence.