

Catfishing- Online Dating Scams

Catfishing is setting up a false personal profile on a dating site or online social media for fraudulent or deceptive purposes.

Motives for Catfishing:

- * Lonely and dupe others into having online relationships they would never have in real life.
- * Attention and sensation seekers who feed off the attention they receive from others and care little about who they hurt in the process.
- * Revenge.
- * To get financial gain by using false sob stories of sick family members or themselves or even loss of a job.

Signs of Catfishing:

- * Model good looks.
- * No cell phone- this is a HUGE red flag.
- * Never use webcams, Skype, Facetime etc.
- * Always traveling- never time for a visit.
- * Always have excuse for no visit.
- * Sob stories- usually use this for financial gain, false emotional bond.
- * Deployed in military.
- * Vague details but professes love quickly.

How to avoid being a victim of Catfishing.

With many people online dating sites, activity apps or social media, the following are some good rules to follow:

- * Protect your data- don't give out too much information too quickly.
- * Meeting in person- if the other person won't use webcams, such as, Skype, Facetime, that should send up a red flag. If you do meet- always meet in a public place and never your home.
- * Don't sext with strangers or send risqué photos of yourself - you never know where they will end up.
- * Ask questions- if someone is pursuing another online, each person has the right to ask questions to make themselves feel comfortable and safe.
- * Gut Check- It's as simple as that. If things just don't add up and your gut is saying something is off, it probably is. Don't let desperation of wanting a relationship block your common sense.
- * Tell someone you trust- Running situations by a third party generally helps.