



**SCAM
ALERT**

Aging and Adult Services **ROMANCE & CATFISHING**

Scam predators are creating false online identities and infiltrating online dating and social media sites in an attempt to gain your trust and romantic interest. This type of deception is called catfishing. Catfishing is a devious activity where the scam predator hides behind a false persona. More commonly, catfishing is the first step in the crime of phishing, which is when a scam predator attempts to obtain your personal information or your money through illicit means. Recently, scam predators have been impersonating military personnel in their online dating and social media profiles, and falsely claim they are serving overseas in order to explain why they cannot meet in person. Be aware of these scams!

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the United States (US) Army Criminal Investigation Command (CID) have provided suggestions to help you identify and avoid this type of scam when interacting online romantically or socially:

Red Flags:

- Suspicious language: Claims to be from your area, yet uses words or phrases that are not commonly used or do not make sense.
- Hard luck stories: Shares stories of financial trouble, such as utilities being shut off, cars stolen, or relatives being sick.
- Fast moves: Talks about your future together and how much he/she loves you before you even meet.

Tips:

- Never send money or personal information to someone you have not met in person.
- Do not give someone your credit card information to buy a ticket to visit you.
- Ask specific questions about details they list in their profile and watch for mistakes.

Note: You may report scam predators to the FTC, Adult Protective Services (APS), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3).

If you think you may be a victim of a scam, contact
San Bernardino County Adult Protective Services (APS)
at **877-565-2020**, or your local police department.