

Stay safe on screen: How to chat on webcam with confidence

Do you chat to people online you've never met? Do you chat to them on webcam? Do you share pics you only want some people to see? If you do, you need to know how to keep yourself safe on screen.

Some people who contact you genuinely just want to chat or be friends. But the problem is, it's easy to lie online. There are a few people out there, let's call them 'abusers', who pretend to be friendly but want to hurt you. They want to get you to chat on cam and then video you doing things you might be embarrassed about.

Like what?

Abusers will flirt with you, flatter you or send you sexy pictures. They might pretend to be a boy or girl your age. They will try to convince you that it's ok to talk to them about sex. Then they'll ask you to send them naked selfies or go naked on webcam. They might ask you to touch yourself or do other sexual things.

So what?

It's easy to get carried away on webcam. Chatting on webcam can be fun, exciting and feel sexy. It can feel really private. Unfortunately:

- **Webcam is not private, it can be recorded and shared**
With the right software it's really simple to record anything that's displayed on a computer screen. That includes webcam video. If the person on the other end records you, they could share the video with your friends on Facebook, post it on YouTube or email it to your family.
- **Abusers use videos to threaten young people**
'if you don't go on webcam for me, I'm going to share this video with your friends'
Abusers try to force young people to make more sexual videos by threatening to share an embarrassing picture or video with their family or friends. Some have asked for money or for young people to hurt themselves.

"This would never happen to me"

Unfortunately this has happened to hundreds, potentially thousands, of young people in the UK. This has happened to boys and girls. This may have happened to someone you know. If it has, you probably wouldn't know about it.

Abusers try all sorts of tricks to make you think it's safe to share an image or video with them.

- They often pretend to be a girl or boy your age
- They send sexy pictures or webcam video of other people to get you to flirt
- You might not be able to tell they're an abuser until after they've got a video or picture of you

Once they have an embarrassing video or picture abusers try to convince young people that they are more powerful than them. They're not. They lie to try to scare people into doing what they want.

Here are some lies abusers use to try to trick young people:

Lie *"The police will never find me, I've hidden myself on the internet"*

Fact This is never true. All abusers leave a 'digital footprint' online. The police are very good at tracking these people down, even if they're not in the UK. Large numbers of individuals have been arrested for this type of crime.

You can report an abuser directly to the police: www.ceop.police.uk

Lie *"I'm definitely going to share this image if you don't go on webcam for me"*

Fact Abusers don't always share images, even when they've threatened to. It's not in their best interests. The more information they share, the easier it is for the police to track them down.

Lie *"If I share this image you'll never get over it"*

Fact You might feel you have no way out but this isn't true. If an abuser does share an image, this is better than being forced to do more sexual things. All problems can be solved with support. It's always best to tell someone or report to CEOP as soon as possible.

Lie *"It's your fault for sharing a naked image in the first place"*

Fact It's never your fault. If you're being threatened the only person responsible is the abuser.

Lie *"There's no one who can help you. I'm in control"*

Fact There's lots of help and support out there. If you're too embarrassed to tell an adult you trust like your mum or dad, you can contact CEOP and speak to an advisor. They deal with this every day and won't judge you. They'll support you to make it stop.

How can I stay safe?

The best way to stay safe is by never doing anything on webcam you wouldn't want your family or friends to see.

If you do share something you regret, it's never too late to get help. We all do things we wish we hadn't sometimes. Even if the video or image is shared, no matter how embarrassing it is, it doesn't have to be the end of the world.

- 1. Don't feel pressured to get naked on webcam.** If someone is pressurising you to go on cam, block them and report them to CEOP.
- 2. If someone threatens you online, tell an adult you trust as soon as possible.** If you can, get up from your computer immediately, walk away and tell an adult you trust.
- 3. It's never too late to get help.** No matter how far things have gone, there are always people out there to help. You can call Childline at any time on 0800 1111
- 4. Remember - it's not your fault.** Whatever you've shared on webcam, the abuser is the only person to blame. They will be held responsible. You won't be in trouble.
- 5. The abuser has broken the law.** Encouraging a young person to get naked or do sexual things on webcam is a serious crime. The police will find and arrest the abuser.

Remember, you're not alone. If you're too embarrassed or scared to tell an adult you trust, you can call Childline on 0800 1111 or report to CEOP. **To report to CEOP visit www.thinkuknow.co.uk, click this button:**



The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre is here to help young people (up to age 18) who have been forced or tricked into taking part in sexual activity with anyone online or in the real world. For information, advice and to report concerns directly to CEOP visit www.thinkuknow.co.uk