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# LANGUAGE MATTERS

Understanding our world and  
your part in it.

Prevent. Support. Empower.



# The Power of Language

Using the correct, non-victim-blaming language when writing about romance fraud is vital in changing how society views and supports victims. The media and campaigns hold significant influence in shaping this narrative. By choosing words that reflect the reality of the crime, we can help reduce shame and stigma.

Victims of romance fraud did not “fall for a scam” - they were groomed, manipulated and coerced by criminals who deliberately sought power and control. Just as we wouldn’t say someone “gave away” their phone in a robbery, we must say their money was stolen, not lost or given. These are serious, targeted crimes.

Using the terms fraud and criminals instead of scam and scammers helps ensure the language reflects the severity and intent behind the acts and that blame is placed squarely where it belongs.



**Language shapes our thoughts, influences our connections, and drives our understanding. It's essential for effective communication, fostering relationships, and bridging gaps. Embracing this change in language can reduce victim-blaming, shift public perception, build a more informed, compassionate response that holds criminals accountable for their actions.**

## Unlocking Education

Using accurate, non-blaming language helps educate others about the psychological manipulation and emotional abuse that enables romance fraud to occur. It shifts the focus from the victim's actions to the criminal's calculated tactics, helping people understand that this is not about naivety, but about exploitation. By framing it as coercion and control, we begin to highlight the parallels with other forms of abuse, fostering empathy and deeper awareness. This understanding is essential for breaking stigma, supporting recovery, and preventing future harm.

## Join the Change

Your organisation has the power to help with change by using language that accurately reflects the reality of romance fraud, language that recognises victims as survivors of abuse and manipulation, not people who were simply "fooled." By adopting and promoting non-blaming terminology in all communications, you help dismantle harmful stigma, support victims with dignity, and educate the public on the true nature of this crime. Join the movement to shape a more informed, compassionate future, where the blame lies with the criminals, and victims are given the understanding and respect they deserve.

# Words Matter

## FRAUD NOT SCAM

“Fraud” conveys the legal, serious nature of the crime - “scam” trivialises it. Using “fraud” helps ensure victims are taken seriously and criminals held accountable.



## CRIMINAL NOT SCAMMER



“Criminal” reflects the true severity of their actions - “scammer” downplays it. Using “criminal” reinforces accountability and highlights the intentional, exploitative nature of the offence.

## STOLEN NOT LOST OR GAVE AWAY

Using “stolen” not “lost” recognises that victims were deceived and manipulated, there was no informed consent, only exploitation through calculated emotional abuse and control. It was coerced and ‘stolen by design’<sup>©</sup>



## GROOMED NOT FELL FOR



Using “groomed” not “fell for” highlights the calculated, manipulative tactics used by criminals. It wasn’t naivety, it was coercive control and psychological abuse.

# LET'S WORK TOGETHER

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Working together with LoveSaid offers valuable opportunities for collaboration with a victim-centred organisation that prioritises empathy, safety, and recovery. By sharing best practices, insights, and resources, organisations can not only improve outcomes for victims of romance fraud but also enhance their own support services and credibility. Partnership with LoveSaid ensures that interventions are trauma-informed and ethically grounded, fostering trust and consistency across the sector. Ultimately, this kind of collaboration strengthens our collective impact in protecting and empowering those affected by online fraud.

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