



The following questions can help to determine whether there is grooming going on:

Did they ask for really personal information about you or someone else, especially early on in your 'relationship'?

Do they want you to keep your 'relationship' a secret from other people?

Do they want to meet with you alone or in secret?

Do they want you to send them pictures of yourself or of other people, and/or want to send you photos of themselves?

Do you feel pressured into doing or saying things that make you feel uncomfortable?

Have they asked about your sexual experiences or how you feel about doing certain sexual things?

Do they send or give you gifts that you think are either excessive – such as things that are very valuable or very personal or very 'grown up', like alcohol, tobacco or drugs?

Do they ask you to move your webcam so they can see certain things?

Do they seem to already know things about you that you haven't told them?

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You may be in great danger, so make sure to tell someone who you trust, and tell an adult. Sex should always be consensual. Remember: **you're allowed to say no, and you should never be pressured into doing something you don't want to.** Below are some things that people may say to pressure you into having sex with them – and some things that you can say that help you say no:

"If you loved me you'd do it."

"If you loved me, you (1) wouldn't have said that, and (2) would respect my decision."

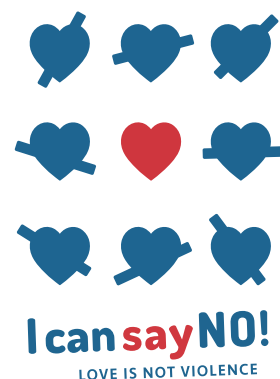
"Everyone else is doing it."  
"I'm not everyone else."

"You're frigid."

"No. I'm just comfortable with who I am and what I want."

MORE INFORMATION  
ABOUT ONLINE VIOLENCE  
AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN:

[nane.hu/en](https://nane.hu/en)  
[patent.org.hu/en](https://patent.org.hu/en)  
[www.true2you.eu](https://www.true2you.eu)  
[www.womenlobby.org](https://www.womenlobby.org)  
#HerNetHerRights



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# THE DANGERS OF GROOMING

SEXUAL GROOMING IN OFFLINE AND ONLINE SPACES

**NANE**  
WOMEN'S RIGHTS ASSOCIATION



**NANE HELPLINE**  
FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
IN HUNGARY

**06 80 505 101**

MON, THU, FRI 18-22H, TUE 10-22H, WED 12-16H

+ CHAT HELP WED 16-18H at:

[WWW.NANE.HU/EN](https://www.nane.hu/en) [INFO@NANE.HU](mailto:info@nane.hu)



## WHAT IS GROOMING?

Grooming is when someone systematically builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can sexually manipulate, exploit and abuse them.

The perpetrator will develop an emotional connection with seemingly kind, caring behavior and positive feedback, then use this to get the victim to do certain things that seem insignificant at first. These are things that the victim does not really want but will do for attention and care. The perpetrator will slowly get the victim used to doing what they are asked despite their own needs and will. He will ask for bigger and bigger favors that are more and more uncomfortable, and the victim will find it hard to draw the line where they say no, because they have already fulfilled the previous favors. And if the victim does say no, the groomer will use emotional blackmail, manipulation or even threats. Besides, he will give a lot of positive feedback, will keep saying that he unconditionally loves the victim and cares for them, making the whole experience extremely confusing. The perpetrator may be an adult the victim knows (a teacher, a family friend, a trainer) or someone they met online.

The perpetrator may use the following methods in order to groom the victim:

- initiates or forces regular, continuous DMs
- asks to meet in person
- buys gifts (small or expensive)
- gives money
- offers favors without being asked
- shows pornographic content
  - or wants to watch it together
- talks about sexual topics
- asks for intimate photos
- keeps initiating physical contact
  - tries to hug, kiss or touch
- might befriend the parents of the victim
  - in order to silence their suspicion

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## THE STAGES OF GROOMING

### Victim selection

Abusers often observe possible victims and select them based on ease of access to them (e.g. regular meetings one-on-one) or their perceived vulnerability (e.g. poverty, abusive family).

### Gaining access and isolating the victim

Abusers will attempt to physically or emotionally isolate a victim from those protecting them and often seek out positions in which they have contact with minors.

### Trust development and keeping secrets

Abusers attempt to gain the trust of a potential victim through gifts, attention, sharing "secrets" and other means to make them feel that they have a caring relationship and to train them to keep the relationship secret.

### Desensitization to touch and discussion of sexual topics

Abusers will often start to touch a victim in ways that appear harmless, such as hugging, wrestling and tickling, and later escalate to increasingly more sexual contact, such as massages or showering together. Abusers may also show the victim pornography or discuss sexual topics with them to introduce the idea of sexual contact.

### Normalization

Abusers attempt to make their behavior seem natural, to avoid raising suspicion. For teens who may be closer in age to the abuser, it can be particularly hard to recognize tactics used in grooming.



## GROOMING IN ONLINE SPACES

Grooming also happens online. Social media and smart devices make grooming extremely easy because perpetrators can pretend to be someone else (another child or peer), and this often happens without the knowledge of the parents. Groomers usually try to approach multiple youngsters at once, and they use really sophisticated methods in order to develop a relationship in a short period of time.

Even if they do not try to meet in person, they may encourage the victim to visit pornographic websites, talk about sexual experiences, or ask them to send pictures or switch on the webcam and do things that the victim may feel uncomfortable about. All of these things may be forms of sexual abuse.

The best rule of thumb is that what starts online, stays online. And if you're not sure or feel uncomfortable about anything that someone is saying to you online, talk to an adult you can trust or to your friends about what is happening, and block the person or leave the chat room or forum where you've been talking to them.



## UPON SUSPICION OF GROOMING...

Tell an adult you trust. This could be a teacher, a family member, your youth worker or support worker. With this adult, you could develop a safety plan that would help you to choose how best to keep yourself safe.

If you have been sexually assaulted or sexually abused, turn to a doctor for medical help. Think about reporting it to the police.

Talk to your friends. A good friend will listen to you and help you speak to an adult.

If the grooming has taken place online, you should also report what's happened to the website or forum where you met and DMed with the person who groomed you.

It's important to think carefully about who you talk to, and especially about what personal details you share.

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## WARNING SIGNS OF GROOMING

Being groomed affects many young people who often ask 'why is this happening to me?', so it's important to remember that this is not your fault and to know that you can get help. It might be hard to determine whether someone is grooming you, and perpetrators might even say that they are your loving partner.

Remember, if something doesn't feel right – even slightly –, then it probably isn't.

If you feel like someone is trying to gain your trust, asks too much from you and reacts badly when you refuse, or they ask something you feel uncomfortable about and says that the relationship depends on that, there is a chance you are being groomed by that person.