



# Caring Matters

County of Sacramento

February 2018

## Beware of Sweetheart Swindlers!



February may be the month of hearts and flowers, but it's also prime time for financial cons, from imposter fraud to the "sweetheart swindle."

Falling in love with a con artist has consistently been ranked as one of, if not the most, expensive scams for the victims. It's not hard to see why. Love is a powerful emotion. Most of us would do practically anything to help out a friend or loved one in need. Fraudsters know this, which is why they devote significant time and energy to developing friendships and "love" with their victims. However, these criminals aren't looking for a soul mate. They're looking for victims they can take financial advantage of.

The scams usually begin the same way. The victim is first approached on an online dating website like Match.com, a social media platform such as Facebook, or another type of online forum.

As the relationship develops and false trust is built, the "friend" asks the victim to send money to help them out of some fake situation, such as for medical bills, to get out of jail, to visit the victim, or some other reason. If the victim agrees to pay, there will be more requests for money to cover other fictitious expenses, until the victim realizes it is just a scam and stops paying, or worse, runs out of money to pay.

How can you spot a romance scam and avoid falling victim? Here are red flags that the person you're dealing with is after your cash, instead of your heart:

\*She requests that you wire money or to cash a check or money order.

\*The "relationship" becomes romantic extremely quickly, with quick pronouncements of love or close friendship.

\*He claims to be a U.S. citizen who is abroad, very wealthy, or a person of important status.

\*He claims to be a contractor and needs your help with a business deal.

\*She makes excuses about not being able to speak by phone or meet in person.

\*He quickly asks you to communicate via email, instant messaging or text messaging instead of the online dating site's messaging services.

\*She claims to be American, but makes frequent spelling or grammar mistakes that a native English speaker would not do.

If you've been approached by someone you think could be a romance scammer or if you've already fallen victim, DON'T keep speaking with the person who approached you. Ignore their emails, phone calls, IMs or other communications. Instead use the online dating site's abuse flagging system or contact Fraud.com.

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### IHSS Public Authority

Welcome to the new IHSS  
Public Authority Newsletter!  
We welcome your suggestions  
for content or general feed-  
back.

### Contact Us

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## Upcoming FREE Classes

IHSS Public Authority regularly holds classes on a variety of subjects related to caregiving! All classes are open to both Providers and Recipients, and are held on Thursday evenings as scheduled below. Classes begin at 5:30pm and end by 7:30pm. Take a look at some upcoming classes:

**February 8th—Home Safety and Universal Precautions\***. Presented by IHSS PA staff, this class will review ways to stay safe on the job, prevent transmission of bloodborne pathogens and how to maintain an injury-free work environment.

**February 22nd—Common Mental Illnesses: Fighting the Stigma through Recovery Principles**. Presented by Linda Ellis, RN, BSN, MN, this class will review symptomatic behavior of various mental illnesses, and approaches to lessening the stigma of mental illness.

**\*Indicates Core Class.** Core Classes provide information on the basic skills each Provider needs to do their job safely, and helps Providers become more proficient in their work. A certification of completion is given at the end of each class, and each core class completed is noted in the Provider's profile, enhancing interviews with prospective Recipients.

**If you have questions regarding the IHSS Educational classes, please contact Mary-Ann Cowan at (916) 876-5682 or send an email to [HHS-PA-Education@saccounty.net](mailto:HHS-PA-Education@saccounty.net).**