

Predator Victim Grooming (Ondejko)

Length: 2 minutes, 43 seconds

Internet Predators use distinct techniques to try to trick you and gain your trust. We know about these techniques and tricks because we chat online with the predators and we've confiscated their computers and examined how they chat with victims.

The predators will try to **appear familiar** to you. They will be really friendly, asking you about your hobbies and other interest. Internet Predators ask lots of questions and respond in such a way to fool you into thinking that they care about you. They try to make you feel good about yourself, complimenting you and maybe even sending gifts. They often will agree with your opinions. What you like, or dislike, they do too. They will say they understand how you feel.

Predators will challenge your parents' authority by telling you that they are too strict or say something like "I would never treat you like that," or "they just don't want you to be who you are, they just don't understand."

Predators also typically try to **develop** your **trust**. They may say something like, "you know you can tell me anything and I won't tell another living soul." In fact, we've had a predator say, "I know you would never get me into trouble" and "I trust you with my heart."

Predators ask personal questions and try to get you to establish a secret relationship [**establish secrecy**]. They will ask you to describe yourself, talk about ex-relationships, and want you to reveal secrets. Predators will exploit any parent/child conflict and encourage the child's feeling that the parent is wrong.

Another thing predators typically do is try to **erode barriers**. They will ask you lots of questions to see what your morals are and try to exploit them, they want to talk on the phone with you, exchange photos or use a webcam. They may send and want to receive inappropriate pictures.

Finally, predators want to set up a **face-to-face meeting**.

If students have been communicating with someone who is using these tricks, they need to remember that it's never too late to get help. The students may have already seen or done things online that they are ashamed of. Don't be bullied. And don't let someone you've already communicated with trap you. It is better to tell parents, or a trusted adult, about the situation now before something bad happens to the student or to someone else the predator is talking to online. Online predator contact can be reported to the Attorney General online or by phone.

When the predators we communicate with online show up to meet the student they thought they were talking with, we arrest them. We talk to them to find out how many other students they have hurt or have tried to hurt and unfortunately it is usually a lot.

Our experience teaches us that students need to remember two important things:

1. Never talk to an adult online unless a parent or a trusted adult knows about it. Even if that person is someone you know – like a coach, a priest or a minister, a teacher, or even a friend's parent.
2. If someone says or does something online that makes you feel uncomfortable, get off the computer and tell a parent or trusted adult right away. Don't be afraid to tell them about it – they would rather know than have you be hurt.