

National Trading Standards Scams Team

Providing support to
fraud and scam
victims

Language Best Practice

Language Do and Don'ts

Language **YOU SHOULD** use in communications with victims

Abuse	Hurting or mistreating someone, often causing them physical or emotional harm
Accessible	Able to reach across the board in a variety of ways
Advocating	Publicly supporting
Become a victim of.	Getting coerced into giving away money or personal information to dishonest people
Coercive Control	An act, or a pattern of acts, of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation that abusers use to harm, punish or frighten survivors
Conversation	We should all be talking about fraud, coercive control etc
Criminals	Always use this instead of the word scammer/fraudster as this is what they are and it needs to be known
Engaging	Showing positive involvement
Fraud	The act of lying to someone to get money or things from them unfairly
Gaslighting	Use of manipulation and creating a false narrative to make an individual question their own judgement
Grooming	When someone builds trust with another person to take advantage of them, especially for harmful purposes
Harassment	Verbal abuse; physical attacks; being stalked; threats of harm; distribution of misinformation, character assassination; inappropriate emails; letters; phone calls and communications on social media
Help	Showing concern and care
Hot State (red state)	A form of manipulation used to cause a feeling of panic and urgency, leading to acts of impulse

Impacted by	To strongly affect an individual
Inclusion	Ensuring everyone in society has the information and support they need
Intimidation	To frighten or threaten
Isolation	Controlling a person's social activity: whom they see, whom they talk to, where they go and any other method to limit their access to others
Lived Experience	Direct, first-hand
Manipulation	Tricking or influencing someone to do what you want by controlling information or emotions
Moving forward	Making progress
Perpetrator	An individual who carries out an illegal or immoral act
Power and Control	The goal of all aspects of abuse because victims' experiences consistently indicate that the behaviour of the perpetrator is not random but purposeful and systematic
Process	Ongoing action
Recognise	Acknowledging the situation
Scams	Lies and deception designed to steal money or things from people
Support	Giving assistance and help
Survivor	Use instead of victim to demonstrate the severity of what a victim goes through
Triangulation	A manipulation technique that criminals/abusers use to attempt to retain power and control over the victim/survivor. It involves including a third party such as a family member or friend into the relationship to create confusion, insecurities and jealousy within the

	victim/survivor.
Vulnerability	Being in a position where you are easily hurt or taken advantage of because of your situation or feelings
Well-Being	How individuals feel and function both on personal and social levels

Language **YOU SHOULD NOT** use in communications to victims

Duped	It makes it sound like a victim could have easily avoided the scam. Does not put blame on the criminal at all
Fall/Fell for a scam	Suggests the scam was easily avoidable and puts blame on victims. (you don't fall for a burglary)
Fooled into thinking/believing	Implies the blame lies with the victim
Fraudsters	This term detaches the criminal from what they are and almost makes it sound like it is a skill/career
Recover From	The impact of coercive control can have lifelong effects on an individual. It is a process of moving forward daily. It is not a recovery from an illness
Scammer	Again this is a similar term to fraudster, it takes away the reality that they are fundamentally criminals
Suffer/Endure	Negative language and contributes to the ongoing stigma around all aspects of Domestic Abuse
Swindled	Implies a victim's money has been stolen due to incompetence and puts the blame on them
Too good to be true	It implies that the victim is being greedy by wanting something for nothing and it also implies that the victim doesn't deserve something good.

Tricked	Similar to falling for, it makes it sound like a victim could have easily avoided the scam. Does not put blame on the criminal at all
Use your instincts	This completely disregards the victim entirely and will put them down
We know / We understand	Diminishes and undermines the individuals experience