

Dealing with pressure online

Sometimes it can feel awkward saying 'no' to people, especially if they're someone close, such as a friend, boyfriend or girlfriend. This might be because you really like that person, you trust them and don't want to let them down. However, if you do say no, any genuine friend or partner who cares for you and respects you will accept your decision.

Unlike our real friends, people we don't know online can try to convince us to do things, even when we have said no. This can feel tricky because, online, there can be lots of people asking all at the same time. An example of this could be when you are live streaming or 'going live', when often there are lots of people watching. These 'viewers' can encourage young people to do things they may not be OK with by bombarding them with lots of requests and comments. These requests can feel uncomfortable and can include asking a young person to chat one-to-one, asking for personal information, or asking them to do sexual things such as taking clothes off.



Receiving lots of comments like this all at the same time can cause young people to feel under pressure. This pressure might not always be obvious, it might be lots of compliments, promising gifts or the prospect of more followers. This can make young people feel like they need to do what they are being asked, even if they don't want to. When there are lots of people asking, sometimes it can feel like the only way to get them to stop is by doing what they want. These are all elements of pressure and this is wrong.

If people online are asking you to do things that make you feel uncomfortable you can always say no, as difficult or awkward as this may feel. Even if the people seem nice and the other things they say to you make you feel good, you never have to do something you're uncomfortable with and you always have a choice. There is more information on live streaming, and things to think about before going live, at www.thinkuknow.co.uk/11_13/need-advice/live-streaming/.

If you live stream and feel pressure from lots of people making these type of requests, ask yourself the following questions:

- *Are they real friends who you trust, and who look out for you? Or are they saying nice things to you to try and get you to do something?* Nice comments only mean something when they are genuine, not when they are given to try and get you 'on side' and make you do something you don't want to.
- *Are they not taking 'no' for an answer?* Real friends respect our decision when we say no, and stop asking. If they keep asking they are putting pressure on you and that is wrong.
- *Do they make you feel bad or threaten to stop talking to you if you don't do what they want?* Even if you have been talking for a long time, you do not owe them anything and you do not need to do what they say. True friends would never make you feel bad or guilty for saying no.

What if I've already done it?

It is not uncommon for young people to experiment online, and talking to other people online can be fun. But sometimes this can lead to being tricked or pressured into doing something sexual whilst live streaming. If this has happened to you, you are not to blame.

Doing something once does not mean you need to keep doing it. You can decide every time. If someone is asking you to do sexual things online, making you feel guilty for saying no, or telling you that doing something like this once means you have to keep doing it, this is blackmail and you should tell someone. Speak to an adult you trust or report to CEOP at www.ceop.police.uk.

What if they keep asking?



- **Remove yourself from the conversation.** This can give you time to think and respond. Lots of comments all at once can feel like you have no time to think, and sometimes this can lead young people to doing things they wouldn't normally do. Take the time to think and remember that you always have a choice.
- **Trust your gut instinct** and stick to this, even if people keep asking. If we hear something over and over we might start to think that it's normal or ok, but it isn't. Childline refer to a tactic called #listentoyourselfie – this means trusting your gut feeling.

- **Take control of the situation.** Encouraging anyone under 18 to get naked online is a serious crime. If people are asking you to get naked when live, or for naked photos, tell them that they will get into a lot of trouble. Zipit has some clever memes you can use to say no, you can search for it on your App Store.

Live?

- Treat live streaming like a photo – just because it’s live that doesn’t mean it will only exist in that moment. If you’re live chatting with someone, it can feel just like a normal conversation and unfortunately it is easy to be tricked into doing something in the heat of the moment, but remember there is a camera, and anything that happens on a camera can be recorded and shared.



Private chat?

- Be wary of people you meet whilst live streaming who ask you to chat privately. Ask yourself why they need to chat to you one-to-one. In a public chat other people can see the conversation and can check that it is safe, but with private chat it is much harder for other people to see what is going on.

Trustworthy advice?

- If you are looking for advice on particular topics such as sex, sexuality and relationships, there is lots of great advice on the internet – but it’s important to be cautious about getting advice and support from people you’ve only met online. Use trustworthy organisations such as Brook (www.brook.org.uk) and The Mix (www.themix.org.uk), who provide expert information and advice to young people. If you want to speak to someone directly, you can speak to Childline privately at any time of day on 0800 1111 or by visiting www.childline.org.uk.

If you are worried that you have been tricked by an adult whilst live streaming or any online platform, report it to CEOP at www.ceop.police.uk. No matter what you might have shared online, you are not to blame.

