



Grooming prevention: Officials

What is Grooming?

Grooming (in the context of corruption) is the process by which public officials are deliberately targeted by people within or outside of an agency, to become engaged in corrupt activity.

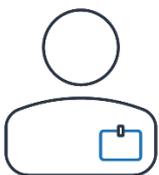


Perpetrators look for opportunities to exploit intimate relationships, family connections, personal history and cultural and social links. They invest considerable time in understanding their targets so that they can manipulate, coerce or threaten them into acting corruptly.

In doing so, perpetrators leverage some of our most basic needs and vulnerabilities, including:

- the need to feel seen, understood, valued and/or recognised
- frustration or exclusion in the workplace
- financial hardship
- health or relationship concerns.

Am I vulnerable?



Yes. All public officials are potential targets for grooming. You are likely to have access to sensitive information, the ability to make and/or influence decisions, and insider knowledge of sensitive processes. Much of this is of significant value to commercial entities, criminals, private individuals and other groups.

Officials can unwittingly fall victim to grooming when personal and professional relationships evolve in ways that compromise their integrity. Often, they only realise they have been exploited after having engaged in corrupt conduct.

Who might try to groom me?

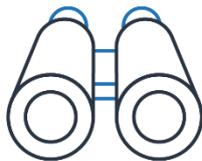


Organised criminal groups will look for access to sensitive information, particularly law enforcement information including in relation to investigative or border control activity, which helps them avoid detection



Individuals and businesses may seek to groom officials for information or to exercise their regulatory powers to provide them with a commercial or private advantage

Former colleagues working in the private sector may use their personal networks and relationships to 'reach-back' into contacts and colleagues in government agencies to obtain insider information



Foreign entities pose an inherent risk of espionage to organisations that deal with sensitive government information

Extremist groups can target public officials and actively seek to forge relationships with like-minded 'insiders' in the public service

How can I protect myself from becoming a target?



- ✓ Understand the broader value of the decisions you make or influence and the information and resources you have access to.
- ✓ Maintain a professional relationship with clients, suppliers, contractors, regulated entities and other stakeholders. Ensure every action and decision you take is objective and consistent with the legitimate function of your role
- ✓ Be wary of anyone who takes an unusual or unexpected interest in what you or your agency does, especially if they start asking for sensitive information, suggest you meet up outside of work or try to connect in a personal context (e.g. on social media).



- ✓ Consider how much information you share on social media. This information can be leveraged by someone who might want to groom you for corrupt purposes.
- ✓ Be conscious of discussing official information with or around people who do not need to know it.
- ✓ Ensure you understand and implement the integrity policies of your agency. They are there to protect you as well as your agency.



- ✓ If anyone attempts to seek favours or information they shouldn't have access to, or makes threats to you or your family, report it.
- ✓ Don't self-manage integrity risks. Raise concerns you have about your colleagues – by speaking up, you can help keep, or get them out of trouble. Whilst it's always better to report early, it's never too late to do so.

For more information on grooming, see ACLEI's [Corruption Concepts: Grooming](#).