

THE BIG QUESTION

CAN YOU MAKE FRIENDS ONLINE?

What should you do if someone wants to be your friend online?
What should you say? Can it be a good thing?

Our Core Value Champion

Ben Canham, who has Asperger's Syndrome, was plunged into depression after losing his dad at just 17 before his mum passed away when he was 18, leaving him parentless. After this, the 23-year-old was subject to an attack by local thugs that left him too afraid to leave his home. In a desperate bid to connect with people, he turned to strangers online - which is where he met Shelagh



Low, a 68-year-old retired Scottish social worker. The pair began speaking and soon became bonded through shared experiences of grief. Before long, Shelagh became increasingly concerned for Ben - who revealed he was having mental health concerns after being threatened. She said: "When Ben was threatened I actually contacted the police down there on his behalf." Shelagh also tried to talk Ben into going outside and even flagged him to social services in his area as a person of concern.

But Shelagh - who also lives alone - felt she needed to take action to help Ben and decided to make the 700-mile round journey to bring him to live with her. She said: "I just knew he needed some human contact and someone to check on him."



Ben now credits her selfless offer with saving his life. Ben, who now has over 20,000 followers on social media, said: "Sharing my story has actually helped other people going through the same things as me, which is touching to know that I can help other people."

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IF SOMEONE ASKS TO
BE YOUR FRIEND
ONLINE, WHAT
SHOULD YOU DO?

2

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF
TALKING TO PEOPLE
ONLINE?

3

WHO CAN HELP YOU IF
YOU'RE WORRIED
ABOUT SOMETHING
ONLINE?