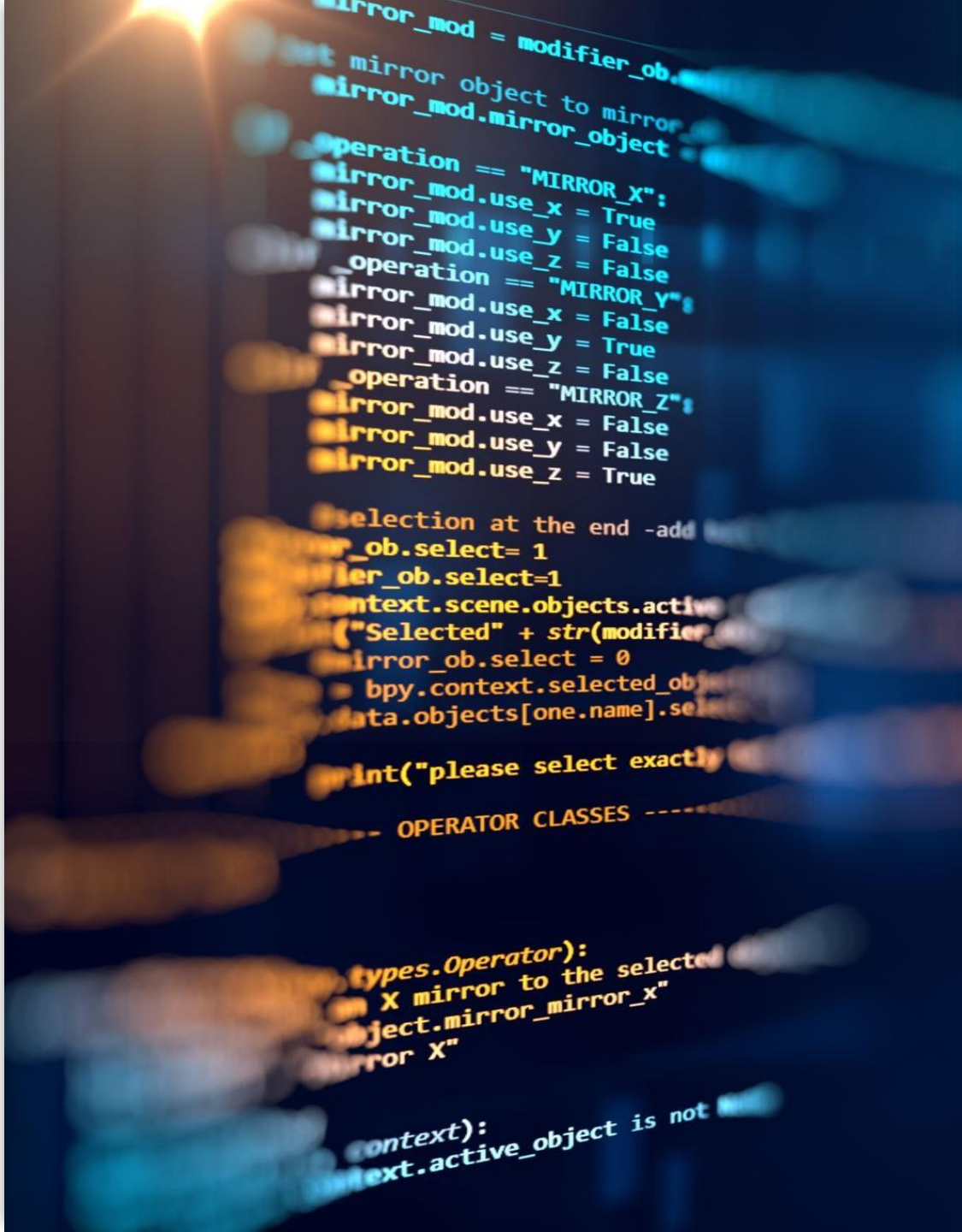
Risk of sharing personal information on social media

Key risks of sharing personal information include

- **Identity Theft and Financial Fraud:** Hackers can use stolen details (birthdays, addresses, SSNs) to open credit lines, apply for services, or sell information on the dark web.
- **Targeted Cyberattacks:** Sharing phone numbers or email addresses online increases exposure to phishing, scams, and spam.
- **Physical Safety Risks:** Posting real-time locations, home addresses, or photos from a trip can tip off criminals, revealing that you are not at home or detailing your routine.
- **Data Misuse and Privacy Loss:** Third parties and marketers often collect, sell, or analyze shared data, which can lead to discriminatory profiling or unwanted targeting.
- **Account Takeover:** Information shared on social media, such as names of pets or schools, is often used to guess passwords or answer security questions.
- **Reputational Damage:** Shared personal information or photos can be used for blackmail, harassment, or to cause public embarrassment.
- **Breaches Involving Minors:** Sharing photos of children poses severe risks, as these images can be used without consent or end up in the wrong



Steps to Mitigate Risks

Steps to Mitigate Risks:

Limit Social Media Sharing: Be cautious about sharing personal details, photos, or location data.

Review Privacy Settings: Ensure accounts are private, and disable geolocation services on apps.

Use Secondary Accounts: Use a separate email for non-essential registrations to minimize spam and potential breaches.

Secure Old Devices: Properly erase all data before disposing of or recycling old phones and computers.

Be Wary of Phishing: Do not click on suspicious links or provide information to unverified sources.

7 Golden Rules for Information Sharing

- **1. GDPR is not a barrier**
- Remember that data protection and regulation law is not intended as a barrier to info sharing – it helps us to share the right information, in the right way, for the right reasons. Never put management or organisation interests before the safety of others. The principle of confidentiality is not absolute, especially when it is to safeguard adults or children.
- **2. Be open and honest**
- Right from the start, be clear with the people we support (and/or their families where needed) what we hold, why we might share it, who might need to know. Try and get informed consent from the beginning where possible.
- **3. Seek advice**
- If in doubt, ask! Have confidence in checking with others. Talk to your safeguarding lead, or line manager. You do not have to disclose personal or identifying information to get someone else's view, even if you talk to the police or the local authority.
- **4. Share with consent wherever possible**
- But respect the wish of those who do not consent. It is their right as an adult, where they have the mental capacity to make that decision. However, you may still decide to share the information without consent, where you can evidence that the need is:
- in the public interest (e.g. other adults at risk, staff are implicated)
- the adult, or someone else, is at very serious risk of harm
- a serious crime has been committed
- you suspect coercion or duress is involved in their decision
- the person lacks the mental capacity to make the decision
- **5. Always consider the safety and well-being**
- What is the risk of **not** sharing the information? What will be the impact of sharing / not sharing – on the person, on anyone else involved.
- **6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure.**
- Check these key words. Is it the right information for the purpose? Is it being shared in the right format, with the right people? Is it accurate and up to date? Are you sharing promptly enough for the purpose intended? Think "need-to-know".
- **7. Keep a record**
- Be clear what you have shared or chosen not to share. Why have you shared the information? Evidence how you came to that decision, and who you shared what with.
- Adapted from SCIE Safeguarding Adults information sharing