



INTIMACY  
FOR STAGE & SCREEN

GUIDELINES FOR ENGAGING  
INTIMACY COORDINATORS  
IN TV/FILM



# A NOTE ON THE GUIDELINES

This is a living document and will be updated regularly as intimacy practice evolves, changes and recreates itself. Thus, we ask that you keep checking our website to find the most updated version.

If you wish to share the link to this document do not share the link of the document itself, instead we ask that you share the link to the website page where you can click on the button that directs you to the most updated version.

If you wish to reference information from this document, use it in your research, articles, books etc. we ask that you credit *Intimacy For Stage & Screen* and all the document's contributors fully (their names mentioned below).

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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These guidelines are influenced from the standards and protocols set by SAG-AFTRA and ACTRA's Best Practices.

### THANKS

A huge thank you to Equity UK and Equity Women's Committee, Kelly Burke and Jennifer Greenwood for their continuous support in bringing safe intimacy practices to the foreground of UK's entertainment industry.

Thank you to SAG-AFTRA, ACTRA and Directors UK for their guidance and for all those that advised them and cared enough to make intimacy standards acknowledged and respected worldwide.

Thank you to Alicia Rodis and HBO for being the pioneers of intimacy coordination and for establishing a standard for safe intimate practice on set.



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTIMACY COORDINATION

Strategies for performing and shooting intimacy for screen has been around for many years and implemented by Producers, Production Managers/Coordinators, Directors, AD Teams, Costume Department, Agents and Artists.

In 2004 Tonia Sina coined the phrase “Intimacy Choreographer” in her ongoing research and thesis “Intimate Encounters; Staging Intimacy and Sensuality” (Virginia Commonwealth University). Subsequently, further practitioners worldwide have created their own research into the topic and as such, it is constantly evolving.

The term “Intimacy Coordinator” was created by HBO and Alicia Rodis on the set of “The Deuce” in 2017. HBO announced in late 2018 that they will employ an Intimacy Coordinator on each show that has nudity or simulated sex. This contributed immensely to the role’s development in the UK and worldwide.

In 2019 Directors UK released their “Directing Nudity & Simulated Sex Guidance”.

In 2020 SAG-AFTRA released their “Standards and Protocols for Intimacy Coordinators”. ACTRA released their “Best Practices for scenes involving nudity, intimacy, simulated sex and sexual violence”. Times Up Foundation published their online guide for actors “Working in The Entertainment: Your Rights in Nude, Intimate and Sex Scenes”.

The Intimacy Coordinator role is now an established position on set in the UK acknowledged by Directors UK, Equity and BECTU.

### **Development of the organisation *Intimacy For Stage & Screen***

In March 2016, Lizzy Talbot brought “Intimacy Direction” from the USA to the UK and founded *Theatrical Intimacy*.

In Late 2016 Claire Warden and Yarit Dor joined *Theatrical Intimacy* as co-founders and in 2017 *Theatrical Intimacy* became *Intimacy Directors International UK*, a branch of IDI.

In 2020 it was rebranded as *Intimacy for Stage and Screen* to include their ongoing work with the recorded media industry as well.

## 2.0

### CONSENT ON SET

Consent is given by the Performer performing the action. Consent can only be freely given if the Performer has full knowledge of the action required beforehand. Any form of coercion negates the Performer's consent.

#### Legal Definition in the UK

Section 74 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 in the UK states that: "a person consents if he agrees by choice and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice."  
(<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/contents>).

#### Consent is freely given

The individual has a right to their body and therefore consent is retractable. If for whatever reason the individual feels unsafe emotionally and/or physically they have the right to retract their consent at any point (and also during the shoot). While the consent is retracted, the action previously agreed to can no longer be performed and the Performers, Intimacy Coordinator, Director, Producer and 1AD should negotiate alterations and create a new Nudity & Simulated Sex Rider/Waiver/Clause for that scene before filming can continue.

#### Consent can only be given if the individual is fully informed

Never assume that if a script has notes that include intimacy then those applying to audition have fully taken that into account. As an employer you must inform your potential employee what the job/role entails and then check their level of consent & agreement. Consent should be attained and checked at all stages.

#### Consent is the right of everyone involved

If a scene has nudity and/or simulated sex (especially if it is simulation of non-consensual sex), Heads of Departments should check-in with their crew ahead of time to see who is comfortable to be in the closed set and work on that scene. Please do not assume that every crew member is automatically comfortable being in close proximity to that action or hearing it repeatedly.

#### Consent and the Intimacy Coordinator

The Intimacy Coordinator is a specialist hired to facilitate intimacy choreography in a safe process while overseeing consent.

For more general information on consent: <https://www.disrespectnobody.co.uk>

## 3.0

# WHAT IS AN INTIMACY COORDINATOR?

## Intimacy Coordinator

An Intimacy Coordinator is an intimacy-movement specialist trained to oversee and facilitate scenes involving nudity, simulated sex or overseeing consent on set.

Their role involves:

### Advocacy

The Intimacy Coordinator serves as an advocate for the Performers and Crew on set during intimacy scenes. Examples of advocacy include:

- is a Mental Health First Aider<sup>1</sup> in rehearsals and on set for intimate scenes.
- Oversees closed set protocols along with the 1st Assistant Director;
- Oversees Nudity & Simulated Sex Waiver/Riders during shoot along with the producers;
- Can assist with conflict resolution and can advise on ways to prevent sexual harassment on set;
- Can be a third party during costume fittings;
- Can be a third party during placement of microphones close to sensitive areas.

### Liaison

The Intimacy Coordinator liaises and collaborates with departments (eg. Costume, Hair and Make-up, Props, Stunts, SFX, VFX etc.) with regard to intimacy considerations.

### Collaboration and Intimacy Choreography

The Intimacy Coordinator collaborates with the Performers, Director and Director of Photography to create intimacy choreography rooted in the storytelling. The Intimacy Coordinator continues to adjust the choreography to the needs of the Performer and for camera angles or shot sizes throughout the shooting process.

### Important:

- Power Dynamics exist on set and as such we highly recommend that an Intimacy Coordinator does not work as a Stunt, Stunt Coordinator, Assistant Director, Producer, Director etc. on the same production.

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<sup>1</sup> [Mental Health First Aider](#) - The Intimacy Director should be a Mental Health First Aider which can provide immediate support and aid in a sensitive situation (see section 5.0). They are not a trained therapist. If a Performer or crew member is triggered or suffers a mental health crisis they need to be directed to a trained therapist that is not part of the production and the session should be off-site as much as possible



## 4.0

### STRUCTURE OF THE INTIMACY DEPARTMENT

There are levels of expertise within the intimacy department such as: a Lead Intimacy Coordinator, Co-Intimacy Coordinator and Trainee.

- **Lead Intimacy Coordinator** is head of their department (intimacy) and main Intimacy Coordinator on the production. If unavailable on the day they will bring a Cover or Co-Intimacy Coordinator.
- **Co-Intimacy Coordinator** is a second Intimacy Coordinator working on the production or an additional Intimacy Coordinator brought in to help the Lead Intimacy Coordinator on the day if, for example, there are multiple intimacy scenes shot at once or many background artists performing simulation or nudity.
- **Trainee Intimacy Coordinator** is an Intimacy Coordinator In-Training. They may assist or only shadow. This is dependent on the decision of the Lead/Co-Intimacy Coordinator.



## 5.0

# WHEN SHOULD I HIRE AN INTIMACY COORDINATOR?

In order to keep Performers safe, we recommend an Intimacy Coordinator be brought in to facilitate the following scenes:

### **An Intimacy Coordinator is essential for scenes including:**

- Nudity & Simulated Sex Riders / Waivers / Clauses
- Simulated Sex
- Nudity
- Semi-Nudity
- Undressing to a state of nudity/semi-nudity
- Non-consensual action<sup>2</sup> such as Simulated Sexual Assault, Simulated Sexual Violence, Simulated Sexual Manipulation.
- Kissing on the body
- Intense mouth-to-mouth kissing
- Groping or Making Out
- Portrayal of contact with chest or genitals
- Presence of Child Actors, Young Adult Actors or Vulnerable Artists in a scene containing intimacy<sup>3</sup> (please see terminology Appendix 1)
- Use of prosthetic genitalia or prosthetic breasts

### **An Intimacy Coordinator is recommended for scenes including:**

- Insinuation of sexual actions
- Mouth-to-mouth Kissing
- Any instances in which a performer requests an Intimacy Coordinator

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<sup>2</sup> Any intimacy involving violence requires a Stunt Coordinator present as well.

<sup>3</sup> The Intimacy Coordinator will work closely with the 1st Assistant Director and the Chaperone to oversee the child's protection. Involving minors in intimacy scenes is problematic and thus please get further safeguarding advice from Equity and your Chaperone.

## 6.0

# WHAT TRAINING OR EXPERTISE SHOULD AN INTIMACY COORDINATOR HAVE?

Practitioners enter this profession in different ways and from a variety of backgrounds. This section is a recommended process incorporating valuable information which can help engagers ascertain the level of expertise and the training of a candidate.

### 6.1 Recommended Hiring Process:

- Ask for a CV of Intimacy Coordination credits and related training. (An engager should get familiarised with the intimacy coordination training providers available worldwide and their reputation/credits/training structure).
- Interview the Intimacy Coordinator
- Obtain a recommendation from a Director, Producer, 1st Assistant Director, Performer, DOP or another experienced Intimacy Coordinator.

### 6.2 Expertise & Training:

An Intimacy Coordinator should have all of the following:

#### Professional Experience

A CV containing the following:

- “Intimacy Coordinator” and/or “Co-Intimacy Coordinator” credits. (Note, “Intimacy Direction” is not the same job).
- Professional experience working directly with Performers and Directors in a professional setting.
- Previous experience of working on-set.
- Professional experience in movement instruction for actors. This should include teaching movement based disciplines which require knowledge of anatomy, basic biomechanics and movement pedagogy tools (crucial skills in order to create action, adapt it quickly and to be able to explain verbally or demonstrate if they have an assistant).

#### Intimacy Coordination Certification Training

We recommend that the Intimacy Coordinator should be fully certified. ISS recommends they should have attained a minimum of **130 hours of taught contact time** in their training **prior** to the mentoring stage (shadowing & assisting on set as a Trainee). Such training should be led and assessed by an experienced Intimacy Coordinator/s or an established training body focused on Intimacy Coordination.

Topics of training should include:

- Advocacy



- Intimacy Choreography, Technique & Masking
- Intimacy Kit
- Health & Safety Equipment
- Basic Filmmaking Studies
- Industry Standards and Contracts
- Consent and Sexual Health
- On Set Etiquette
- Protocols and Problem Solving

### Health and Safety Training

The Intimacy Coordinator should provide evidence of qualifications in:

- Adult Mental Health First Aid
- Sexual Harassment & Bullying Awareness
- LGBTQIA+ Awareness
- Diversity & Equality Awareness
- Bystander Intervention Training
- Conflict Resolution Training
- Creative Industries Safety Passport
- Emergency First Aid

If a show involves minors, or vulnerable artists, additional training in:

- Safeguarding of Children in the Entertainment Industry
- Youth Mental Health First Aid

### Criminal Record Check

- Demonstrating no sexual, violent and/or safeguarding offences (DBS or equivalent)



## 7.0 STANDARDS AND BEST PRACTICES

If you wish to hire an Intimacy Coordinator we highly recommend you do so in the pre-production stage in order to achieve a safer and more effective process.

### 7.1 Pre - Production

- Request a CV, recommendation and interview the Intimacy Coordinator.
- Confirm engagement, receive their rate card (from them or their agent) and sign a contract prior to any work on the show.
- Schedule Intimacy Meetings
- Discuss Intimacy Process
- Connect the Intimacy Coordinator to Heads of Departments
- Book intimacy rehearsals before the day for the Performers, Intimacy Coordinator and Director (highly recommended if and when possible).

### 7.2 Day of Shoot

You should expect the Intimacy Coordinator to:

- Review all health & safety equipment and modesty garments.
- Oversee and manage the Closed Set Protocols along with the 1st Assistant Director.
- Facilitate Intimacy Choreography.
- Be present during shoot to choreograph intimacy, assure continued consent and to modify action as needed.
- Ensures that the footage on the monitor maintains the Nudity & Simulated Sex conditions agreed in Waiver/Rider. This responsibility is shared with the Producer / Executive Producer present on set.

### 7.3 Post Production

- The Intimacy Coordinator will be available for the Performers if they have questions or concerns.
- The Intimacy Coordinator can be available during the editing process to ensure that the material shot meets the Nudity & Simulated Sex Waiver/Rider specifications.



## 8.0

# RATES & CONTRACTING CONSIDERATIONS

### Rates

- Minimum rates of Lead Intimacy Coordinators and Co-Intimacy Coordinators should be set in parity with other heads of department.
- Many Intimacy Coordinators in the UK currently follow the minimum rate card of the PACT Equity Stunt Coordinators.

### Contracting

Intimacy Coordinator contracts require various clauses to protect both the production and the service provider. We advise against hiring an Intimacy Coordinator on a general Deal Memo. Intimacy Coordinators or their agents will have service/consultancy agreements of their own.



## APPENDIX 1:

# INTIMACY FOR STAGE AND SCREEN'S INTIMACY TERMINOLOGY FOR TV/FILM

### **Advocate**

A person who publicly supports or recommends a particular cause or policy.  
A person who puts a case on someone else's behalf.

### **Body Double**

A "stand in" Performer who will pose as the body of a Performer during a stunt or intimate scene. The body of the Body Double will therefore be seen by the public to be the Performer's body and so the Performer should have the right to agree on the actions or level of exposure their likeness will perform/show.

### **Boundary**

A physical parameter that a Performer has put in place to guard themselves from physical and/or emotional and/or trauma.

### **Check-In**

An update between the Intimacy Coordinator and the Performer or between the Performers to ensure consent and/or intimacy protocols are maintained.

### **Child Actor and Young Adult Actor**

In England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, a child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

Intimacy scenes where minors are present require safeguarding practices in place. The Intimacy Director will work closely with the Stage Management Team and the Chaperone to oversee the child's protection. To understand more about what level of involvement can a Child Actor or Young Adult Actor have in the scenes, please seek advice from Equity UK.

### **Closure / De- Rolling**

A ritual / action / exercise that aids the Performer to de-role (come out of character) and acknowledge that the intimate situation performed was not real.

### **Consent**

Section 74 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 in the UK states that: "a person consents if he agrees by choice, and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice."  
(<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/contents>).

Consent on set is given by the Performer performing the action. Consent can only be freely given if the Performer has full knowledge of the action required beforehand. Any form of coercion negates the Performer's consent.

For more general information on consent: <https://www.disrespectnobody.co.uk>

### **Descriptive/Rider Language**

The wording in the Waiver or Rider detailing the extent of nudity and type of simulated sex actions the Performer agrees to perform per scene.



## External Barriers

Props and/or padding placed between Performers to reduce or eliminate groin-to-groin contact, stimulation and/or help to anchor body parts in order to perform intimacy choreography techniques. These are usually provided by the Intimacy Coordinator or made by the prop department with guidance from the Intimacy Coordinator.

## Garment Barriers

Padding inserted into modesty garments to reduce or eliminate groin-to-groin contact and stimulation. These can be provided by the Intimacy Coordinator or made by the costume or prop department with guidance from the Intimacy Coordinator.

## Intimacy

A very broad and subjective term. It may be affected by the context of the characters within the scene and whether the Performers and/or Director see a moment as an intimate moment. Depending on states of emotions, level of familiarity or intensity of the relationship, it can include non-contact based intimacy as well as contact based intimacy. Examples: portrayal of sexual tension and chemistry where no touch occurs, intimacy between parents and children or friends or strangers, simulation of sexual actions, nudity/semi-nudity, kissing etc.

## Intimacy Choreography

The choreographed moves of intimacy which the performers perform.

## Intimacy Coordinator

An Intimacy Coordinator is a intimacy-movement specialist trained to oversee and facilitate scenes involving nudity, simulated sex or overseeing consent on set.

## Intimacy Director

An intimacy-movement specialist trained to oversee consent and to facilitate safe intimacy choreography for the stage.

## Intimacy Risk Assessment

A report which outlines a systematic process of evaluating the potential risks that may be involved in the shooting of an intimacy scene. We recommend that Intimacy Coordinators submit such documentation prior to the day of shooting.

## Intimate Scenes

This term is complex because a Performer can see any scene as intimate for their character. However, when regarding scenes that may need an Intimacy Coordinator, we recommend considering “Intimate Scenes” as scenes which may involve situations which are mentioned in the “Physical Intimacy” term above as priority.

## Modesty Garments

With the expansion of intimacy coordination practice, this now includes any garment which may cover the genitalia, intergluteal cleft, nipples and breasts. These are usually made or bought by the costume department and should be in consultation with the Intimacy Coordinator to assure correct design, usage and placement. Some Intimacy Coordinators will provide specific modesty garments for simulated sex scenes due to the needs of their intimacy choreography.

## Nudity

PACT Equity TV Agreement 2019-2020 states:

“Nudity” or “Nude” shall mean the display of any part of the body which would be revealed if the Artist were not wearing a bathing suit (Speedo and bikini, for male and female actors, respectively).

## Nudity & Simulated Sex Waiver/Rider

A legal document or clause in a contract which is negotiated between the Performer (or their representative) and the Producer. This defines the terms of nudity and/or simulated sex agreed by both parties.

## Permission

Can be given by a third party but those asked to do something need to be able to give their consent freely. For example, a Director can give permission for an action to happen but only the Performer can give their consent.

## Physical Intimacy

We define physical intimacy as any moment which portrays physical contact and highlights the intimate nature of the characters. This may include (but is not restricted to): kissing, “making out”, physical contact leading into various states of undress, contact with chest or genitals, simulated sex, simulation of sexual violence, simulation of sexual manipulation.

## Placeholder

An agreed gesture used by the Performers in rehearsals or auditions which substitutes the intimacy action. This is extremely helpful for early rehearsals when Performers explore the scene in its entirety for it allows them to avoid improvising intimacy. Anytime they feel a need for an intimate action they can use the agreed placeholder to signal that further choreography is needed in that moment of the scene. Once intimacy rehearsals start with the Intimacy Coordinator, placeholders are then removed and intimacy choreography can be facilitated fully. Placeholders should not be intimacy actions like a kiss or hug. It is best practice to agree on a more neutral gesture.

## Power Dynamic

Can be defined as the degree of control over material, human, financial and intellectual resources exercised by an individual or group. Degrees of power can be sustained/constant or dynamic/distributed depending on role hierarchy, class, gender, race, age, background etc. One example of power dynamics on set is that of a Producer due to their hire or fire ability.

## Semi-Nudity

The state of being nude from the waist up or waist down.

## Sexual Assault

Sexual or indecent assault is any physical, psychological and emotional violation in the form of a sexual act, inflicted on someone without their consent.

For more information:

<https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/looking-for-information/what-is-sexual-violence/other-kinds-of-sexual-violence/what-is-sexual-assault/>

## Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature that makes one feel distressed, intimidated or humiliated. It can take lots of different forms. It can include or be called sexualised bullying and can happen to people of any gender or sexual orientation and can be carried out by anyone of any gender identity.

For more information:

<https://www.acas.org.uk/sexual-harassment>

<https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/looking-for-information/what-is-sexual-violence/other-kinds-of-sexual-violence/what-is-sexual-harassment/>

## Simulated Sex



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PACT Equity TV Agreement states:

Simulated Sex shall mean any act which if performed in public would be regarded as "indecent".

### **Withdrawal of Consent**

A Performer owns the right to their body, therefore, they can withdraw their agreement to giving or receiving an action in a physical capacity at any time.



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## APPENDIX 2: SHOOTING INTIMACY SCENES DURING COVID-19

Members of *Intimacy For Stage & Screen* have contributed to BECTU's Intimacy Department's Covid Guidelines which can be found in this link. Follow the notes in the Intimacy Department.

<https://www.bectu.org.uk/covid19-return-to-work>

## APPENDIX 3: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Websites of Training Providers

The following are training providers that we know train intimacy coordinators similarly to what is outlined in section 5.0.

**UK:** Intimacy for Stage & Screen [www.intimacyforstageandscreen.com](http://www.intimacyforstageandscreen.com)

**USA:** Intimacy Directors & Coordinators [www.idcprofessionals.com](http://www.idcprofessionals.com)

**Canada:** Intimacy Coordinators Canada <https://www.intimacycoordinatorscanada.com>

### Worldwide Industry Guidelines, Standards and Recommended Practices

Directors UK:

<https://www.directors.uk.com/campaigns/directing-nudity-and-simulated-sex#the-guidance>

SAG-AFTRA:

Intimacy Coordinator Standards & Protocols:

<https://www.sagaftra.org/contracts-industry-resources/workplace-harassment/intimacy-coordinator-standards-protocols>

ACTRA

Best Practices for scenes involving nudity, intimacy, simulated sex and sexual violence:

[https://www.actratoronto.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Best\\_Practices\\_030520\\_web.pdf](https://www.actratoronto.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Best_Practices_030520_web.pdf)

Safe Spaces

<https://www.equity.org.uk/getting-involved/campaigns/safe-spaces/>

Dignity at Work

<https://bectu.org.uk/get-involved/dignity-at-work-campaign/>

Equity's Manifesto for Casting

<https://www.equity.org.uk/media/1380/manifesto-for-casting.pdf>

Equity UK's Casting LGBT+ Guidelines

[https://www.equity.org.uk/media/3465/equity\\_lgbt-casting-guide.pdf](https://www.equity.org.uk/media/3465/equity_lgbt-casting-guide.pdf)

### Selected Articles

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/24/business/intimacy-director-hbo-the-deuce.html>

<https://www.hbo.com/the-deuce/season-2/intimacy-coordinator-interview-emily-meade-alicia-rodiz>

<https://deadline.com/2018/10/hbo-hires-intimacy-coordinators-to-monitor-on-set-sex-a-new-role-1202489884/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2019/nov/21/rules-for-screen-sex-scenes-issued-to-british-directors>

<https://variety.com/2020/film/news/sag-aftra-intimacy-coordinators-1203484749/>



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