

Intimacy Coordination and Gaming: A Guideline for Games Developers and Studios

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Introduction

This document is an offer to the games industry about the role of intimacy coordination in games, based on our work together and drafted in 2024. We are excited to share it with you. It is a dynamic document, a 'testing' stage, subject to change and evolve with ongoing conversation and in consultation with industry partners and peers.

It is influenced by multiple existing guidance and protocols in the intimacy coordination field across theatre, film and television, including but not limited to: SAG-AFTRA Intimacy Coordinator Standards & Protocols, Intimacy for Stage and Screen Guidelines, Bectu Guidance for Shooting Intimacy and Equity's Best Practice Guidance for Working as a Video Game Performer.

Thanks

Thank you to all those working and supporting intimacy coordination who have pioneered, advised and contributed to existing guidance and protocols and best practice.

Thank you to Pitstop Productions, Larian Studios, Asha Jennings-Grant, Enric Ortuño, Natalie Winter and David Menkin.

Thank you to the cast and crew of Baldur's Gate III, and all cast and crew on recent projects that cannot yet be named for inviting and welcoming intimacy coordination principles into the games space.

A Brief History of Intimacy Coordination

The foundations of intimacy coordination existed informally across the screen industries for decades before it was established as a role. The extensive and often uncredited work of performers, directors, producers, costume and makeup departments, assistant directors, agents and stunt teams have all valuably contributed to intimacy coordination as we know it today.

In America, Tonia Sina's work was fundamental in the creation of the role, introducing the term 'Intimacy Director' in 2004 whilst working on her master's thesis (Campanella Sina, T. 2006).

In 2016, Intimacy Director's International (IDI) was founded by Tonia Sina, Alicia Rodis and Siobhan Richardson, later known as Intimacy Directors and Coordinators (IDC) under Alicia Rodis. Pioneering work in theatre spaces had been happening concurrently over this period with Laura Rikard and Chelsea Pace founding Theatrical Intimacy Education (Villareal, A. 2022).

In 2017, the viral response to the #MeToo movement founded by Tarana Burke, expedited the creation of the intimacy coordinator role in a formal capacity. With support from HBO, Alicia Rodis was the first credited on-screen intimacy coordinator for her work on 'The Deuce'.

The work in America throughout this period extended globally, with intimacy coordinators including Ita O'Brien, Lizzy Talbot and Yarit Dor amongst others, campaigning to establish IC work in the UK.

Current landscape of intimacy coordination in games

In 2023, Pitstop and Larian were the first studios in the UK to hire and credit intimacy coordinators on a game for Baldur's Gate III (Asha Jennings-Grant & Enric Ortuño). The games industry has continued to hire IC's, on as yet unannounced projects in 2024 (Rosanna Normanton) and 2025: Project 1 (Joana Nastari), Project 2 (Rosanna Normanton)*.

*based on available information at the time of publication

Intimacy Coordination in Games

What is an intimacy coordinator?

An intimacy coordinator (IC) in games supports scenes depicting nudity, intimacy and hyper-exposure*.

*exposing/sensitive content that would not usually take place in public e.g. medical examinations, birthing scenes.

An intimacy coordinator is a neutral third party (external to a studio). They are an advocate, a liaison between cast and the creative team and an intimacy choreographer.

The role includes support through all stages of production: prep, shoot/recording and post.

What does an intimacy coordinator do in games?

The role can include, but is not limited to:

- **Consultation:** advising studios, cast and crew on consent-based practices and working with intimate content.*
- **Advocacy:** advocating for cast **and** crew.*
- **Liaison:** an intimacy coordinator collaborates with other departments and is the key person to liaise with regarding scenes with intimate content.*
- **Intimacy Garments:** in coordination with the MOCAP technician, they organise intimacy garments for additional coverage and protection where required.
- **Intimacy / Nudity Riders:** can provide descriptive language to producers to include in intimacy/nudity riders when required.*
- **Risk Assessment:** In the UK, IC's risk assess scenes containing simulated sex, nudity and some cases of hyper-exposure.
- **Shoot Day Reports:** can keep a record of what happened on the shoot.
- **Intimacy Choreography:** intimacy choreography can be offered for performing intimacy in MOCAP.
- **Intimacy Vocal Choreography:** vocal choreography can be offered for voice only performances.
- **Additional Welfare/Cast Support:** IC's are qualified mental health first aiders and can offer resources and advice for performers coming out of role (de-roling), signposting for additional support if necessary.*

Intimacy coordinator's do **not** do the following:

- Whilst intimacy coordinators may have valuable experience in these roles an IC is not a director, actor, therapist, acting coach, vocal health coach or stunt coordinator on set
- They are not part of human resources (HR) or a member of the production team/studio taking on additional duties*
- They are not a legal expert that can create legal documents for a production or studio*
- Intimacy coordinators cannot adequately fulfil the role remotely, with the only exception being if a performer is dialling into a vocal recording session from a home studio due to location, and is working remotely themselves

Status of role on a project:

- In parity with all other specialists and heads of department*

*Also included in Bectu Guidance for Shooting Intimacy

Hiring an Intimacy Coordinator

Intimacy coordinators should be considered for projects containing depictions of intimacy, nudity or hyper-exposure.

The [Bectu intimacy coordinators registry](#) is a useful place to start looking for an appropriately qualified IC. Intimacy coordinators on the registry have had to meet a minimum standard of training and experience. IC's on the registry also provide a DBS check at the point of application, although employers are responsible for checking the current status of DBS.

Intimacy coordination is not an entry level position. IC's should have completed a **full** qualification in intimacy coordination and have a background and number of years experience in the role or relevant to supporting the role e.g. movement, film, games, performance.

It is recommended to refer to the Bectu IC branch website and documentation for additional information and advice for hiring an IC.

In addition to an intimacy coordination qualification, IC's should have training in the following areas:

- Sexual harassment & bullying awareness*
- Mental health first aid*
- Creative industries safety passport**
- Trauma informed practice*
- Anti-racism*
- Unconscious bias awareness*
- Disability awareness**
- Equality, diversity and inclusion*
- LGBTQIA+ awareness*
- UK law & resources on consent and harassment**

*as per SAG-AFTRA Standards & Protocols for the Use of Intimacy Coordinators

**as per Bectu Guidance for Shooting Intimacy

IC's should be an independent third party. Due to power dynamics, they should not be a permanent member of in-house staff or a member of the production taking on an additional role.

Intimacy coordinators cannot adequately fulfil the role remotely, with the only exception being if an actor is dialling into a voice recording session from a home studio due to location, and is working remotely themselves.

Intimacy coordinator rates

At the time of writing, a Games rate card for intimacy coordinators is not yet established. For now, the Bectu Film and TV rate card should be used as a reference point when discussing rates with IC's.

In film and television, IC's establish a daily rate for prep and shoot days on a sliding scale based on the full budget of a project. Wherever possible, this should also happen in games.

Where games developers are contracting out performance capture work, the IC budget should pertain to this alone and not the full games budget.

In both cases and for guidance, intimacy coordinator rates should be considered in parity with a freelance stunt coordinator.

Working with Intimate Scenes, Depictions of Nudity and Hyper-exposure

Hiring intimacy coordinators on projects containing depictions of intimacy, nudity or hyper-exposure supports a consent-based creative space.

A note on performer preference

Some artists may prefer not to work with an IC on set for intimacy scenes, which should always be respected and considered. For scenes containing **simulated sex/sex acts** and **depictions of nudity**, hiring an IC for a project is recommended, as per Equity and SAG-AFTRA guidelines, even if the 1:1 work with the performer is minimal. An IC can advise a minimum level of support, whilst respecting artist preferences for their engagement.

This is for a number of reasons:

- An intimacy coordinator is there for both cast **and** crew on a project, including the director, producers and crew in the room at the point of recording/shooting.
- To support the performer **and** mitigate risk for the production, the presence of an intimacy coordinator, completion of intimacy riders and intimacy risk assessments are recommended.
- If other artists are involved in the recording/shooting of the scenes, there will likely be a minimum level of involvement from an IC that is required to ensure support for all performers in the room.
- The presence of an intimacy coordinator is recommended by Equity and SAG-AFTRA for all scenes containing intimacy and nudity.

If studios want to explore cast preference for solo performance capture, offering an '**opt-out**' option rather than an 'opt-in' option is advisable. This reduces risk of coercion due to employer-employee power dynamics.

Simulated sex / nudity riders

Intimacy and/or nudity riders are required for any simulated sex act, depiction of nudity and some acts of hyper-exposure.

A rider is an addendum to an artist's contract that includes specific detail about the intimate content and/or nudity being performed and/or depicted in the scene. It is a

legal agreement between production and the performer. It also includes information about body doubling for any intimacy involved*.

Whilst gaming rarely requires an artist to perform with actual nudity, it is important the artist has knowledge of if/when their character will appear nude and in what context, particularly if their facial likeness is being used.

The use of riders supports informed consent and demonstrates an artist's knowledge of what is required from the performance.

Intimacy coordinators can provide production with descriptive neutral language to include in a rider. This is informed by conversations the intimacy coordinator has had with the director/s and performer/s involved in the scene.

Production should send riders to performers at least 48 hours prior to recording/shooting to support informed consent, ideally sooner. Riders should be signed by performers prior to recording starting.

If there are last minute script changes or additions to the simulated sex and/or nudity involved in the scheduled recording/shooting, additional prep time will need to be considered and the process for supporting informed consent restarted.

Recap checklist:

- ☐ Intimacy riders are required for any simulated sex act, depiction of nudity and some acts of hyper-exposure.
- ☐ Intimacy riders include specific detail about the intimacy and/or nudity that the artist is agreeing to perform in the scene.
- ☐ Where any facial likeness of a performer is used, specific detail about the depiction of a character's nudity is required.**
- ☐ Where facial likeness of a performer is not used, specific detail about the depiction of a character's nudity is strongly recommended.**
- ☐ IC's can provide production with descriptive neutral language to include in the rider, following discussions with director and performers.
- ☐ Production send riders to performers at least 48 hours prior to recording/shooting.
- ☐ Riders should be signed by performers prior to recording starting.
- ☐ Last minute script changes that include additional intimate content and/or nudity require additional prep time, with the consent process potentially needing to restart.

Notes on current limitations:

*Further discussion is needed with the gaming industry to define the use of 'body doubling' in this space, due to the complexity of multiple performers contributing equally to character.

**Due to the complexity and frequently unconfirmed detail of how a character might be depicted at the point of performance capture, further discussion and collaboration is needed to establish best practice in this area.

Closed set protocols in gaming

A closed set supports safety and focus during scenes containing intimacy or hyper-exposure. It is advisable to communicate closed set protocols to actors and crew before the day of recording and state again prior to recording/shooting the relevant scenes.

This is an example of what a closed set in the games space can look like, in collaboration with the person running the set and supported by the intimacy coordinator:

1.) Minimal crew present for the recording / shoot session.

Recommended closed set personnel:

In person: Director, producer, intimacy coordinator, MOCAP technician, sound engineer, person running the set (1stAD, producer, floor manager)

Remote: 2 x clients / games developers

Any additional personnel should be discussed in collaboration with the person running the set (1stAD, producer, floor manager) and the intimacy coordinator.

2.) If there is simulated sex, a safety meeting is held prior to recording by the person running the set (1stAD, producer, floor manager).

3.) A list of who will be in the session will be communicated to the performer/s before the scene. If anything changes, the performer/s are notified. All other personnel will be asked to leave the immediate vicinity and sightlines.

4.) External windows in the studio (to corridors/other studios) will be covered.

5.) Other than the equipment being used to record the scene(s), no other recording or photography (e.g. still photograph, personal video, digital photograph, or cell phones) will be taken by anyone (including all members of cast and crew) during the recording of the scenes.

6.) Everyone's boundaries are important. If anyone has any concerns about the content or recording at any time they can approach the intimacy coordinator / producer to discuss.

Intimacy Coordination in the Games Production Pipeline

This is an example of how the intimacy coordinator role fits into the games production pipeline.

All intimacy coordinators work slightly differently, but tend to follow a similar prep to wrap structure. Please speak with your IC about their preferred approach and how this aligns with the needs of your project.

Production Pipeline:

PRE-PREP:

- Production approach and hire an IC on a project where they know scenes containing intimacy, hyper-exposure or depictions of nudity are involved
- Casting: IC can support production with descriptive neutral / desexualised language for content warnings to include in all casting materials. This alerts actors and agents to any intimate content involved in both the project and specific roles
- Auditions: intimate content should not be performed as part of an audition prior to being offered a role. Where this is unavoidable e.g. the lines and actions of the character are all intimate, an intimacy coordinator should be engaged for this part of the process

PREP:

- Production provide IC with script and all subsequent script updates
- IC completes an intimacy script breakdown and in collaboration with production, advises and agrees when an IC may be required
- IC meets with the director/s to discuss their creative vision for the scene
- IC meets with each performer 1:1 to discuss the director/s requests for the intimacy, performer boundaries, consent and preferences
- IC supports with any intimacy/movement rehearsals prior to shooting
- IC supports production with descriptive language for the intimacy rider* when required
- Production completes intimacy rider and sends out to actors with at least 48 hours-notice prior to shooting/recording (ideally sooner)
- IC completes an intimacy risk assessment and provides this to production for distribution to cast and crew as required

- Intimacy riders are signed by performers before recording / shooting commences
- In collaboration with the person running the set (e.g. production coordinator, 1st AD, floor runner**), IC communicates closed set memo/protocol for distribution to cast/crew

*See intimacy rider section below for more details

**Examples have been provided here to reflect the variation of language and title between games studios for person running the set

PRODUCTION: SHOOTING/RECORDING:

- IC is present by default for all scenes containing simulated sex, nudity, intimate touch, hyper-exposure (e.g. childbirth)
- IC offers support with choreography and vocal choreography where required, and in collaboration with director/s and performer/s requirements/preferences
- IC is present on set to support cast and crew throughout session, including navigating consent conversations
- If a performer chooses to opt out of engaging with an IC and/or don't feel their presence is necessary, IC's may still be in the session depending on content. Reasons for being present could include supporting other actors and crew involved in the scene, and should be informed by risk assessment and riders
- IC supports closed set protocol in collaboration with person running the session/set: 1stAD/floor manager/production coordinator*
- In coordination with MOCAP technician, intimacy garments are offered for additional coverage under MOCAP suits and robes/blankets offered for additional coverage between takes

*Examples have been provided here to reflect the variation of language and title between games studios for person running the set

WRAP/POST:

- IC offers de-roling methods to performers if requested
- IC offers optional follow-up/debrief to performers
- IC completes shoot/recording day reports (IC's retain for their own professional record. Some IC's send these to production and/or for an additional fee)

Department Checklist for Working with Intimate Content

Games Developers:

- ☐ Consider writing/embedding content warnings and consent options for the player in relation to engaging with intimate content and nudity in the game.
- ☐ When scripting intimacy, involve studios at the earliest point in the process so they can communicate to cast and consider hiring needs.
- ☐ When casting, attach content warnings to all casting materials alerting performers and agents to the content of the project and whether the specific role will or will not involve intimacy/nudity/hyper-exposure.
- ☐ Consider the 48-hour rider guidance: actors should have a minimum of 48 hours notice prior to shooting or recording any scripted intimacy and have a script available to view. Any last minute changes / additions of intimate content could restart this process. See intimacy rider section for more details.
- ☐ Communicate the image/portrayal of a character and alert production to any nudity, again this is recommended a minimum 48-hours in advance. This is particularly important when a performer's facial likeness is being used in a game. See intimacy rider section for more details.

Producers and Studios:

- ☐ Identify if the script contains intimate action.
- ☐ Budget for an intimacy coordinator: see 'hiring an intimacy coordinator'
- ☐ Hire an intimacy coordinator to support on the project. Ensure they are a neutral third party (not in-house) and are qualified with an appropriate level of experience for the project: see 'hiring an intimacy coordinator'.
- ☐ Involve games directors as part of intimacy coordinator hiring processes.
- ☐ Include details of intimate action in casting/audition notices and in communications with agents.
- ☐ Simulated sex acts / intimacy should not be performed as part of an audition process.
- ☐ Make script available in advance to all cast and crew that will be present / involved in recording / shooting content.
- ☐ Communicate with the IC regarding intimacy riders.
- ☐ Ensure riders are provided to actors at least 48 hours prior to shoot (ideally sooner) and signed before camera rolls.

- ☐ Specialist intimacy garments/kit may be required when performing intimate scenes in MOCAP. Please liaise with IC about costs and budget for this.

Director/s:

- ☐ Share your vision for the scene/s containing intimacy and hyper-exposed content. The more clarity around this, the better for supporting informed consent.
- ☐ Engage with production in hiring an intimacy coordinator that you can develop a working relationship with.
- ☐ Support artists to communicate their boundaries and preferences.
- ☐ Work closely with the intimacy coordinator to establish how you'd like to work together and how they can support your vision for the scene.
- ☐ Understand that performer/s consent can be withdrawn and other methods of capturing the scene may have to be implemented.

Artists:

- ☐ A full summary and outline of the story, scene breakdown and scripts (where possible) should be distributed to all cast members ahead of shooting or recording.*
- ☐ Any explicit scenes with explicit language or content should be flagged up to a performer before recording.*
- ☐ A safe line of communication should be in place between talent and production should the performer have any concerns or questions about content.*
- ☐ Any and all sensitive content should be flagged as early in the process as possible by producers to cast members and their representatives.*
- ☐ When recording any scenes of an explicit nature or intimate scenes, it is best practice for a set to be closed to support both cast and crew.
- ☐ A competent intimacy coordinator should be engaged to oversee any scenes of an intimate nature.*
- ☐ If other performer/s are working on set with you, an intimacy coordinator can work with you to support and navigate different boundaries in the space.
- ☐ Intimacy coordinators can support with intimacy choreography and vocal choreography in collaboration with the Director/s.
- ☐ The intimacy coordinator can be present as a third party when MOCAP markers / mic packs are attached.

*As per Equity guidelines for Video Game Performers

Questions to consider:

- ☐ What are your boundaries and preferences in relation to recording/shooting intimate content?
- ☐ What are your boundaries and preferences for performing a character who is nude in a game? Does this change if your facial likeness is used in the game?
- ☐ How do you want to communicate these boundaries to your agent/director/intimacy coordinator?
- ☐ What do you need on set when performing these scenes?

MOCAP Technicians:

- ☐ Intimacy coordinator should liaise with MOCAP technicians regarding any intimacy garments to be used below MOCAP suit, and availability of robes for performers to wear over MOCAP suits if preferred.
- ☐ Intimacy coordinator should liaise with MOCAP technicians about any barrier cushions to support intimacy movement/choreography in the scene.
- ☐ Intimacy coordinator can be requested to be present when attaching MOCAP markers if required.

Sound Engineer:

- ☐ Intimacy coordinator can be requested to be present when attaching mics if required.

1stAD / Floor Manager / Production Coordinator:

- ☐ A safety briefing is recommended prior to shooting/recording scenes with intimate content. IC can support where required.
- ☐ IC works in collaboration with the person running the session/set: 1stAD/floor manager/production coordinator to support closed set protocol.
- ☐ For scenes filmed with more than one performer, IC can liaise with 1stAD before filming to understand how they like to run the set and how to position support.
- ☐ An IC is present to support all cast and crew involved in the shooting/recording of the scene.
- ☐ IC to be present with the director and cast for a closed rehearsal prior to shooting/recording.

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Bibliography and Further Resources

Bectu Guidance for Shooting Intimacy (Oct 2023):
<https://bectu.org.uk/intimacy-coordinators-branch/>

Bectu IC Registry:
<https://bectu.org.uk/get-involved-in-the-union/intimacy-coordinators-registry/>

Equity: Working as a Video Game Performer: Best Practice Guidance (Aug 2024):
<https://www.equity.org.uk/advice-and-support/sector-specific-advice/video-games/working-as-a-video-game-performer>

Intimacy for Stage & Screen Guidelines (Jun 2020):
<https://www.intimacyforstageandscreen.com/guidelines.html>

Safe in Our World: Mental Health Awareness and Support in the Video Games Industry:
<https://safeinourworld.org/>

SAG-AFTRA: Intimacy Coordinator Standards & Protocols (Jan 2020):
<https://www.sagaftra.org/contracts-industry-resources/workplace-harassment/intimacy-coordinator-standards-protocols>

Contact Us

As discussed, this is a testing stage document and there is more work to come in this area. If you have any comments or suggestions and would like to be involved in future consultation, please reach out to Rosanna Normanton: intimacyingames@gmail.com