

Athlete Grooming Poster

What is athlete grooming?

Grooming is a step-by-step process in which a person in authority slowly gains an athlete's trust for their own benefit. The groomer gains the trust of everyone around the intended victim, eventually breaking down interpersonal barriers with the victim. Skilled grooming is deceptive and difficult to detect. It is *harmful* behavior disguised as *helpful* behavior.

What can athlete grooming look like?

- Favouring one athlete over another with special attention, activities, or gifts
- Isolating an athlete from teammates and others
- Being seen as especially valuable to the club
- Establishing a dependent relationship with the victim's parents
- Communicating one-on-one with the athlete or arranging to meet outside of group training
- Increasing physical touch that seems unimportant at first

How do we prevent athlete grooming?

- Implement policies that clearly state what behaviour is ok and not ok
- Follow the Rule of 2 – no person in authority should be alone in private with an athlete
- Screen persons in authority
- Train administrators, athletes, and their parents to recognize grooming
- Report suspicions of grooming – you don't need to be sure

