

# WRAP PRO

The Essential Source for Entertainment Insiders

THEWRAP MEMBERS HUB EVENTS MEMBERS-ONLY VIDEO DATABANK

SEARCH



## Meet Hollywood's First Agent for Intimacy Coordinators

by [BRIAN WELK](#) | February 24, 2020 @ 3:39 PM

Intimacy Professionals Association founder Amanda Blumenthal helped shape SAG-AFTRA's new guidelines for the new role

As one of the first intimacy coordinators in a rapidly growing and buzzy new role in Hollywood, Amanda Blumenthal has made it her business to educate the industry and ensure sex scenes in film and TV are managed safely.

Now she's taken that business to the next level, becoming the first and only licensed agent in Hollywood representing intimacy coordinators. In addition to her own work as an intimacy coordinator acting as a liaison between actors and productions to ensure scenes involving nudity or intimacy are performed safely, she now represents a new generation of professionals and works to place them on shows and films.

If you haven't heard Blumenthal's name, you've seen her work. She was the first intimacy coordinator working in Los Angeles dating back to 2018, working on shows like "The L Word," "How to Get Away With Murder," "For All Mankind" and "Carnival Row."

She also consulted directly with SAG-AFTRA in shaping the [guidelines for intimacy coordination](#) that the union released last month.

**Also Read:** [Safe 'Sex' on Set: Inside Hollywood's Push for Intimacy Coordinators](#)

As the founder of Intimacy Professionals Association (IPA), she said received more calls requesting her services than she could handle herself. Sensing an opportunity, she launched the agency arm of her organization in October which now trains, certifies and places intimacy coordinators to meet the growing demands of the industry.

"I always tell productions that hire my coordinators, I'm also available to you as a resource if there's something you need, because I know this job so intimately," Blumenthal told TheWrap. "And there aren't other agents who understand the work in the way and at the level that I understand it or are able to give their clients the same level of support that I do."

Through IPA, Blumenthal is working to create a "one-stop shop" for productions that have a need for intimacy professionals. She currently represents eight intimacy coordinators, as well as several consultants who specialize in the topics of gender and sexuality, everything from trans and nonbinary issues to sexual subjects like BDSM or kink.

In all, she estimates there are 45 people working as intimacy coordinators in film and TV across the country, but only half are actually certified through IPA or the industry's other major organization for coordinators, Intimacy Directors International (IDI).

**Also Read:** [SAG-AFTRA Announces Protocols for Intimacy Coordinators](#)

Blumenthal's training process involves a six-month course that does more than teach students how to choreograph a sex scene for the camera or provide protective covering for actors. She also trains coordinators to understand the hierarchies on set and the protocol of where to report issues. She also makes sure coordinators understand the ins and outs of nudity riders so that what's happening on set matches up with the actor's written consent.

In just the first few weeks since SAG's guidelines were made public, Blumenthal said she's already received a massive influx of calls from people seeking training and a rise in calls from productions looking to employ intimacy coordinators.

"Hopefully there will be a greater understanding among productions around how productions interact with intimacy coordinators, because right now, most people, they have no idea, and at the moment, it's hard to learn exactly how does a production utilize an intimacy coordinator. There's not a lot of information out there," Blumenthal said. "So I hope that with the guidelines, it will help to standardize with the people who aren't necessarily, who haven't trained or certified or aren't part of IDI or IPA, it will help bring them into line with best practices of what is happening with us."

**Also Read:** [HBO's 'Mrs. Fletcher' Finale: Owen Teague Talks Filming His First Sex Scene With an Intimacy Coordinator](#)

Blumenthal a distinction between intimacy coordinators in film and TV and intimacy directors coming from the world of live theater, which often moves at a much different pace and allows for more rehearsal time than seen in film. Blumenthal said theater is "a different beast," and her program does not prepare students to work in that space, nor are people with theater experience qualified or certified to work on a film set.

In December, Blumenthal graduated another class of intimacy coordinators, most of whom she will continue to represent and offer work referrals. But Blumenthal said that training for intimacy coordinators is currently stuck in the "Wild West." Even with the SAG-AFTRA guidelines dictating how a coordinator should act and what productions should expect, there's a danger that untrained coordinators could put productions at risk.

"Someone can just call themselves an intimacy coordinator and just start marketing themselves that way. Most people don't necessarily have an understanding of the field to differentiate themselves in that way," Blumenthal said. "If a production gets an intimacy coordinator that's untrained, doesn't know what they're doing, doesn't follow the protocols that we see as standard in the industry right now, they can do real harm to the production and the actors."

Much like stunt coordinators, many intimacy coordinators today find work through referrals, which can often lead to placing people who aren't qualified or aren't a fit for the production. As an agent, Blumenthal can work directly with productions and studios to determine which coordinator can best serve the project.

**Also Read:** [HBO's Casey Bloys: Intimacy Coordinators May Become as Standard as Stunt Coordinators](#)

For instance, your project may not need an intimacy coordinator specifically, but if there's burlesque choreography or pole dancing, Blumenthal can find someone to assist. Even indie or student films rarely reach out to secure an intimacy coordinator because they fear it's too expensive.

"They perceive certain barriers to using one, so I always encourage student films and indies and shorts, reach out anyway, because I have people who have just finished training or are towards the end of training, and they need experience, and those are the projects that are a really good match for them," Blumenthal said.

Blumenthal said that unless a project buys out her time entirely, she generally will work on three shows at once, and most other coordinators can handle the same amount. And not every show or movie has enough nudity or intimacy to require a coordinator. So in L.A. at the very least, the current crop of coordinators is meeting current demand.

"We have enough intimacy coordinators in Los Angeles to meet the needs of productions here," Blumenthal says. "The issue we're running into is the smaller markets. Albuquerque, Chicago, some places in Canada like Vancouver, Montreal, New Orleans, they have very few people, if any, so those productions are most vulnerable to people who aren't properly trained."

Training for those smaller markets is Blumenthal's next step, as well as seeking improvement in film — which she said is generally lagging behind television.

**Also Read:** [Starz's 'Now Apocalypse' Had No 'Time or Budget' for Intimacy Coordinators, Creator Gregg Araki Says](#)

What's more, while other networks have adopted intimacy coordinators on their shows, only HBO has made it a mandate on all of its productions, contracting IDI founder Alicia Rodis to supervise the entire slate. Pushing for mandates from other networks could be the next step in making intimacy coordinators commonplace.

"I would love it if more studios and networks would mandate. I think that that would be a really big step forward in terms of making a statement that they value safe sets, that performer safety is a priority and it's important," Blumenthal said. "I'm actually kind of surprised more people didn't after HBO made their announcement. HBO is progressive, they tend to be ahead of the curve on a lot of things, but I think it's been over a year now."

How IPA grows from here depends largely on the industry's adoption of intimacy coordinators and the SAG-AFTRA guidelines. The bright side is, more and more producers, directors and actors have gotten over the first hurdle and have actually worked with an intimacy coordinator before.

"One of the things that I've learned over the last two years is it's really hard to make long term goals with something that is changing so rapidly. So I'm staying open minded about where this could be going and what our numbers could be looking like, because there's so many factors at play that it can go in so many different directions that we don't really know," Blumenthal said. "But one of the things I'm trying to do is help make sure we're keeping up with the demand from productions for intimacy coordinators, because the last thing you want to have happen is the demand exceeds the supply."



**BRIAN WELK**

Film Reporter • [brian.welk@thewrap.com](mailto:brian.welk@thewrap.com) • Twitter: [@brianwelk](https://twitter.com/brianwelk)