

Grooming Behaviors

Sexual offenders often engage in an observable pattern of behaviors, often referred to as “grooming” behaviors. Alone, many of these behaviors may occur without being part of a grooming process. While we want to closely examine red flag behaviors, it does not necessarily mean that an individual is a sexual predator. Nonetheless, here are a few things to look for.

#1 Gifts

The individual buys expensive gifts for the athlete or provides them with money.

#2 Isolation

The individual separates the athlete from his or her peers.

#3 Special treatment

The individual treats an athlete differently from their teammates.

#4 Out-of-program contact

The individual tries to find ways to be alone with an athlete. For example, the individual may offer to take the athlete to and from practice, help with homework, or take them on unsupervised trips outside the sports program.

#5 Need

The individual tells the athlete they “need” him or her to succeed in sport.

#6 Policy violations

The individual pushes boundaries in public and doesn’t follow policies. For example, this individual may have athletes sit on their laps in public, even if it’s against club policy.

#7 Manipulation

The individual manipulates the athlete emotionally, praising them one day and degrading them the next.

#8 Time with parents

The individual spends an unusual amount of time with the athlete’s parents outside of sport.

#9 Secrets

The individual tells your athlete not to talk to their parents about what they do when they’re together.

#10 Control

The individual attempts to control an athlete, on and off the field.