

## Prevention

### Responsible Coaching Movement

The [Coaching Association of Canada's, Responsible Coaching Movement](#) includes the [Rule of Two](#), which refers to open and observable environments. AOA is committed to creating such environments for all provincially-sanctioned events, activities and programs and supports member organizations in adopting relevant policies.

### OPEN & OBSERVABLE ENVIRONMENTS POLICY

**Open and observable environments are in reference to the Coaching Association of Canada's [Rule of Two](#).**

This reference has been created by [Swim Canada](#) and adopted by AOA to assist individuals in understanding and creating open and observable environments. Thank you for the generous offer from Swim Canada to share their resources.

**At the provincial level, AOA is committed to creating open and observable environments at all AOA sanctioned events, including training meetings , camps and competitions.**

For the purpose of this page, the following terms have these meanings:

- *“Representative”* – All individuals employed by or engaged in activities on behalf of their Organization/Club. Representatives include, but are not limited to, coaches, staff, administrators, officials, club directors and officers, committee members, and volunteers.
- *“Open and observable environments”* - means **making meaningful and concerted efforts to avoid situations where a coach, official or other representative might be alone with an athlete and/or vulnerable individual. All interactions between an athlete and an individual who is in a position of trust should normally, wherever possible, be in an environment or space that is both “open” and “observable” to others.**

#### What is an ‘open’ environment?

- An open environment is an environment that is not closed or concealed from others.
- Interactions should not take place behind closed doors or in secluded locations.
- Others should be aware of the interaction that is taking place.



### What is an 'observable' environment?

- An observable environment is a space where others can see or take note of the interaction.

### Before interacting with an athlete, ask yourself:

- Is this an open interaction?
  - Are we in a closed or secluded place?
  - Who knows this meeting/interaction is taking place?
  - Does the athlete (or individual in a position of lesser power) have an easy and accessible exit path?
- Is this interaction observable?
  - Is anyone else with us?
  - Can anyone see us?
  - Can anyone hear us?

**Note: To ensure the open and observable environment, special considerations must be applied for shadowing practices.**

### Shadowing Minors - Best practices:

- A shadower is a mentor who accompanies a young or novice participant on a course or training activity. Shadowing can provide a safe environment and prevent a negative experience of getting disoriented or lost. It can help educate a beginner and provide a basis for conversation later on.

### Recommendations:

- If possible, a parent/guardian should be assigned to shadow their own children.
- **If a coach or program volunteer shadows minors**, they should perform the activity at a minimum ratio of two minors to one adult, or in small groups. If an adult shadower is following a single athlete, they must have a current PIC (Police Information Check) on file and the parent/guardian of the minor must be aware of the activity and give permission to do it.
- Shadowing happens in an **open environment** and the participant must give verbal consent before each activity to more than one witness (e.g. Group, coaches, parents) and must be fully comfortable to be shadowed.
- Verbal consent can be obtained before each practice e.g. with a team recap, stating that there will be shadowing activity and asking permission from parent(s) and participant(s).



#### **Consideration for shadowing at events:**

- If shadowing happens at a competition it must be approved by the event director.
- Shadowing at a competition is usually allowed for small children, total beginners and special needs participants. The event sanctioning body must outline the rules regarding results.

#### **For the shadower:**

- Stay several paces behind the competitor.
- Do not communicate with the competitor about his or her course, except as a matter of safety.
- If the competitor makes a major mistake, we suggest two levels of assistance:
  - Ask the competitor "Where do you think we are on the map?", or
  - "Would you like to know which way I would go?"
- If the competitor is new to the sport, the entire course may consist of a conversation with the shadower regarding techniques.

#### **References:**

<https://www.swimming.ca/en/safe-sport/prevention/responsible-coaches-movement/open-observable-environments/>

<http://baoc.org/wiki/Juniors/Cool/Shadowing>