



## Feminist Women's Health Center

*Leading. Educating. Advocating.*

### **Sensitive Care for Survivors of Physical Violence or Trauma**

For nearly thirty years, the Feminist Women's Health Center has provided affordable and supportive comprehensive gynecological care in a safe and supportive environment. As part of efforts to address the specific physical and emotional needs of women, we are proud to offer specialized care for sexual assault or abuse survivors who have difficulty undergoing a GYN exam or abortion.

For survivors of sexual violence or physical trauma, receiving a pelvic exam or having an abortion may 're-traumatize' her. The primary objective in facilitating survivor sensitive care is to validate the woman's experience(s) by giving her as much control as possible over her appointment process and exam.

#### ***The Counseling Session:***

Before she even enters an exam room, the woman speaks with one of our counselors. The counseling session has no time limit, and any questions the client has may be asked and answered. The counselor's primary task is to assess how the woman is feeling about the exam or procedure that day. A client is asked to consider whether she would prefer to become oriented to the Center, the staff, and complete the counseling segment on one day, and then reschedule for the procedure or exam on another day.

*During a GYN exam:*

For some survivors, the experience of sexual violence can drastically impact their feelings about receiving GYN care.

- The nurse talks with the woman about what happens before the exam begins.
- A friend or counselor can be present with the client in the exam room.
- The woman controls the pace of the appointment and the exam, and can stop the exam at any time.
- The sheet or drape covering the woman's body does not block the nurse's head.
- The woman may ask for a hand-held mirror to view her own exam.

*During abortion services:*

- A friend or counselor can be present with the client in the room.
- There is no time limit on pre-abortion counseling for the woman.
- We can work with the woman and law enforcement to arrange for DNA analysis, if appropriate.

Every woman is offered and provided additional counseling referrals as part of her care. Any other suggestions or ideas that a client provides as potentially helpful for her are considered on a case by case basis.

For more information about our supportive and affordable healthcare, please visit us at [www.feministcenter.org](http://www.feministcenter.org), or contact us at:

**Feminist Women's Health Center**

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