


## Ritual

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Volume 11, Number 2, 2024

Vulnerability in Medicine

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1112326ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26443/ijwpc.v11i2.444>

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Publisher(s)

McGill University Library

ISSN

2291-918X (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this document

St-Cyr, C. (2024). Ritual. *The International Journal of Whole Person Care*, 11(2), 30–31. <https://doi.org/10.26443/ijwpc.v11i2.444>

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## RITUAL

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**KEYWORDS:** Trauma-informed care

First we prepare the terrain.  
Do you find speculum exams difficult?  
We can premedicate. Sometimes that helps.  
You have the power here. Say pause, or stop  
I will immediately obey. Immediately.  
I will say what I'm doing before I do it.  
I will sit you up so you can be above me, looking down  
I will check in with you verbally, and visually.  
Hand you the speculum to demystify.  
Here, move it around. Quack, quack.  
Every word carefully chosen.  
Let your knees fall to the side.  
(Never anything you've heard in trauma.  
Never say open your legs, I tell the residents)  
And if you tell me to stop, it's not a failure.  
It's a victory. You said no  
And it was respected.  
It's a triumph. Be proud. ■

## **Biographical note**

Before medicine, the author was a counsellor and intervention worker. She retains a keen interest in the social sciences and is forever curious about the human condition.