

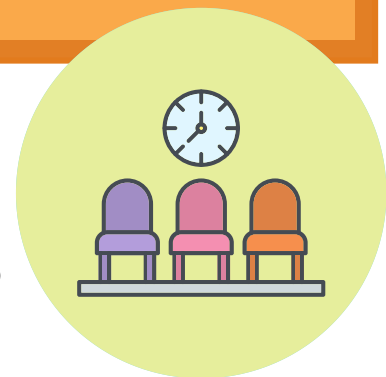
Supporting Incarcerated Survivors:

Sexual Assault Medical Forensic Exam Accompaniment

All survivors, including survivors who are incarcerated, have the right to a forensic medical exam following a sexual assault. Forensic exams should be performed within 120 hours of an assault – though the time frame varies across jurisdictions. Advocates have a key role to play in ensuring that forensic exams are survivor-centered and trauma-informed.

Before the Exam:

- Become familiar with protocols that have been set up between your agency, the facility, and the hospital
- Introduce yourself to the survivor, the nurse, and the transport officers
- Explain to the survivor what your agency does and any limits to confidentiality
- Ask the survivor what name they would like you to use for them and what pronouns they use
- Let the survivor know that the exam is completely voluntary and free of charge; no one can require them to undergo any part of the exam



During the Exam:



- Assure the survivor that you believe them, that they are not alone, and that what happened to them is not their fault
- Check in about the survivor's physical comfort; provide things like blankets or food if possible
- If appropriate, make small talk to help the survivor relax or take their mind off the exam
- While a survivor may volunteer this information, do not ask why they are incarcerated

After the Exam:



- Incarcerated survivors almost always are sent back to the facility where the assault occurred – a practice that puts them at risk of re-victimization and retaliation
- Talk with the survivor privately, if possible, and make a safety plan with them about returning to the facility
- Let the survivor know how they can continue to receive support though your agency's hotline and via written correspondence
 - Complete a Release of Information (ROI) form with the survivor so your agency can write to the survivor, set up in-person services, or advocate on their behalf
- Provide approved support materials specific to incarcerated survivors that they can take back to the facility