



## **Our Political Agreements**

### **Women's Knowledge**

- We value shared information and experience over authoritative knowledge, especially when it comes to our own bodies. We support a woman's right to make informed choices about her health and health care. Women who were born women and live their lives as women inform the work we do including workshop development, library and resource acquisition, speech and campaign work, information dissemination, and organizing. We support women's sexual autonomy. We are pro-choice.

### **Our Health Model**

- We promote a holistic model and preventative health care. We fight for publicly funded, universal health care. We challenge the health care system to meet the needs of women.

### **Our Anti-Violence Agenda**

- We expose and work to change the ways that the health care system perpetuates violence against women. We offer information and other resources to women who are experiencing violence in their lives.

### **Our Alliances**

- We embrace a local and global perspective on women's health and health care. We forge alliances with women, women's organizations, and health groups to build an equitable society.

### **Our Political Culture**

- We offer women a woman-only space and women-centred services and a gendered perspective on health and health care. We are feminists who work collectively, value consensus decision-making and support women activists strategizing for change.
- We have, among other things, encouraged women to educate themselves about their menstrual and fertility cycles, carry out breast self-examinations, have natural child births, terminate unwanted pregnancies, fit themselves with diaphragms, use cloth menstrual pads, explore their cervixes, explore alternatives to hormone replacement therapy, accept their bodies as they are, and love themselves for who they are. Our work focuses on women's life experience and women's bodies.
- We are a feminist organization focused on women and women's health. For over 30 years, we have advocated that women must control their own bodies and make decisions about their own health care. Therefore, we feel that it is essential that a woman be born a woman and have the physiology of a

woman and the psychological experiences of living as a girl and a woman in order to embrace the work of the Vancouver Women's Health Collective. For us, membership and services are open to women who were born women.

### **Feminism**

- We hold that the theory of feminism and the practice it is based on has been continually framed over time by women's honesty about their life experiences. Feminism is a form of activism used to resist sexism with the purpose to attain freedom for women from patriarchy. Classism and racism are separate hierarchies that are entrenched within patriarchy. Since these systems work for each other, feminists need to dismantle them, the ultimate end being freedom for all. In addition to resistance to formal power structures, feminism provides a value system that women use to make choices in their lives.
- We recognize that by virtue of our sex, women are born into a gender hierarchy. Using this analysis, we have organized based on our shared physiology, our social shaping and our common experiences growing up as women born women who have lived their lives as women. We believe that organizing with women who share these common life experiences is our most valuable tool.

### **Vancouver Women's Health Collective**

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