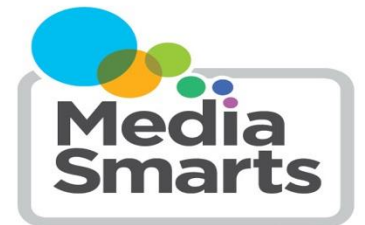


# Best Practices in Digital Empowerment and Literacy Skills for Survivors





*presents:*

# Innovations in Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Trauma- and Violence-Informed Health Promotion

*A NATIONAL CONFERENCE*

Oct 1–2, 2025



# INTRODUCTIONS

# Overview and Objectives

- Understand the process of designing, implementing, and evaluating a digital media literacy program following a trauma- and violence-informed approach
- Learn about key digital media literacy needs and challenges surfaced by survivors and facilitators in the *Resilience through DigitalSmarts* program, and the considerations involved in responding to those needs
- Consider ways to incorporate lessons learned and best practices emerging from this intervention research project



# About MediaSmarts

- Canada's not-for-profit centre for digital media literacy
- Our vision is that everyone is empowered to engage with all forms of media confidently and critically
- We achieve this through:
  - Research and policy
  - Education
  - Public awareness and engagement

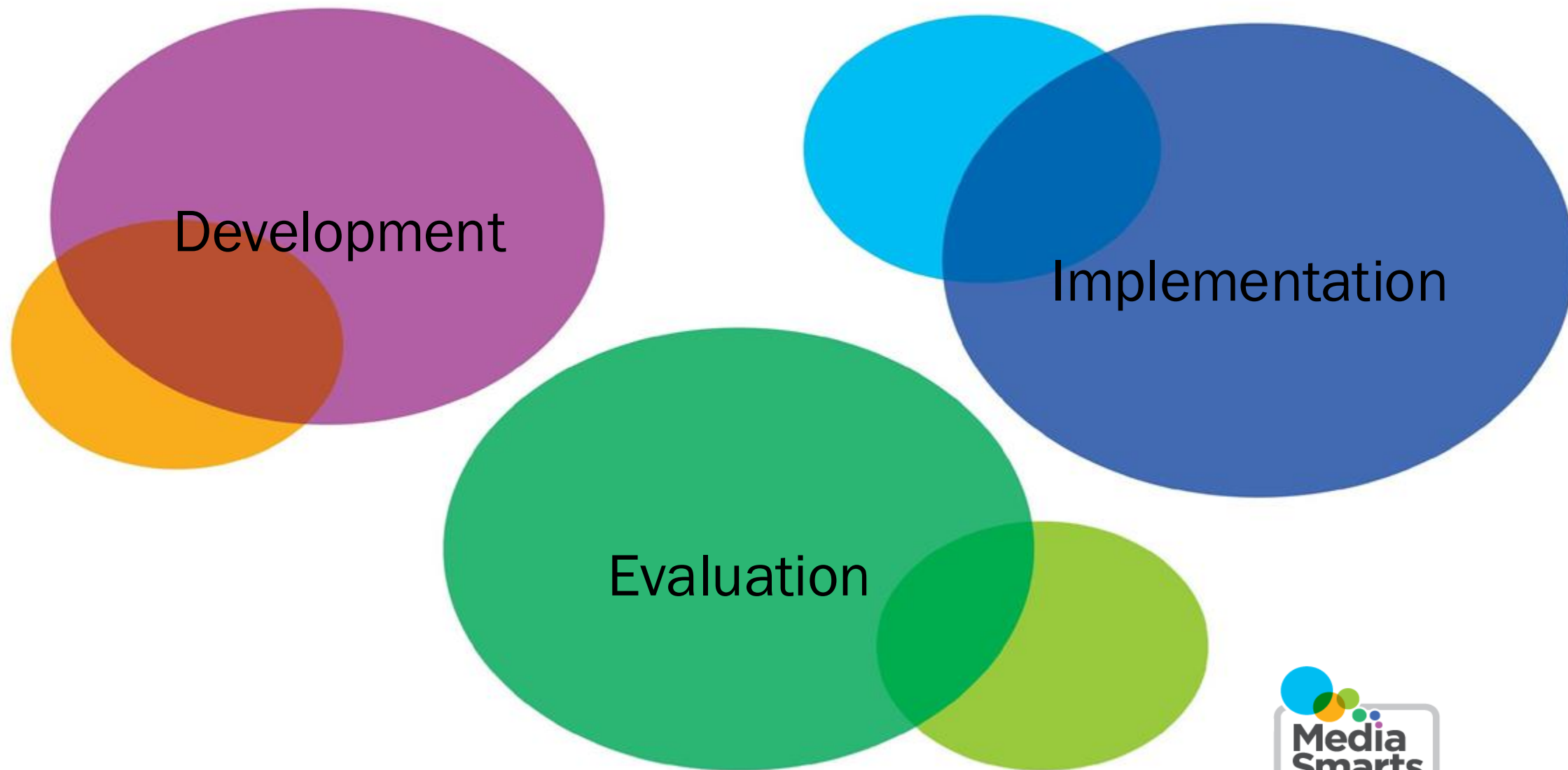


# Moving On: Digital Empowerment and Literacy Skills for Survivors (MODELSS)

- Four-year intervention research project
- Goal: to adapt, deliver, and evaluate digital media literacy resources for survivors of technology-facilitated violence and abuse (TFVA) and practitioners in the violence against women (VAW) sector

# Moving On: Digital Empowerment and Literacy Skills for Survivors (MODELSS)

- Trauma and Violence-Informed Approach
- Address Complex Online Harms Through Digital Media Literacy Education
- Collaborative and Sustainable Interventions at Individual, Community, and Systems Levels





# DEVELOPMENT

Digital  
Smarts

# Research-to-Resource Model

- Combines research and educational development expertise
  - **Research:** Identify needs, issues, challenges, contexts and best practices
  - **Education:** Resources and interventions address issues and draw on best practices
  - **Evaluation:** Test and evaluate resources with partners and incorporate findings into the resource

# DigitalSmarts in a New Context

- **Foundation:** The DigitalSmarts program, a series of eight hour-long workshops designed to teach important everyday digital skills
- **Adaptation:** Adapting DigitalSmarts program to reach a **new population** (*survivors of TFVA*) in a **new setting** (*emergency shelters and transitional homes*) and **context** (*preventing TFVA*)

# Collaborative Development

Understanding audience's needs

- Literature review
- Needs assessment

Meaningful collaboration with audience and experts

- Advisory committee, including researchers, practitioners, frontline VAW workers
- Translators, literacy and accessibility consultants
- Indigenous facilitation and evaluation experts
- Research ethics

# Needs Surfaced

- **Short-term, digital triage needs**
  - How survivors can protect themselves in crisis, and how practitioners can support them

*“But when it comes to checking their emails, when it comes to checking their locations, a lot of [survivors] don’t even know that option even exists.”* - Practitioner

- **Unexpected immediate needs**
  - Protection from scams

*“[What] I fear mostly is them taking my information, your stolen identity. And I’m also very afraid of scams.”* - Survivor

# Needs Surfaced

- **Long-term digital resilience needs**
  - Varying digital literacy levels and needs
  - Hopelessness, anxiety, confusion around how to protect themselves online
  - Inadequacy of legal responses
  - Language barriers

*“I have grandchildren. I would like to be able to go online and play games with them...”*

- Survivor

*“These are things I am not familiar [with], and I, myself, am not really a tech-savvy person... Even when I did all these things, I still feel like it’s not safe. I don’t know.”* - Practitioner



# Resilience through DigitalSmarts



# Digital Triage Handouts

Printable documents that include important online safety, security, and well-being information to assist survivors in crisis and their families.

## Securing Your Devices

This resource provides some practical first steps for securing devices against common forms of device tracking and covers actions such as turning off Bluetooth, WiFi and location sharing; renaming your device; checking for spyware and app permissions; and doing a factory reset.



Digital Smarts

## حافظ على أمان أجهزتك

يقدم هذا المصدر بعض الخطوات العملية الأولى التي تساعدك على تأمين أجهزتك ضد الاتصال الشبكي لتتبع الأجهزة، كما يحتوي على إجراءات مثل إيقاف تشغيل تقنيات Bluetooth و WiFi، وإيقاف تشغيل مشاركة الموقع، وإعادة تسمية جهازك، والتحقق من وجود برامج تجسس، والتحقق من أدوات التطبيقات، وإجراء إعادة ضبط المصنع.



Digital Smarts

## Protéger vos appareils

Cette ressource propose des mesures pratiques pour protéger les appareils contre les formes courantes de localisation et couvre notamment la désactivation de Bluetooth, le partage de la connexion Wi-Fi et de la localisation, le changement du nom de l'appareil, la vérification des logiciels espions et des autorisations des applications, et la réinitialisation.



Techno habile

## ایمن سازی دستگاه های خود

این منبع برخی از گام های عملی اولیه را برای ایمن سازی دستگاه ها در برابر انواع رایج رهایی دستگاه، ارائه می دهد و اقداماتی مانند خاموش کردن Bluetooth و WiFi و اشتراک گذاری، موقعیت مکانی، تغییر نام دستگاه ها، بررسی وجود جاسوس افزار و مجوز های برنامه ها و انجام بازنشانی به تنظیمات کارخانه را پوشش می دهد.



Digital Smarts



# Digital Resilience Workshops

Series of six workshops designed to educate and empower survivors to confidently participate in online communities (for example, through safe and secure job searching, social media use and online banking and shopping).



# IMPLEMENTATION

# Implementing Resilience through DigitalSmarts

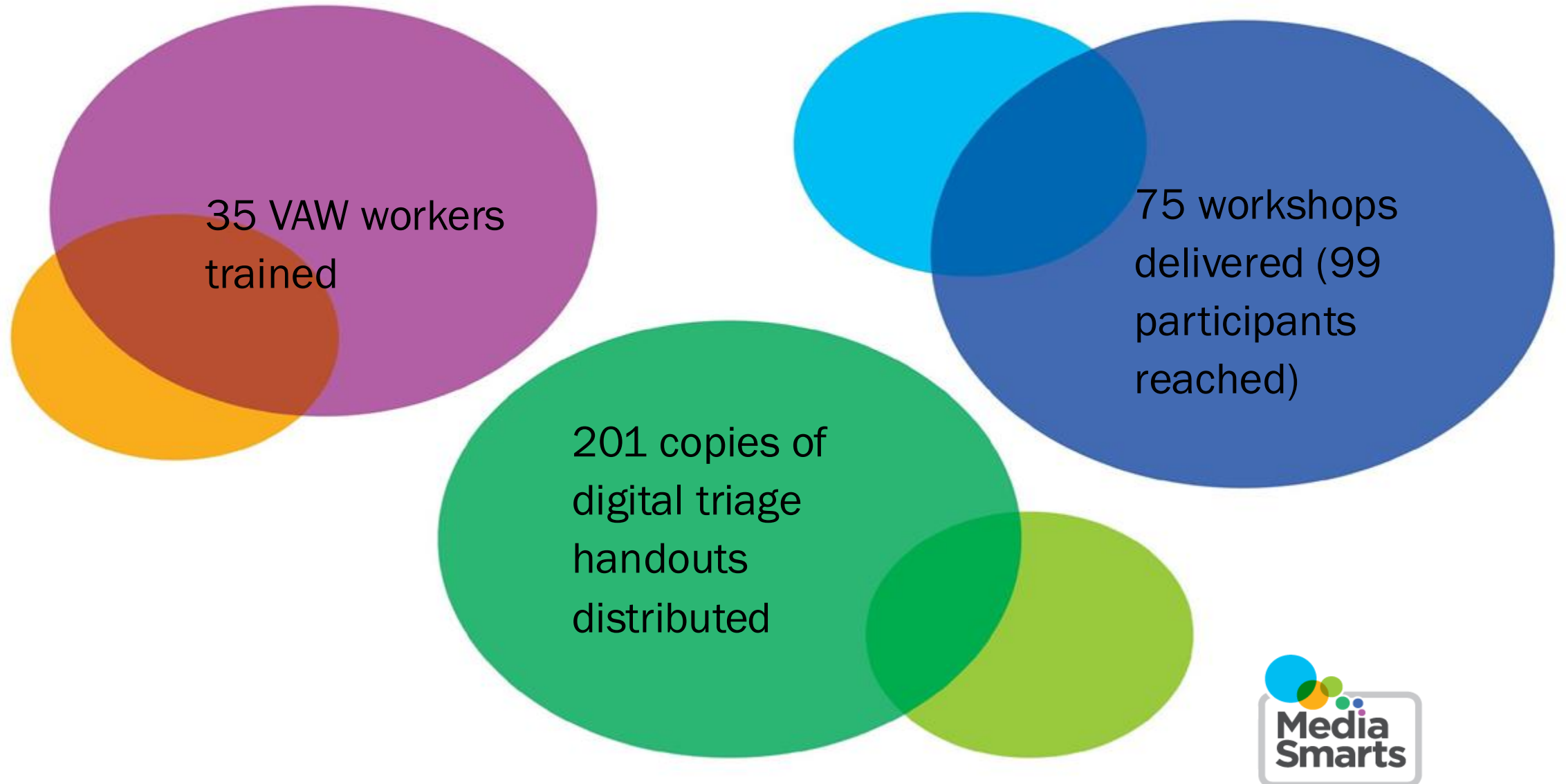
## RESOURCES

- Facilitator Guide: *Delivering the Resilience through DigitalSmarts Workshops: A Guide for Facilitators*
- Facilitator Handbook: *Trauma- and Violence-Informed Digital Media Literacy Education: A Handbook for Facilitators*
- Train the Trainer Workshop

## COMMUNICATION

- Regular meetings with service delivery partners
- Regular advisory committee meetings, including researchers, practitioners, frontline VAW workers

# Year One: Resilience through DigitalSmarts



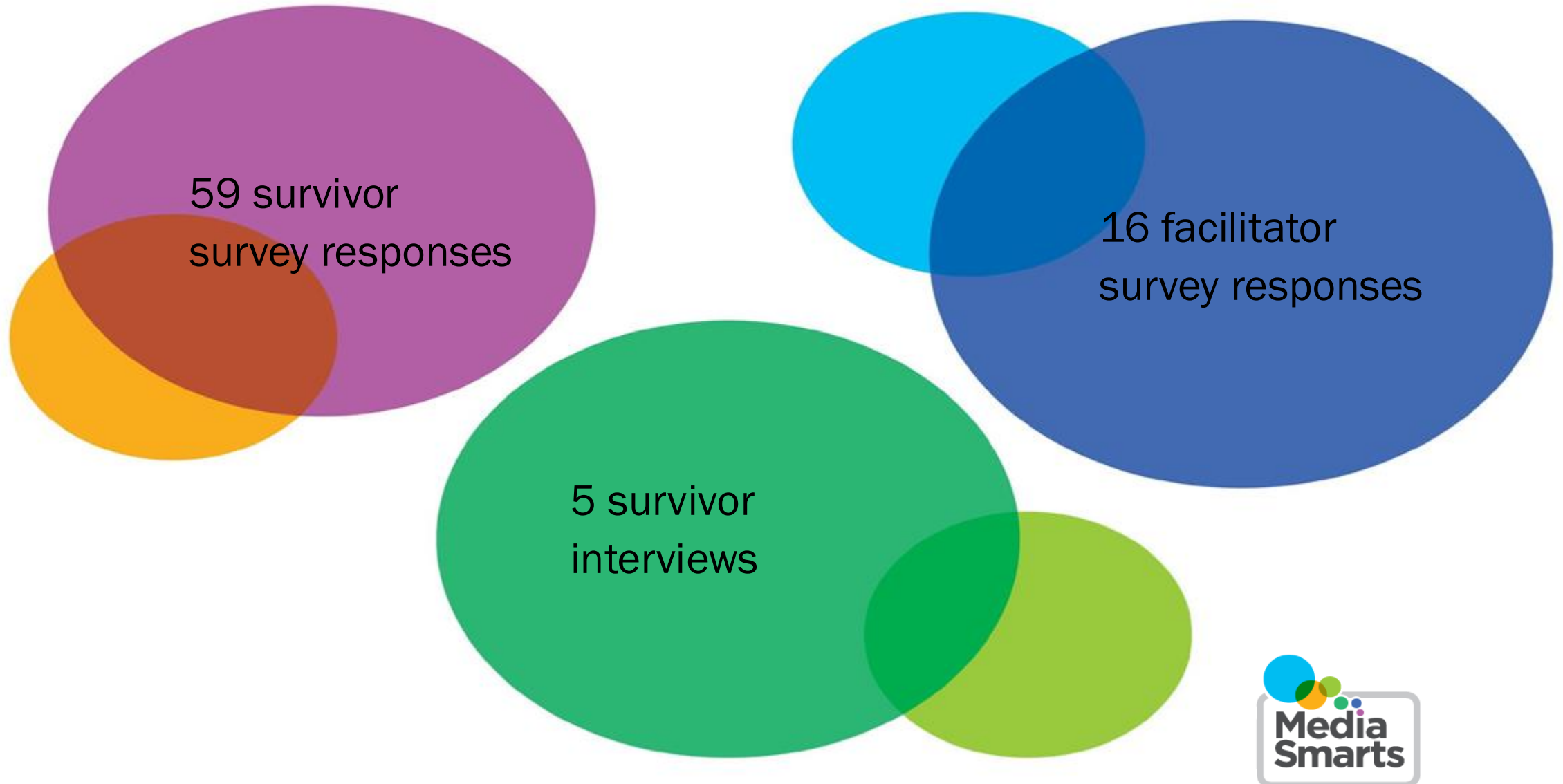
# EVALUATION

# Designing Evaluation

- Online surveys and interviews
  - Pre- and post-workshop survivor surveys
  - Voluntary follow-up survivor interviews
  - Post-workshop facilitator surveys
- Iterative design
  - Revisions based on regular feedback
- Anonymity
  - Maintain sense of safety
- Accessibility and translation
  - Different language needs



# Evaluation Responses



# Evaluation

- Over **95%** of participants reported positive changes to their knowledge, skills, and confidence
- Over **80%** of facilitators also reported observed positive changes to survivors' knowledge, skills and confidence
- Over **80%** of facilitators reported satisfaction with the program resources and supports



# Survivor Feedback

*“...there’s a few things that I’ve kind of worked on and gone into one of my settings and tried this. Like, I’m a little apprehensive at times, but at least I feel a little bit more confident with certain – with certain things anyways, so that helps.”*

- Survivor Interview

*“I really appreciate that information about how to create a strong password. The second thing is I know how to navigate online when I search for information that I need. I have to be very careful in terms of knowing what I click because there are many links.”*

-Survivor Interview

# Facilitator Feedback

*"There was a lot of engagement. At the end of the session, I noticed that there was more confidence in the room to create a video. Another point that was interesting was the need to post safely. Which was discussed during the session. All the ladies stayed until the end of session. Another point to add is that the resource page was very useful."*

- Facilitator Survey Response

*"for the participants who are not comfortable on computers, there's too much content to become familiar with. there were also a lot of participants who opted out of the survey because they didn't feel comfortable giving even their demographic information to the random survey."*

- Facilitator Survey Response

# Responding to Evaluation Feedback

- Added more languages for digital triage handouts
- Shortened program elements
  - Shorter consent form
  - Allowed for workshops to be split into more digestible sections
- Removed survey identifier questions
  - Felt invasive to survivors

# Lessons Learned and Best Practices

1. Understand and respond to needs
  - Conduct needs assessments
2. Collaborative and sustainable approaches
3. Keep things accessible
  - Different digital media literacy levels
  - Different language needs



Respond to Needs

The diagram consists of several overlapping circles of different colors and sizes. In the top right, a large yellow circle contains a smaller orange circle labeled 'Respond to Needs'. In the bottom right, a large purple circle overlaps with a medium blue circle labeled 'Collaboration'. In the bottom left, a small grey circle contains a smaller pink circle labeled 'Accessible Language'. A medium purple circle labeled 'Sustainable Approaches' is positioned between the 'Accessible Language' and 'Collaboration' circles. The 'Media Smarts' logo is in the bottom left corner.

Collaboration

Sustainable Approaches

Accessible Language



**QUESTIONS?**

# Next Steps

- Continued program implementation
- Program promotion and sustainability

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[mediasmarts.ca](http://mediasmarts.ca) / [habilomedias.ca](http://habilomedias.ca)



Sign up to attend our  
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Thank you for  
attending!

