

# Personal safety mobile phone applications: Just another way of responsabilising survivors of IPV, or a tool for empowerment?

A SURVIVOR'S VIEW!

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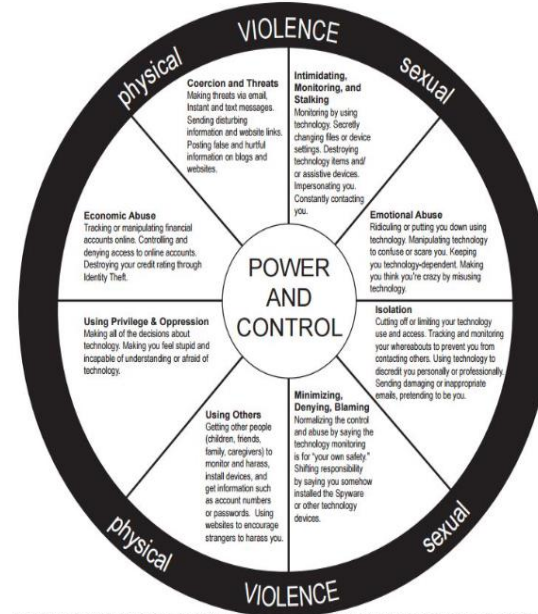
# Mobile Phone Applications: Security & Personal Safety

Given societies reliance on mobile technologies, specifically 'applications', the potential of digital communications as a tool to assist in the reduction/prevention of experiences of DVA, appears a logical step forward/development & worthy of academic examination

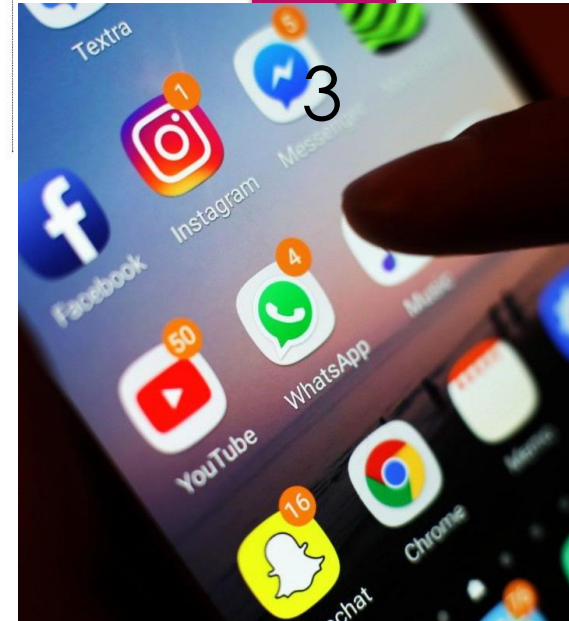
# Technology & DVA

- ▶ Research focus is on 'tech' abuse to control partner
- ▶ Research reports state tech can also be used e.g. as a prevention tool
- ▶ Little on tech (specifically mobile PSA's) & victim empowerment
- Some have asked practitioners views

NB: All DVA involves Coercive Control  
Today we consider intimate relationships



© 2006, 2008 NNEED Safety Net Project [medv.org/safetynet](http://medv.org/safetynet). Based on Duluth's Domestic Abuse Intervention Project model.



What about survivors views?

**Something's Missing!**

# The CJS & The Problem with Risk

- Short termism approach: value for money = cheapest
- Historic funding shortfalls & place of specialist services in the 'system' not clear or protected only 1: 3 Local Authorities in E&W have a 'specialist service'
- CJS at centre of 'Multi-agency responses' - not at the centre of survivors lives' - adopting a positivistic risk management 'measurement' model based on incidents (physical) which views victims as 'them' & different to 'us' thus 'othering' them
- Need to be 'high risk' before receiving an 'intervention' [Risk Thresholds also change!]
- Lack of formal evidence base = 'policy based evidence' not 'evidence based policy'
- Recovery has become secondary (CJS not trauma informed); managing risk & supporting victims seen as the same; victims experience 'job done delusion' & labelled 'intractable cases' 'hard to reach' despite being 'everyone's business' i.e. 'all' agencies, commissioners, providers, victims, activists, public – **We should ask then whose side are we on?** (Becker 1967)



## Examples



International tech - beyond Anglophone

5



TecSOS: European: Utilised in London by Police for 'high risk' – (audible) data goes directly to Police Control Room **NB PHONE**



Brightsky App: Combined functions



Personal Safety Smartphone Apps: Abundance!



Alarm & Alerts - Discreet options



Sends whereabouts info/alerts 'emergency contacts'



Secure server records video & sound or to a personal contact on phone (sentinel) - Some apps start as free then are at £ cost



Mapping locations

# Responsibilisation

- ▶ Garland (2001): the victim (along with other bodies of services) becomes part of 'controlling' or 'managing' the crime'
- ▶ Citizens 'asked' to utilise incentives of their own protection
  - Adjust routines & adopt decision making processes
  - Become
- ▶ Using te
- NB **Stran**



security tools?

# Problems ???

Does becoming risk aware increase fear?

- Might it create a backlash?

Victim blaming - Increased responsabilising

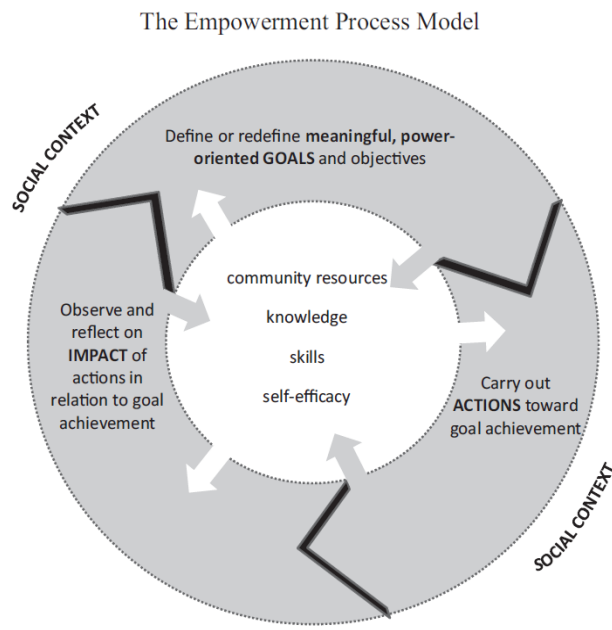
- It was something the victim did/did not do

Victims find themselves increasingly burdened in the pursuit of justice (Davies 2015)

# Empowerment: Process not Outcome

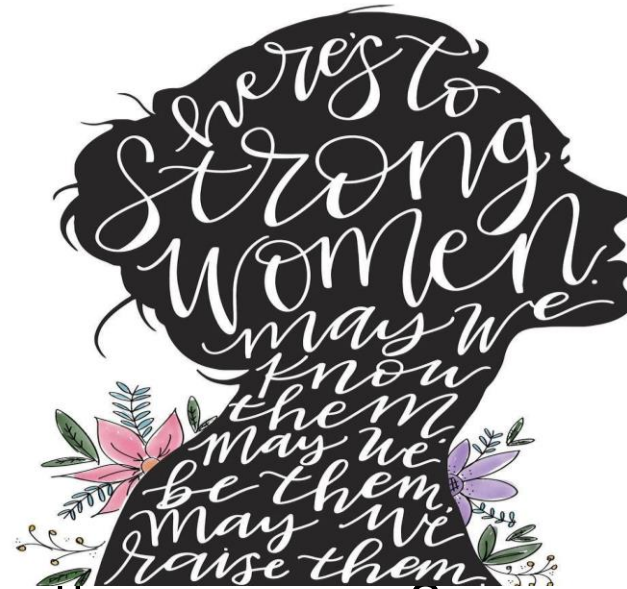
*“a process by which people, orgs & communities gain mastery over their affairs”*

- Problem as an context in which that success
- Process context
- We must empower



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# Research Project & Objectives

## Explore

Explore feelings (of safety, safety reassurance) & actual safety (reduction in repeats/increase in deterrence) perceptions of uptake (or not) & use of application

## Identify

Identify 'perceived' strengths & weaknesses of this crime reduction (empowerment) tool by users e.g. increased use of features? accessibility, recorded use etc

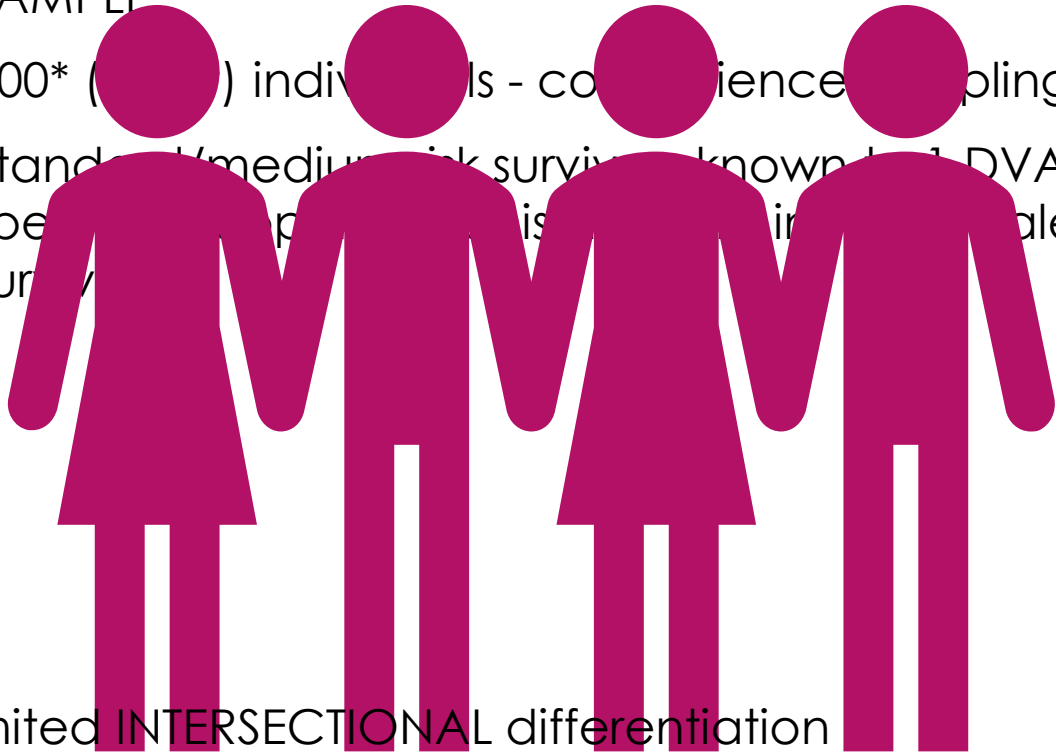
## Compare & contrast

Compare & contrast findings across demographic differentiations (e.g. gender)

# Methodology

## ➤ SAMPLE

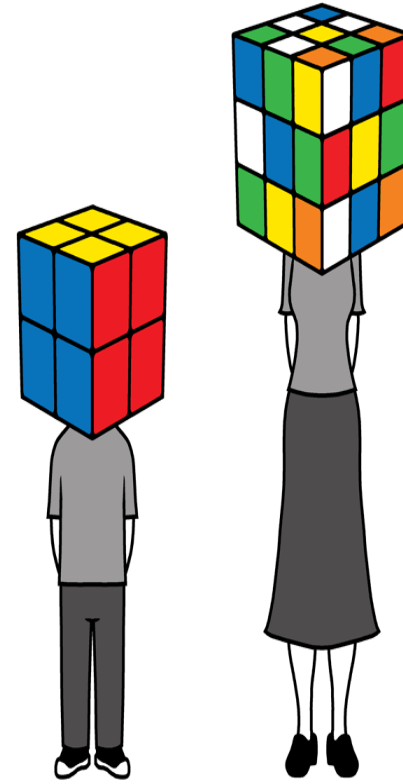
- 100\* ( ) individuals - convenience sampling
- Standard (medium) risk survivors known to DVA specialist providers in specialist services



Limited INTERSECTIONAL differentiation challenge = enabled extension of sample to further specialist providers

## ➤ METHODS

- COMPLETE DVA victim
- COMPLETE
- CURRENT & individual INTERVIEWS



use with non

professionals

QUESTIONNAIRES /skype



# Some Themes from Preliminary Findings

## 1 of 2

- Problems with Technology?
- Problems With People?
- Space, Place & Context?
  
- Pilot
  - Gender data gap = a barrier
  - Preferred use of 'other' tools for personal safety
  - PSA's seen as relevant (via marketing utilised) to some groups only

# Some Themes from Preliminary Findings

## 2 of 2

### ➤ Interviews

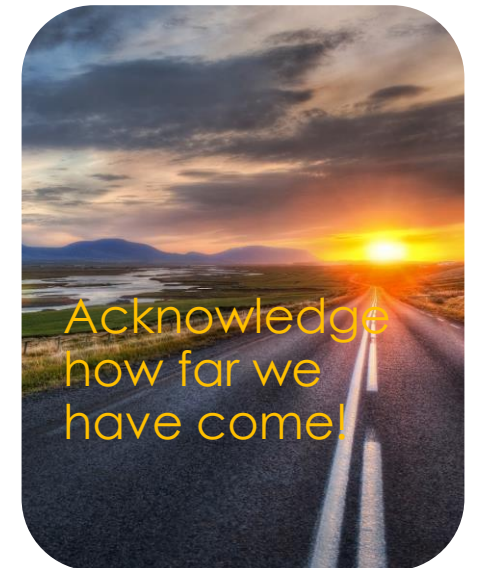
- Political drivers at play e.g. policy-based evidence
- Lack of K&U of CC by some e.g. non stealth risk issue undermined
- Lack of technical literacy unrecognised by some – assumptions made
- Victim Blaming narratives: *'victims taking responsibility for their actions'*
- Class, Rurality, BAME, Gender issues:

# Moving Forward?

- ▶ Does PSA work as intended? What's unintended? Do users feel empowered? Responsibilised?
  - Address design issues, barriers for engagement - intersectionality; beware Policy based evidence
- ▶ Develop K & U & acknowledge all DVA includes Coercive Control
- ▶ Accept you cant innovate away a complex issue like DVA & that change requires a 'Whole systems approach' beyond Risk!



It's a  
complex  
issue



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