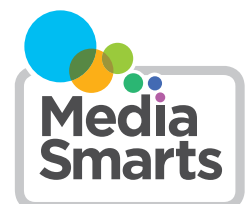


Trauma- and Violence- Informed Digital Media Literacy Education

A HANDBOOK FOR FACILITATORS

Funded by the Government of Canada
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Canada



MediaSmarts

MediaSmarts is a Canadian not-for-profit charitable organization for digital media literacy. Our vision is that everyone is empowered to engage with all forms of media confidently and critically. To achieve this goal, we conduct and disseminate original research that contributes to the development of our resources as well as informs public policy on issues related to digital media; develop internationally recognized educational programs for teachers, parents, general audiences, and others; and conduct awareness-raising activities to further digital media literacy in Canada. MediaSmarts has been developing digital media literacy programs and resources since 1996. Through our work, we help people develop the critical thinking and digital media literacy skills they need to benefit from the digital economy and society, and derive new opportunities for employment, citizenship, innovation, creative expression, and social inclusion.

Website

mediasmarts.ca

Handbook Key Contact

Dr. Kara Brisson-Boivin, Director of Research

kbrisson-boivin@mediasmarts.ca

MediaSmarts Research Team

Dr. Kara Brisson-Boivin, Director of Research

Khadija Baig, Research and Evaluation Associate

Vanessa Turyatunga, Research and Evaluation Associate

Handbook Credits

Vanessa Turyatunga, Research and Evaluation Associate

Dr. Kara Brisson-Boivin, Director of Research

MODELSS Project Advisory Committee

Amy FitzGerald, Executive Director, BC Society of Transition Houses

Danya O'Malley, Executive Director, P.E.I Family Violence and Prevention Services

Deborah Schwientek, Manager, Employment and Training Services, YWCA Hamilton

Dr. Jane Bailey, Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa

Inara Dodhiya, Manager Transition Houses, YWCA Metro Vancouver

Jeanine George, Executive Director, Aboriginal Shelters of Ontario

Dr. Jordan Fairbarin, Associate Professor, Sociology, King's University College at Western

Dr. Kaitlynn Mendes, Assistant Professor, Sociology, Western University

Kira Gee, Sexual Violence Educator, Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse

Lauren Hutchison, Supervisor Women's Economic Prosperity, YWCA Calgary

Nawal Vajeed, Grants and Government Relations Lead, Nisa Homes

Raine Liliefeldt, Director of Member Services and Development, YWCA Canada

Rhiannon Wong, Technology Safety Canada
Project Manager, Women’s Shelters Canada

Róisín Cahill, Tech Without Violence Project
Coordinator, BC Society of Transition Houses

Ronit Kasimov, Manager, Shelter Client Services,
Yorktown Family Services

Shiba Anjum, Director of Programs, Nisa Homes

Sly Castaldi, Executive Director, Guelph-
Wellington Women in Crisis

Syma Nehal, National Operations Manager, Nisa
Homes Vancouver

Dr. Suzie Dunn, Assistant Professor, Schulich
School of Law, Dalhousie University

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this handbook.

Land Acknowledgement

MediaSmarts acknowledges that it is based on
the traditional unceded and occupied lands of
the Algonquin Anishinaabeg. With gratitude,
we acknowledge the territory to reaffirm our
commitment and responsibility to building positive
relationships with Inuit, First Nations, and Métis
peoples from coast to coast to coast.
We strive to ground our work in care and
reciprocity, and this includes being in a
constant state of learning – especially when it
comes to understanding the digital well-being
and experiences of Indigenous peoples and
communities across Canada. We commit to
creating and maintaining respectful processes and
relationships that recognize and seek to address
power imbalances across the digital media literacy
landscape.

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Message from MediaSmarts

For over twenty-five years, MediaSmarts has developed resources that aim to meet wide-ranging digital media literacy needs across Canada, alongside a network of partners in education, research and academic institutions, civil society organizations, government and industry. We are grateful for the continued opportunity provided through this project, supported by the Public Health Agency of Canada, to move forward on meeting the digital media literacy needs of survivors of technology-facilitated violence and abuse and the practitioners in the violence against women (VAW) sector who support them.

This resource was developed through the work MediaSmarts has done (and continues to do) to implement a trauma- and violence-informed approach in our *Resilience through DigitalSmarts* program. Through extensive research and consultations with survivors of technology-facilitated violence, VAW practitioners, researchers, facilitators and other experts, MediaSmarts has developed this facilitation handbook to summarise key background information, principles, and promising practices related to implementing a trauma-informed approach in digital media literacy education.

We have two goals for this resource: First and foremost, it is intended to guide the practitioners who will be facilitating the *Resilience through DigitalSmarts* workshops. Second, we hope this handbook will be a useful guide for projects, organizations, and individuals who want to

introduce a trauma-informed approach in media literacy education. Centring this trauma-informed lens was a new endeavour for our organisation and we want to share what we have learned with those who find themselves in a similar place.

Given the multiple audiences we hope to reach, we have kept the contents of this handbook high-level and generally applicable to facilitation in different contexts. The specifics of how we applied the contents of this handbook in the *Resilience through DigitalSmarts* program are covered in our training workshop for facilitators, workshop slides and scripts, internal meeting discussions, expert consultations, and many other practices and processes we have undertaken in the development of this program.

As we discuss later in this handbook, implementing a trauma-informed approach is a continuous process, not an outcome. As we continue to learn, we wholeheartedly welcome your comments, feedback, or promising practices. If you are interested in connecting with us about this project or have suggestions and thoughts to share, please send an email to info@mediasmarts.ca. We look forward to continuing these conversations and efforts towards developing and implementing a trauma- and violence-informed approach in digital media literacy education.

About This Handbook

This handbook is developed as part of *Moving On: Digital Empowerment and Literacy Skills for Survivors* (MODELSS), an intervention research project designed and developed by MediaSmarts - Canada's non-profit centre for digital media literacy. The MODELSS project aims to adapt, deliver, and evaluate digital media literacy resources for practitioners in the violence against women (VAW) sector and survivors of family violence - specifically those who have experienced or are experiencing technology-facilitated violence and abuse.

Responses to technology-facilitated violence must be sensitive to the trauma that survivors have experienced to avoid re-traumatization and further harm. Therefore, MODELSS is designed with a trauma- and violence-informed lens and implements this approach in all program resources and our evaluation of them. This handbook is a guide to trauma- and violence-informed digital media literacy for facilitators who will deliver the *Resilience through DigitalSmarts* workshops, developed as part of the MODELSS project, 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).

This handbook provides background information on digital media literacy and technology-facilitated violence, as well as promising trauma-informed practices for facilitators of the *Resilience through DigitalSmarts* workshops.

The handbook covers the following topics:

- What is digital media literacy?
- What is technology-facilitated violence and abuse?
- What is a trauma- and violence-informed approach?
- Promising practices for trauma- and violence-informed facilitation
- Navigating between in-person and remote facilitation
- Resources for facilitators, practitioners and survivors

The handbook ends with a **tip sheet** that facilitators can refer to prior to and/or during facilitation.

We recommend reading through all the information in this handbook, as it is crucial to framing the more practical tips we highlight. However, those looking for immediate practical tools in trauma-informed facilitation will easily find them using the colour-coded sections:



Tips for preparation **before** facilitation are highlighted in peach



Tips to consider **during** workshop sessions are highlighted in blue



Tips for what to do **after** workshops are highlighted in purple

Background Information

Digital Media Literacy

The internet and the digital devices we use have become an indispensable part of our lives. To survive and thrive in this digital age, we all need to know how to access digital media and how to use, understand, and engage with it to our full potential: this is what defines digital media literacy.

[Research in the field](#) considers digital media literacy a social justice issue through which economic, social, cultural, and civic gaps are reduced and opportunities are strengthened - particularly for women and girls. The MODELSS project adopts this understanding of digital media literacy and aims to meet the wide-ranging digital literacy needs of technology-facilitated violence survivors and the practitioners who support them.

Resilience through DigitalSmarts, the digital media literacy program developed as part of the MODELSS project, aims to build online resilience and improve the safety, health, and well-being of participants by developing their confidence and skills to engage as active, informed, and empowered digital citizens.

Technology-Facilitated Violence and Abuse

There are several forms or types of abuse, which makes it difficult to have one comprehensive definition of abuse. In the context of relationships, abuse is a pattern of behaviours used to gain or maintain power and control over a partner. This [includes](#):

- physical abuse (physical violence or threats of it);
- emotional and verbal abuse (non-physical behaviours meant to control, isolate, and frighten);
- financial abuse (an abusive partner extending power and control over finances);
- sexual abuse (forcing, pressuring, or coercing someone to do something sexually that they do not want to do); or
- technology-facilitated violence and abuse.

Technology-facilitated violence and abuse is defined generally as a form of abuse or controlling behaviour involving the use of technology to coerce, stalk, surveil, or harass another person. It [consists of a range of actions](#), including:

- sending abusive text messages or emails;
- cyberstalking;
- the non-consensual sharing of intimate images ('revenge porn');
- publishing private and personal information ('doxing');
- impersonation;
- threats and intimidation; and
- blocking communication.

Research largely categorizes technology-facilitated violence and abuse as a form of intimate partner violence, gender-based violence, domestic and family violence, and other societal and structural patterns of violence against women (Douglas et al., 2019). This places technology-facilitated violence as primarily linked to gender inequality, rather than technology itself (Afrouz, 2021). Still, it is important to also acknowledge the unique and driving role that technology plays in new forms and instances of abuse (Henry et al., 2020). For example, technology-facilitated violence has been [compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic](#), with control and intimidation tactics increasingly moving to digital devices and platforms.

The MODELSS project understands technology-facilitated violence and abuse as a public health issue requiring collaborative and sustainable interventions at individual, interpersonal, community, and systems levels. Our project also recognizes that environmental factors (such as access to resources and services) and intersecting forms of oppression, marginalization, and exclusion (such as race, sexuality, and gender) greatly influence all aspects of well-being and shape health outcomes for survivors.

Resilience through DigitalSmarts Program

Following [focus-groups](#) with practitioners in the VAW sector and survivors of technology-facilitated violence, MediaSmarts designed the *Resilience through DigitalSmarts* program to include two types of program content:

1. *Digital triage handouts*: important online safety, security, and well-being information to assist survivors in crisis and their families.
2. *Resilience through DigitalSmarts* workshops: a series of six workshops 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).

Our program content has been designed in collaboration with a network of VAW service delivery partners across Canada, our project advisory committee, literacy and accessibility consultants, evaluation consultants, master Indigenous facilitator, graphic designer, and translators. For the *Resilience through DigitalSmarts* workshops, we have adapted four pre-existing workshops from MediaSmarts' [DigitalSmarts](#) program and designed two new workshops for survivors of violence and the practitioners who support them:

- Introducing Online Basics
- Introducing Online Safety
- Introducing Online Privacy and Security
- Advancing Your Online Privacy and Security
- Online Relationship Safety (new*)
- Digital Storytelling (new*)

MediaSmarts' digital media literacy experts will train VAW practitioners in emergency shelters and transitional homes to deliver the *Resilience through DigitalSmarts* program.

In partnership with program facilitators and participants, we will conduct an iterative evaluation of the *Resilience through DigitalSmarts* program. Feedback gathered through this evaluation will be used to further develop program resources. We will also share and exchange evidence-based promising practices for designing and delivering digital media literacy interventions to address and prevent technology-facilitated violence and to support the health of survivors with: public health and digital safety policymakers, academics and researchers, practitioners in the VAW sector, community organizations and educators.

Trauma- and Violence-Informed Approaches

Definitions

To understand trauma- and violence-informed approaches, we must first define trauma and re-traumatization:

- (Individual) trauma is an event or circumstance resulting in physical, emotional, and/or life-threatening harm. Trauma also includes the lasting adverse effects that this event or circumstance has on an individual's physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual health and well-being (SAMHSA, 2014).
- Re-traumatization is the re-activation of trauma symptoms through thoughts, memories, or feelings related to the past trauma experience (Schippert, 2021). This may happen when, because of a triggering event or through speaking about the trauma, one is reminded of an earlier trauma.

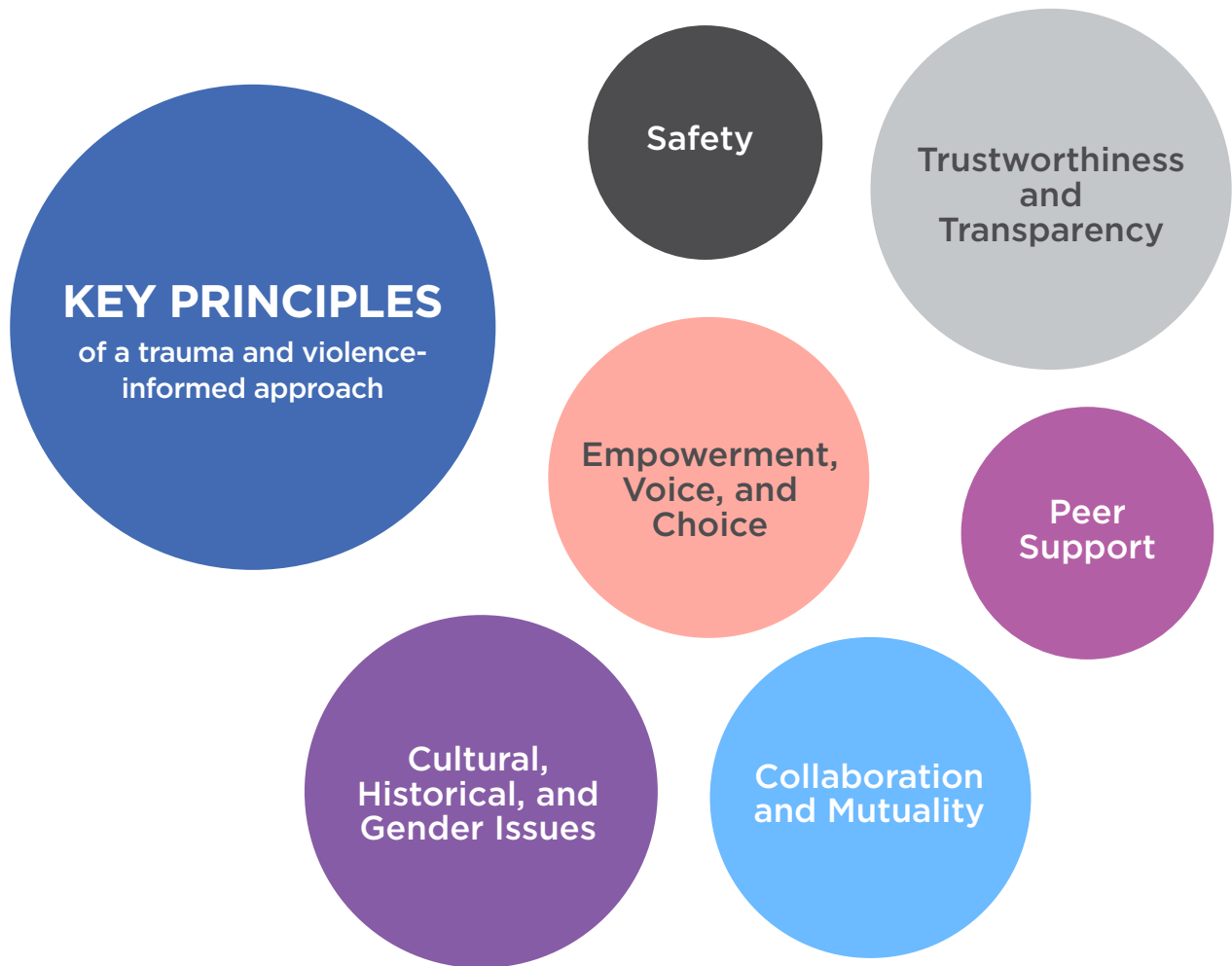
By definition, a trauma- and violence-informed approach “realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery; recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system; and responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices, and seeks to actively resist re-traumatization” (SAMHSA, 2014).

In other words, to apply a trauma-informed approach is to understand and be sensitive to the histories of trauma that people may carry, to be aware of what that trauma may look like, and, as much as possible, to avoid or minimize the potential exacerbation of that trauma. Additionally, trauma-informed approaches aim not just to avoid harm, but also to encourage empowerment and well-being.

A trauma-informed approach is not merely an outcome, nor is it a process limited to the initial stages of implementation. Rather, **it must be an ongoing, evolving, and all-encompassing process** where one is continuously responsive to the realities and needs of those affected by trauma (Knowledge Hub, 2024).

Key Principles

Trauma- and violence-informed approaches are guided by foundational principles that work as credible frameworks for addressing the needs of survivors of trauma and violence. Six key principles, as defined by the US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), are commonly cited:



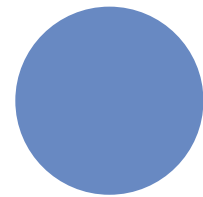
These six principles are defined and expanded below along with promising practices to consider in the context of digital media literacy program facilitation.

Creating ‘Safer Spaces’

Safety is the first foundational principle of trauma-informed approaches. In the context of workshops, this principle relates to all involved in the workshops, including facilitators. Prior to, during, and after workshops, both facilitators and participants should feel emotionally, physically, and psychologically safe while discussing difficult and sensitive topics. MediaSmarts has designed the *Resilience through DigitalSmarts* workshops with both facilitator and participant safety in mind, through consulting with a diverse group of VAW practitioners and researchers and conducting additional research into trauma-informed facilitation. The workshop scripts were evaluated several times to make sure that safety was a primary consideration through, for instance:

- Ensuring an adequate number of breaks, especially after content that may be challenging;
- Using inclusive and empowering language or statements of fact and avoiding language that may lead participants to experience more anxiety and fear or potentially lead to re-traumatization;
- Suggesting signals for participants to indicate when they are not feeling safe or need a break and making it clear that they can step away from the workshop whenever they need to.

Beyond the design of the workshops, however, there are a few considerations for facilitators before, during, and after workshops.



Participant Safety: Promising Practices

The *Resilience through DigitalSmarts* workshops follow the common ethical and methodological practices required for qualitative research (set out by the [TCPS2](#)), which prioritize participant safety. This includes maintaining participant anonymity, safeguarding their data, and giving participants the option to withdraw from the workshops. However, a trauma- and violence-informed approach requires additional safeguards focused on sensitivity and awareness of trauma:

Before the workshop(s):

- Facilitators can define key concepts such as abuse and trauma and speak to participants about potential signs of re-traumatization. Some participants may not know if what happened to them can be classified as abuse, may be unaware of the risks of participating in a trauma-related workshop, and may not know how to recognise signs of re-traumatization in themselves. Participants should be informed about more than just the procedures of the workshops as they participate—they need to be reminded of the wider context that relates to their participation. Although this information may be built into the workshop script, it is important for facilitators to confirm or double-check that participants understand.
- Facilitators can establish access to the supports that will be available to participants during and after the workshop. These supports include identifying who they can speak to if they need help during the workshop and providing resources they can refer to during and after the session (some resources are available at the end of this handbook). Again, confirming that participants are aware of these supports is crucial to their feeling of safety during workshops.
- Facilitators may consider how the physical space for the workshop can be made to feel safe. Physical elements can create a sense of safety, such as: a room with enough light, enough space between participants, and a clearly marked space away from the workshop area for participants to take a break. The “Navigating Remote Facilitation” section of this handbook will address some promising practices for doing this in a virtual space.



During the workshop(s):

- Facilitators can make it clear that survivors are not required to tell or retell their story if they do not wish to. If survivors tell their story before they are prepared to do so, there may be a higher chance of re-traumatization.
- Facilitators can look out for signs of re-traumatization in participants, such as a sudden change in their participation or physical signs of discomfort or anxiety. Triggers may arise among participants telling their stories or among those listening to the stories of others.
- If re-traumatization occurs, facilitators can administer de-escalation techniques such as implementing additional breaks and check-ins to allow participants a moment to self-regulate, asking participants what they need to feel safe, or leading participants through breathing exercises.
 - One breathing exercise that facilitators can implement is to ask participants to practice diaphragmatic/deep breathing (where the stomach, rather than the chest, expands and contracts with each breath). Facilitators can lead participants through 10-second breathing cycles, asking them to inhale for five seconds then exhale for five seconds, and repeat as many times as it takes for the participant to feel calmer. This technique can help to prevent hyperventilation and stop the panic reaction that may come with re-traumatization.



After the workshop(s):

- Facilitators can allow for additional debrief time with participants who may need it after a workshop session. It matters how facilitators approach debriefing with participants because some debriefing practices have been found to worsen trauma. Current promising practices for debriefing exercises focus on elements of mental health first aid:
 - Gathering information on participants' remaining needs and concerns;
 - From these needs, identifying and offering participants any immediate or practical assistance you can give;
 - Finally, connecting them with social support and resources to help them cope, and making sure that these are supports and resources they can access in their daily lives.



Facilitator Safety

During workshops, the potential for traumatization or re-traumatization applies not only to participants but also to the facilitators. Facilitators may have experienced trauma themselves or may be affected by hearing stories of trauma during workshops. Part of maintaining facilitator safety, as in the case of participant safety, is ensuring that people are informed about the risks and contexts that relate to their participation. This handbook serves as a resource to provide facilitators with awareness of trauma and trauma-informed approaches, to make their participation as facilitators safer. In addition to consulting this handbook, however, facilitators can:

Before the workshop(s):

- Refer to online resources (see resources list at the end of this document) to learn more about trauma and feel more prepared to navigate their own involvement in trauma-related workshops.
- Ensure they know where the mental health supports for staff are in their workplace and utilize them if needed.
- Contact MediaSmarts (info@mediasmarts.ca) for program-specific support and questions.



During the workshop(s):

- Maintain awareness of how they are feeling and look for signs of (re) traumatization in themselves such as heightened anxiety or suddenly feeling withdrawn or distant. Whenever possible, workshops should have two facilitators present to allow for added support and enable one facilitator to take a break if needed.
- Keep and refer to the tip-sheet at the end of this handbook whenever necessary during workshops.



Maintaining Trust and Transparency

The second trauma-informed principle, *Trustworthiness and Transparency*, relates to building and maintaining trust between participants, facilitators, researchers, and all involved in a particular process. Trust is built primarily through transparency about decisions and operations and in the context of workshops, this includes both the design of the workshops and the facilitation of them.

MediaSmarts has designed the *Resilience through DigitalSmarts* workshop scripts to begin with a summary of topics and activities that provide participants with information (or transparency) about the workshop design at the beginning of each session. Participants should feel in control and empowered as much as possible, especially while discussing difficult topics. Withholding information about the workshop agenda, difficult decisions, unexpected changes, and uncertainties only heightens the participants' sense of lack of control as they participate in an already pre-set environment. Building trust and transparency is a crucial step in creating a safe and open participatory environment.



Promising Practices

Before the workshop(s):

- Facilitators can confirm that participants know the purpose and contents of the workshop. This process may be built into the workshop script, but it is worth double-checking with participants if they still seem unsure.



During the workshop(s)

- Facilitators can communicate expectations with participants, establish boundaries, and be clear about what the workshop and any resources that are offered within the workshop can and cannot do. For example, in the context of digital media literacy education, technology's rapid evolution makes it difficult to make any long-term guarantees about certain online safety practices. While facilitators communicate the usefulness and importance of online safety practices, they should make sure participants understand the limits of those practices as well. Boundaries and expectations set at the beginning of the workshop should be maintained throughout, and any changes should be clearly communicated to participants.
- Facilitators can regularly check-in with participants and allow for questions. Again, while this may be built into the workshop script, facilitators may sense, simply by reading the room or hearing directly from participants, that there may be a need for more time for questions than initially anticipated.
- Facilitators should be honest and transparent about any questions they do not have the answers to. Whenever possible, facilitators can set up follow-up mechanisms to try to provide these answers after the workshops.



Encouraging Peer Support & Collaboration

The third trauma-informed principle, *Peer Support*, is key to establishing safety, well-being, and resilience among participants. The [MODELSS Needs Assessment](#) found that both technology-facilitated violence survivors and VAW practitioners primarily rely on their peers for support, often over institutional or formal supports like the legal system. Additionally, in contrast to individualizing forms of participation which may leave participants with a sense of isolation, collective efforts are often empowering and helpful to participants. For example, peer support may allow participants who feel unworthy or unsure about their contributions during a workshop to focus on helping others who are in similar situations.

The fourth trauma-informed principle, *Collaboration and Mutuality*, extends the principle of peer support to the connection between researchers, facilitators, and participants, and additionally requires *meaningful* sharing of power and decision-making between these groups. Despite the necessity of having different roles and responsibilities in program facilitation and participation, trauma-informed approaches encourage the breaking down of power imbalances and hierarchies as much as possible to allow for truly collaborative and collective efforts.

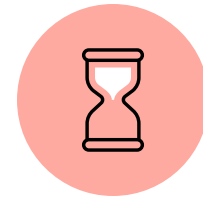
In the *Resilience through DigitalSmarts* program, MediaSmarts has committed to an ongoing- collaborative design process by consulting diverse groups of survivors and practitioners and using their expressed needs and concerns to shape workshops and the numerous decisions that must be made during the facilitation of them.



Promising Practices

Before the workshop(s):

- Before offering support to survivors, facilitators can allow survivors to first assess and express their needs. Support options should be based on those expressed needs. In practice, this may look like asking participants what they feel they hope to receive from the workshop and highlighting or signposting the parts of the workshop that will target those needs.



During the workshop(s):

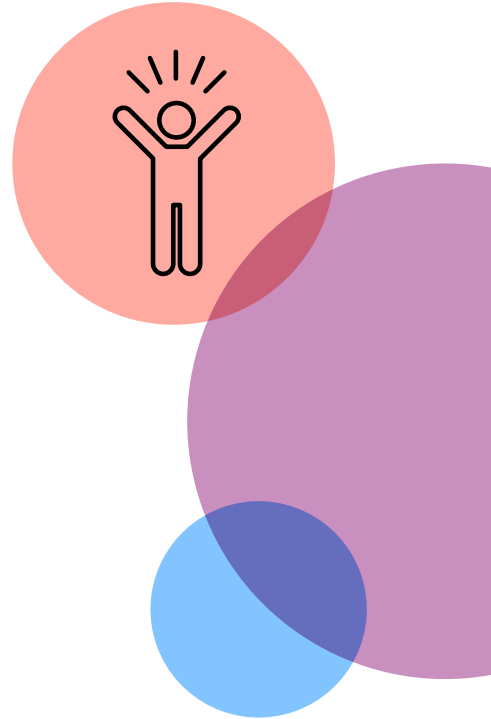
- Collaboration and peer support require building relationships. Therefore, a recommended practice is to find ways to build relationships with and between participants, whether that is through allowing for smaller groups to encourage peer connection, incorporating activities where participants need to work with one or two other participants to meet a shared goal, or scheduling time dedicated to relationship-building between participants, such as eating together with no agenda.
- Facilitators can collaborate with survivors where possible during workshops, such as asking them what they think about a particular insight or asking if they would like to take a break or keep going.



Empowering Participants

The fifth trauma-informed principle, *Empowerment, Voice and Choice*, is about encouraging participants' strengths and honouring their experiences, their choices, and contributions throughout workshops. The [MODELSS Needs Assessment](#) revealed that some survivors feel like their strength and intelligence is often underestimated by technology-facilitated violence and abuse resources and they would prefer to be respected, empowered, and have their already-existing resilience recognized.

This trauma-informed principle also relates to the reality that trauma and abuse is often associated with feelings of powerlessness and a lack of control, and workshops create an inherent power imbalance between facilitators and participants. Even in a pre-designed workshop, trauma-informed approaches require that participants are heard and centred.



Promising Practices

During the workshop(s):

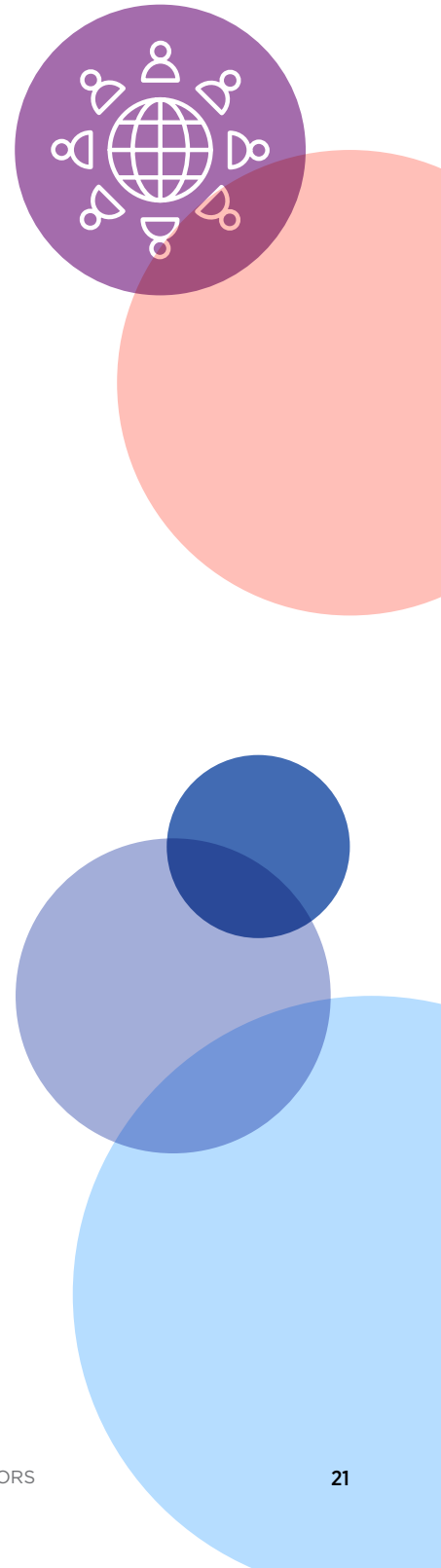
- Facilitators can allow survivors to make choices, rather than simply giving instructions. There are opportunities to offer choices to participants, such as whether they want to tell their story, how they would like to be addressed, and if they would like to take a break. Where possible, give participants the opportunity to make those choices.
- As each participant speaks, facilitators can make sure their participation is validated and affirmed.
- Where appropriate, facilitators can ask questions that encourage resilience and allow participants to reference or build their own practices or strategies for fostering health and well-being. For example, “What thoughts or actions give you hope?”



Considering Intersectionality & Cultural Humility

The final principle, *Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues*, speaks to the need to acknowledge, respect, and be responsive to participants' identities and the intersections within those identities. The forms and impacts of technology-facilitated violence and abuse vary depending on social circumstances, including race, sexual orientation, age, ability, gender-identity, language-needs, and geography. Additionally, the supports and resources that are offered to survivors should be responsive to their identities. For example, during the [MODELSS Needs Assessment](#), MediaSmarts heard from Indigenous women who experienced interpersonal relationship abuse as well as systemic racism and colonial violence through the legal system. Their experience, which is informed by their identity as Indigenous women, led us to ensure that where there is a suggestion to seek legal support in the *Resilience through DigitalSmarts* workshops, there are also alternative community supports and resources provided.

Any trauma-informed approach must engage with survivors' identities and their intersections to create an environment of safety, well-being, and empowerment. MediaSmarts has sought to include multiple perspectives through working with a diverse network of service delivery partners and advisors who themselves serve a diverse group of survivors including newcomers to Canada, gender and sexually diverse survivors, and Indigenous survivors. For facilitators engaging with participants that come from a variety of social circumstances, this trauma-informed principle is primarily about listening to participants and maintaining an awareness of the different cultural and social contexts that inform their participation.



Promising Practices

Before the workshop(s):

- Facilitators can maintain awareness of the intersectional and collective experiences of trauma that participants may face. This includes acknowledging historical, intergenerational, and ongoing trauma and the structural and interpersonal violence survivors may have experienced due to systemic and political violence. It also includes recognizing that technology-facilitated violence and abuse does not affect the survivor in isolation, but also affects their families and communities.
- In addition to physical and emotional safety, it is important that participants feel culturally safe. During workshops, facilitators can ensure that there is respect, value, and openness to different cultural approaches and ways of knowing. Wherever possible, it is recommended to have culturally responsive programs that involve meaningful consultation with community experts and/or are led by members of that community who have the direct cultural knowledge required to deeply engage with participants.



During the workshop(s):

- Facilitators should recognize that the intersectional experiences of technology-facilitated violence survivors may impact their participation and aim to make all participants feel respected and heard. Participants who have experienced forms of violence related to a certain aspect of their identity may feel particularly uncomfortable among people they do not know, or who do not share that aspect of their identity.
- When responding to participants, facilitators should avoid assumptions and generalizations of participants' backgrounds and identities. Instead, they should consistently use and highlight inclusive language and inclusive approaches. Aside from the previous points which highlight inclusive approaches, inclusivity involves listening to and taking cues from participants to incorporate their expressed identities and perspectives within the workshop. In practice, this can include referring to them by their preferred names and pronouns or mirroring the examples they give and the ways they rephrase, interpret and speak about the workshop material.



Navigating Remote Facilitation

Trauma- and violence-informed approaches shift according to setting and must be responsive to the various concerns and possibilities that arise in different settings. The trauma- and violence-informed facilitation guidelines above are applicable to both in-person and remote settings, but it is worth noting that some unique concerns arise from engaging with survivors on virtual platforms, including:

- Blurred boundaries between participants' spaces, which may include spaces in which they experience(d) trauma.
- Lack of shared space which may lead to unclear social cues, misinterpreted silences, and a general sense of not being emotionally attuned to participants.
- Limited opportunity to share one's voice due to a one-dimensional platform.
- Screen fatigue, which may worsen participants' already-vulnerable states.



Promising Practices

Before the workshop(s):

- It is important to balance participants' rights to privacy with the need to ensure that the event is not disrupted by uninvited participants. If practical, require participants to register beforehand and provide them with a password for accessing the session.
- For facilitators, the first step should always be to ensure that survivors are in a safe place while participating. Asking explicitly "First could you let me know if you are in a safe place to chat?" is a recommended practice. If participants are not in a safe place, encourage them to move to one if possible, or encourage and instruct them on how to leave the workshop if they need to.
- Participants can be encouraged and reminded by facilitators to join the virtual workshop from a physical space in which they feel safe and comfortable. The familiarity and comfortability of a participant's setting can allow them to feel a sense of well-being and security.



- To make workshop participants more comfortable, facilitators should consider how their body language and environment may appear to participants. Body language and what is visible on the screen is part of communicating respectfully and empathetically with participants. For instance, facilitators can sit far enough away from the screen so that survivors can clearly see their body language. Facilitators can also inform survivors of any background noises they might hear from the facilitator’s environment (for example, a barking dog).

During the workshop(s):

- Facilitators can make use of the online features that promote participant safety and well-being. For example, participants can be encouraged to briefly turn off their microphone and camera if they feel distressed and need to take a moment to self-regulate. Additionally, features like breakout rooms can provide a space for facilitators to help participants one-on-one, or to encourage peer support.



- Facilitators should confirm that participants are aware of the steps to take to protect their online privacy and safety while participating in a virtual workshop. The digital triage resources, included in the *Resilience through DigitalSmarts* program, provide survivors with steps to enhance their online privacy, security, and safety.

After the workshop(s):

- Additional debrief time with participants is especially important in the context of remote facilitation to mitigate for potential isolation and the harm that may arise from that isolation. Facilitators can:
 - Gather information on participants’ remaining needs and concerns;
 - From these needs, identify and offer participants any immediate or practical assistance that can be given;
 - Connect them with social support and resources to help them cope, and make sure that these are supports and resources they can access in their daily lives;
 - Send a follow-up email with resources shared during the workshop, links to workshop materials, and guidance around on-site supports.



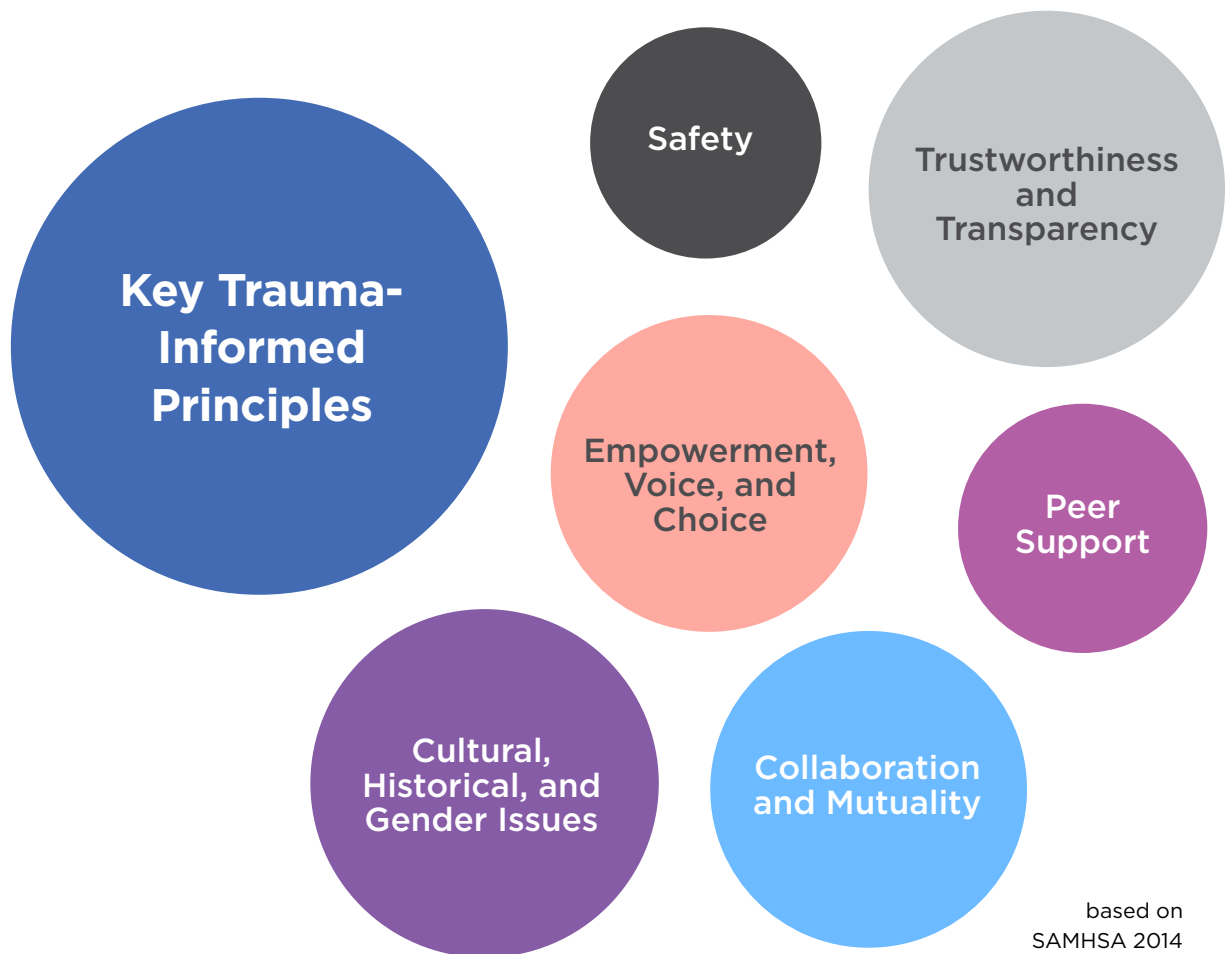
Tip Sheet: Summary of Promising Practices

Key Definitions:

Digital Media Literacy: the ability to access, use, understand, and engage with media in all forms confidently and critically.

Technology-Facilitated Violence and Abuse: a form of abuse or controlling behaviour involving the use of technology to coerce, stalk, surveil or harass another person.

Trauma-Informed Approaches: understand and are sensitive to the histories of trauma that people carry and encourage environments of well-being and safety rather than practices that may inadvertently re-traumatize.



based on
SAMHSA 2014



Recommended Practices

Safety

- Confirm that participants understand key concepts including trauma and abuse.
- Establish access to supports.
- Look for signs of triggers and re-traumatization.
- Review de-escalation techniques.
- Set up the space with safety in mind.
- Allow more time for debriefs if needed.

Trustworthiness and Transparency

- Confirm participants understand the workshop purpose and agenda.
- Set expectations and boundaries.
- Check in regularly, allow for breaks when needed.
- Be honest and transparent including when you don't know something.

Peer Support and Collaboration

- Allow space and time for building relationships.
- Allow participants to first assess and express their needs.
- Collaborate with participants to make decisions where possible.

Empowerment

- Allow participants to make choices.
- Affirm and validate participation.
- Ask questions that encourage resilience such as: “What thoughts or actions give you hope?”

Cultural Humility

- Maintain awareness of identities, their intersections and how they may impact participants' trauma and participation.
- Be respectful and open to different cultural approaches and ways of knowing.
- Avoid assumptions and generalizations of different identities.
- Use inclusive language and approaches.

Remote Facilitation

- Confirm participants are in a safe space and can protect their online safety and privacy.
- Make use of online features such as registration and breakout rooms to promote participant safety.
- Consider how your body language and environment may come across to participants.
- Debrief and send follow-up email with workshop materials, resources, and supports.

Resources for Further Information

- SAMHSA on [Trauma and Violence](#) and [Trauma- and Violence-Informed Principles](#)
- [Tech Safety Canada](#)
- [Implementing Trauma- and Violence-Informed Care: A Handbook](#)
- [Trauma-Informed Self-Assessment for Facilitators](#)

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