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ABSTRACT

Technology-facilitated domestic violence is an emerging issue for social workers and other service providers. The concept of Digital Coercive Control (DCC) is introduced to highlight the particular nature and impacts of technology-facilitated abuse in the context of domestic violence. While practitioners have become more adept at working with women experiencing DCC, there is still little known about its dynamics and whether this violence requires a change in current service responses. This article explores findings from survey research conducted with 546 Australian domestic violence practitioners about the ways perpetrators use technology as part of their abuse tactics. The findings demonstrate that DV practitioners believe perpetrator use of technology is extensive and has significant impacts on the safety of clients. A major dilemma faced by practitioners is how to promote and facilitate client safety from DCC while still enabling safe use of technology so clients can remain connected to family, friends, and community.

IMPLICATIONS

- The use of digital technology in domestic violence creates a significant practice issue for Australian domestic violence practitioners.
- The development of a practice framework for responding to digital coercive control may assist practitioners to highlight the risks posed by this abuse, while still enabling women and children the freedom to participate in the digital realm.

Global estimates suggest that one in three women experience domestic violence (DV) in their lifetime (World Health Organisation, 2017). This violence is commonly perpetrated by men—often partners or ex-partners—against women. Building on feminist theorising that understands DV as constituting more than physical violence, DV has been conceptualised as a pattern of domination by a male partner or ex-partner, termed "coercive control" (Stark, 2007). Stark (2007) argues that coercive control is a liberty crime, aimed at undermining the victim's autonomy, social support, equality, and dignity. Female victims are entrapped in the relationship through the male perpetrator's use of

a constellation of tactics, such as control, intimidation, isolation, shaming, micromanagement of daily activities, and surveillance. Technology-facilitated abuse is emerging as a type of DV—not disconnected from other forms of harm or control enacted—yet it has particular impacts and issues that can shape how violence is experienced, responded to, and regulated. Consequently, there are particular dynamics, risks, and outcomes associated with technology-facilitated abuse. Intent and impacts are important to observe. Tactics such as digital monitoring and tracking are used by perpetrators as forms of coercive control (Dragiewicz et al., 2018; Hand, Chung, & Peters, 2009; Woodlock, 2017). The use of technology in DV can convey a sense of perpetrator omnipresence due to the reach that technology can afford them, with victims feeling they can never really escape the perpetrator's abuse (Woodlock, 2017).

Digital Coercive Control

To encompass a more robust explanation of the full range and intent of digitally-based tactics that perpetrators use and the impact of these actions on victims, the term digital coercive control (DCC) has been proposed (Harris & Woodlock, 2018). This term refers to the use of digital technology (which includes, for example, mobile phones, Global Positioning Systems (GPS), social media) to stalk, harass, threaten, and abuse partners or ex-partners (and children). This violence is situated within the specific context of coercive and controlling intimate relationships and broader sex-based inequality. There is no consensus within academic or practitioner sectors about what this term encompasses or, indeed, what term should be used. The term DCC is used in this paper to refer to the frame we propose, however when referring to previous studies we have used the terminology from that research.

The Use of Technology in DV

Since 2002, DV organisations in Australia (e.g., WESNET, 2018), the United States (e.g., SafetyNet within NNEDV, n.d.) and the United Kingdom (e.g., Women's Aid, 2014) have raised concerns about the increasing use of technology by DV perpetrators as a tactic to abuse and stalk women and children. In Australia, this issue has received government recognition with the Final Report of the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) Advisory Panel on Reducing Violence against Women and their Children (Commonwealth of Australia, 2016) and the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence (State of Victoria & Neave, 2016) identifying technology-facilitated abuse and stalking as an emerging problem requiring a national response. A recent Victorian government child protection practice guide on working with perpetrators recognised that technology-based stalking is a risk factor for filicide, but that the seriousness of this type of abuse is often overlooked by state agents in the police, judiciary, and child protection services (Dwyer & Miller, 2014). Similarly, the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Advisory Board in Queensland (2016) and the New South Wales Domestic Violence Death Review Team (2015) have identified technology-facilitated stalking and abuse as indicators that women and children are at risk of domestic homicide.

While there has been much momentum in the government and community sectors in this arena, there is a dearth of scholarship existing to date. In Australian research,

Woodlock (2017) reported on outcomes from a survey of 152 DV practitioners and 46 victims of technology abuse, and found that the use of technology by perpetrators to control, track, and intimidate had a serious and lasting impact on the safety and mental health of victims. Evidence about perpetrators' use of technology in Australia has also emerged from broader research on violence against women. In a study where 30 women in rural Victoria were interviewed about DV, George and Harris (2014) found that all the women had experienced abuse via technology. Perpetrators used technology to increase the women's social and geographic isolation, exacerbating the additional barriers to safety experienced by women in non-urban areas.

Internationally, there is growing evidence of the dynamics of DCC employed by perpetrators, although scholarly studies have almost exclusively focused on harms experienced by youth in their teens or early adulthood. Typically, such investigations are characterised as studies of "electronic intrusion" or "cyber-harassment", or the like, and do not explicitly focus on DV, even where the results identify other forms of abuse and stalking that are perpetrated by current or former partners (Borrajo, Gámez-Guadix, Pereda, & Calvete, 2015; Reed, Tolman, Ward, & Safyer, 2016). Studies of DCC experienced by adults are limited, but the findings are consistent with the studies with younger participants. A survey on online harassment in the United States, for example, found that the most common perpetrators of digital abuse and cyberstalking against teens and adults were current and former partners, as well as friends (Lenhart, Ybarra, Zickuhr, & Price-Feeney, 2016). The literature suggests that digital technologies (particularly social media platforms) aid in the enactment of stalking and harassment. However, the studies fail to examine fully the differences between types and impacts of male–female victimisation and offending, resulting in a gender blindness that limits understanding of how this violence is situated within DV (Harris & Woodlock, 2018).

In the state of Victoria, in recent years, there has been greater government and community recognition of the seriousness and consequences of nonphysical forms of domestic violence, yet greater theoretical and practical understanding of DCC is needed. To explore further the nature, setting, and impacts of the use of technology by DV perpetrators, a research project investigated Australian DV practitioners' awareness of and responses to technology abuse experienced by their clients. This article now describes the methods of, and reports the major findings from, this research and concludes with a discussion about how social workers and other domestic violence practitioners might best work with women experiencing DCC.

Methods

The collaborative project was conducted with two statewide organisations (Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria and Women's Legal Service NSW) and one national organisation (WESNET) with specialist expertise and focus in the field of violence against women. The organisations had all identified the growing incidence of technology in the context of DV and a corresponding rise in requests for information and education from practitioners in addressing these harms. The aim of the research was to provide a detailed picture of the dynamics, context, and impacts of technology used by perpetrators, including whether there were particular issues for different cohorts of women; and to identify appropriate practice responses for this form of violence. The research questions

were: *How is technology being used by perpetrators of domestic violence?* and *What is the impact of this on their victims?* The research was guided by internal ethics policies of the organisations involved, which included consultation with external experts to ensure that international ethical standards for researching domestic violence were followed (Hartmann & Krishnan, 2016). The confidentiality of participants was paramount and therefore no identifying online information, such as the IP address of the participant, was obtained.

The aforementioned qualitative project employed a mixed-methods research design with a national online survey for DV sector practitioners, focus groups with police, lawyers, and DV sector practitioners, and a legal review of relevant state and national legislation. The findings presented in this article are from the survey with DV sector practitioners, which was conducted in February 2015. DV practitioners were sought as participants because the investigators wanted to prioritise "practice-based knowledge" that can afford "a depth of knowledge and expertise which is often inaccessible to even the most skilled researchers" (Coy & Garner, 2012, p. 296). It is important to note that DV practitioners can also be victims of DV; our focus on DV practitioners was not to create an "artificial divide" between victims and DV practitioners (Caulfield, 2015, p. 41) but to draw on their expertise as an "epistemic community" (Coy & Garner, 2012, p. 296).

Convenience sampling was used, with the survey advertised through the networks, databases and social media accounts of the three partner organisations. To increase the likelihood that the survey respondents were those with practice-based knowledge of DV victims, a qualifying question was asked in the survey. Respondents answering that they did not work with DV victims were directed out of the survey. The survey included questions about what technologies were being used and how often DV sector practitioners were seeing this behaviour, as well as how the technologies were being used, such as to abuse, stalk, and harass. Participants were also asked about the impacts on clients and if they thought that DCC was being responded to effectively by services, and the criminal justice system.

Certain limitations of the study need to be acknowledged. As this research draws on DV practitioners' recollection of events, it is possible that they were affected by observer bias, and they may not recall details accurately, overestimating or underestimating the extent of technology abuse their clients experienced. We also did not collect data in relation to the ethnicity, gender, and age of participants.

The survey contained open and closed questions. Descriptive statistics were derived from the closed questions. Responses to the open questions were thematically coded, first descriptively, then interpretively, using NVivo (King & Horrocks, 2010; Saldaña, 2012). The coding was undertaken by authors one and two and the themes discussed with the project partners and academic experts (authors three and four) in order to validate the findings.

Findings

Overall, 546 practitioners participated in the survey. Over half (53%) specified that they worked directly in DV organisations, with others working in DV-focused roles in legal organisations (15%, $n = 150$), sexual assault (14%, $n = 83$), housing (13%, $n = 79$) and

health (12%, $n = 70$). Others specified workplaces such as child protection and community development. The majority of survey participants were from either Victoria (45%, $n = 248$) or New South Wales (22%, $n = 120$), with most working in major cities (49%, $n = 269$) or regional centres (32%, $n = 174$). Most of the respondents had been working in their role for 1–5 years (45%, $n = 235$) and 6–10 years (24%, $n = 127$).

The Technology Used in DCC

Almost all survey respondents (98%) reported that they had worked with clients who had experienced DCC. The technology most commonly used by perpetrators was mobile phone text messaging, with 47% of practitioners seeing it "all the time" and 42% seeing it "often." Facebook was identified as the next channel of technology likely to be used by perpetrators, with 37% of practitioners seeing this "all the time" and 47% seeing it "often." Email was also seen "often" at 38%, and "all the time" at 13%. Perpetrators were reported to have used GPS tracking via smartphone apps, with 40% of participants stating that such monitoring was occurring "sometimes", and a further 34% stating they saw this "often" or "all the time" in their work. Nearly half of the practitioners noted their clients reported perpetrators threatening to distribute or post intimate photos or videos of them with 35% of respondents seeing this behaviour "often" and a further 14% seeing it "all the time". The age group of clients perceived to be most affected by DCC was women aged between 25 and 34 years.

DCC Tactics and Impacts

Practitioners were asked—in the form of an open-ended question—about their perceptions of the ways perpetrators used technology to enact harm and how this impacted on women clients. Three themes were identified in our analysis. These include omnipresence, isolation, and ostracism, and additional risks and barriers to safety for specific cohorts of women.

Omnipresence

The dominant theme from our analysis was that technology enabled the perpetrator to create a sense of omnipresence with significant ramifications for women. Practitioners identified that technology affords perpetrators a variety of ways to invade every aspect of women's lives: they can use a multitude of channels to breach privacy, monitor, or harass; harm is enacted at any time of day and night and from a distance; perpetrators use technology in a repetitive way. Practitioners frequently commented: "It is constant, unrelenting, intrusive", and the volume of contact from the perpetrator via multiple channels resulted in a sense of being "besieged" or "bombarded". Practitioners observed that women were always "having to look over their shoulder" and repeatedly heard women describe a sense of being trapped and "unable to escape".

Several practitioners mentioned that women felt they had no space that was free from the perpetrator's invasive contact or monitoring. They observed that technology has infiltrated aspects of everyday life—including shopping, banking, communication with friends, family, and services—and women fear that any of these avenues may expose them to the perpetrator's harassment. A practitioner noted that this resulted in an:

… increase in anxiety—there is no escape. The interconnection of our lives with technology means that a person being abused via technology can be followed on any of those platforms (mobile phone, Facebook, internet, email), even if they are not in the same location as the perpetrator.

The phone, being a device that many women rely on and carry with them at all times, is a tool that can effectively make abuse portable. In this vein, a practitioner noted: "It is emotionally difficult as she feels that she is carrying the abuse with her as the volatile text messages are with her everywhere".

Practitioners noted that the constancy of DCC infringed on clients' mental wellbeing and sense of security: "Increased fear for their safety, feeling that they are being monitored 24 hours a day, belief that they are not safe anywhere and at any time, negatively impacts on their physical, emotional, mental, and psychological wellbeing". Practitioners identified that, for victims, perpetrators' invasive presence resulted in hypervigilance and exhaustion: "There is no escaping it—every conversation is interrupted multiple times—the constant-ness [sic] does not allow the women any time to gather their thoughts". Practitioners explained that this unrelenting monitoring and harassment made it more difficult for women to leave the relationship, and ongoing stalking after separation was a reason why women returned:

> Women will return to the perpetrator as they do not feel they will be able to reclaim their lives. We often hear women say that the perpetrator will find her, will locate her phone number, they will not be able to prevent this.

Isolation and Ostracism

Another major research theme was that perpetrators were deliberately using technology to isolate women by hijacking or controlling their use of technology and by threatening to release private and personal material. A practitioner noted: "Women have described increased vulnerability and fear of public humiliation, particularly if he has threatened to release intimate images etc. Women feel unsafe to participate in social media and are losing support networks and connection with friends". Concerns about constant surveil-lance forced women to retreat from going out, going to work, from seeing other people or doing shopping or other daily activities. Practitioners commented that the fear of being monitored also prevented women from contacting services: "It can be very difficult for them to reach out for support services, because he knows everything she does and services are not able to contact her for fear it might escalate the violence". Another practitioner said it made it harder for services to maintain contact with clients: "as they are reluctant to answer numbers that are on private or numbers that are unknown to them".

Additional Risks and Barriers to Safety

When asked whether they had noticed particular issues with DCC that were different for specific cohorts of women, practitioners suggested that isolation tactics were especially effective with women who may already be socially isolated, such as women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. Participants observed how perpetrators deliberately exploited women's social isolation and language barriers by restricting access to technologies women relied on to maintain contact with friends and family. One practitioner shared that: "Australian men who sponsor their partners, who are

women from a CALD background, will often take away their phone and internet access, causing social isolation". Practitioners commented that information and advice about online and social media safety is typically communicated in English, and therefore inaccessible to some CALD women. This is worrying because these women often have a greater reliance on technology to maintain relationships with family overseas and, consequently, they may be at high risk of perpetrators exploiting their need for technology to further increase their isolation.

Of other women uniquely impacted by DCC, participants recognised that perpetrators could effectively use technology in their abuse of women with disabilities. Again, perpetrators exploited women's social isolation and their reliance on technology for their communication. One practitioner said: "For women with disability, there may be a higher need for using technologies to communicate or link in with services and the community".

Practitioners observed that the way that perpetrators used technology affected Aboriginal women in specific ways because of the importance placed on community and connection within Aboriginal cultures. One respondent stated: "Indigenous women may need to use technology to keep connected to their mob, culture, and community but this can place their whereabouts/situation known to the perpetrator if they also have the same connections". Participants cautioned that this connection to community can make it easier to publicly humiliate Aboriginal women, with one commenting:

> Using technology such as Facebook to abuse Indigenous women places the woman at further risk from other parties, such as other family members by spreading information or inviting others to abuse the woman. Technology such as phones can be used to put down the woman or spread rumours around the community which places the woman at greater risk and decreases her feelings of self-worth and increases her isolation from her community.

Perpetrators used DCC to extend women's social and geographic isolation, with particular consequences in rural and remote places. Practitioners noted that women in remote and rural areas were particularly at risk: "They need their phones for safety when they are living in remote areas, and perpetrators will often exploit this and constantly call and text, or even track them with the phone" and "Women can experience fear, anxiety, public humiliation—especially in a small rural town where everyone knows you. Women can lose a lot of friends because of what the perpetrator says about her on Facebook".

DCC: Complexities and Challenges for Service Provision

Practitioners in this study repeatedly observed that DCC had increased the complexity of their work, making it more difficult to assist women and children to stay safe. This was related to the constancy and reach of DCC and the control it affords to the perpetrator. Moreover, unintended consequences such as the revictimisation that can occur through misguided attempts to keep women and children safe, are challenges for practitioners working in this field.

Risk to Women's Safety

The risk to women's safety increases when they leave a violent partner, and digital technology can now add to this. As one practitioner lamented:

> I feel that some men who may not have been bothered to stalk their ex-partners previously, are now more likely to do it because it is so easy with technology. Perpetrators are able to abuse at the click of a button, and they will do so for long after the relationship has ended.

Women who are separated from and share children with a perpetrator may not be able to disengage from digital communication channels because of shared parenting. Perpetrators commonly used child contact as an avenue to continue harassment and intimidation. One practitioner reported:

> We advise women to change phone numbers as calls/texts can be in excess of 50 per day. However, as parenting plans may require them to be contactable, this is not always possible. Perpetrators often use this opportunity to continually change plans for handover/care of children to harass their (ex)partner.

The nature of DCC can provide an evidence base of breaches of protection orders. However, practitioners noted that using this as evidence of harassment or abuse was not necessarily a straightforward process because some community services, courts, and police failed to recognise the significant impacts and risks created by DCC. One practitioner stated:

> Technology-facilitated abuse is not recognised by other services, particularly family services working in the area of post-separation mediation. These services appear to see this abuse as a minor annoyance that a woman has to put up with, but not germane to issues of women's and children's safety.

Another practitioner's comment underscores the seriousness of DCC:

> I think technology abuse is too easily dismissed as just some annoying text messages or a perpetrator being a pest on social media. But this can be a red flag for a serious escalation of abuse and needs to be taken seriously.

"Switching off" Does Not Always Increase Safety

A consequence of some service providers having limited knowledge about the dynamics and seriousness of DCC is that women are often pressured by police, courts, and other services to "switch off" or replace devices, alter device settings, close social media accounts, and change bank and other accounts accessed through technological means. However, these can be difficult (and impractical) choices for women. A predominant theme generated from practitioner responses was that switching off devices or accounts does not necessarily improve safety. In fact, as participants cautioned, for many women it may do the opposite:

> Women feel vulnerable to further abuse if they keep their existing contact details, but feel that it is a safer option because if they are not contactable by phone then there is a fear that the perpetrator will seek more direct contact with them.

Not responding to messages or calls may result in the perpetrator retaliating by using other channels (for instance, in person) to abuse or confront his partner or ex-partner: "Women are too frightened to change numbers or get rid of their phones as abuse will escalate". For some women, although continuing to receive texts or other contacts from an abusive ex-partner increases their anxiety, at the same time, it provides them with information about the perpetrator's attitude and mental state. Thus shutting off communication may result in an increased sense of unpredictability.

Women, such as those with disabilities, who have specific reasons to rely on technology to communicate with family, support networks, and service providers face severe ramifications if they are forced to disengage from communication devices. On this issue, one practitioner shared:

> I've worked with hearing impaired women who rely very heavily on their phones to text friends and family—these women have been stalked and abused on their phones by ex-partners, but all they are told is to get rid of their phones. How can they do that when this is their main form of communication with others?

Victim-blaming

Practitioners expressed concern that women are unfairly judged by police, courts, family law services, and the broader community for being reluctant to change their phone, social media, and other accounts. A theme interpreted from the findings was that a major consequence of these expectations is that women are revictimised and blamed for not making these changes to their use of technologies and communication devices. For example, one practitioner noted the injustice of these community and systemic responses:

> Women are forced to retreat into themselves and not use any social media—change their numbers, block private phone calls. If they don't they are bullied or accused by society and the authorities for not taking these measures—while the perpetrator doesn't appear to have to change a thing, when they are the ones that committed the crime. Again, while it is a safety precaution—women are re-victimised and forced to do all the changing. When we ask women to change every aspect of their technological lives to protect themselves, are we not revictimising the victims?

Another practitioner made similar observations:

> Many women have spoken about being punished for reporting the perpetrator as they have to make all these sacrifices—moving house (costs associated), not having social media, changing their phone number. While society may think "well that's what women need to do to keep themselves safe," victims of DV are continually scrutinised by any choice that they make to restore normalcy to their life.

As comments such as these suggest, responding to clients affected by DCC presents a complex array of challenges for DV practitioners. These difficulties may be exacerbated when legal and other service providers fail to understand the dynamics of DCC or the potential risks of disconnecting from technology. Accordingly, these emerge as practice dilemmas for DV practitioners.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm the applicability and relevance of the DCC concept to the violence against women field of practice, policy, and research. DV practitioners in this study identified and described that technology is being used by perpetrators to extend their coercive and controlling behaviour. The following discussion introduces ideas for effective practice for social workers and other professionals engaged in DV work. In doing this, the potential for the development of a "DCC practice framework" is raised.

DCC as a Recognised Form of Violence: It Is Widespread and Has Unique Impacts

The findings of this national study suggest that the use of technology by DV perpetrators is widespread and pervasive. It is evident from the experience of DV practitioners that DCC has significant impacts on the safety and wellbeing of victims, and that there is a vital need to understand the dynamics, scope, and risks of DCC. It is clear that practitioners believe that technology has changed and extended the ways in which abuse of women and their children occurs. In particular, the duration, intensity, and invasiveness of violence seems to have increased with the rise of DCC. The study identifies that clients of DV services experience a variety of forms of DCC, including monitoring and threats via text messaging, email, social media, and other apps, as well as threats to distribute intimate photos and videos. Considering most studies of the non-consensual sharing of intimate photos and videos are focused on late teens and early adulthood, this finding is indicative of the need for more research on this kind of abuse with adults.

Responses to DCC Need a Survivor-led Approach

Critical to all effective DV practice and violence prevention work is the unambiguous positioning of responsibility and accountability for the violence with the perpetrator, as recognised in key policies such as Australia's National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2010) and Victoria's Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change (State of Victoria, 2016). There is a need for non-judgemental responses from service providers and law enforcement to women experiencing DCC. As practitioners observed, advising women to switch off devices, withdraw from social media, or change their numbers, is putting an enormous burden of responsibility on the victim to adjust their behaviour. Practitioners reported that this can have a significant impact on women's and children's lives, with women's isolation potentially exacerbated at a time when the support of family and friends is needed. Additionally, disengagement from technology can mean that women are uncontactable, which can impact the type and timing of support they receive from services.

Practitioners argued that switching off from technology can actually increase the risk for some women and children. They noted that, for some women, staying in contact with the perpetrator provided useful information about his mental state, which could assist them to assess their level of risk and allowed them to be able to stay safe. Their recommendations warrant attention, because it is contrary to that offered by some stalking experts. Australian forensic psychiatrists Mullen, Pathé, and Purcell (2009), for example, assert that professionals should counsel victims to maintain a total ban on direct communication with a stalker, and should assist victims to contact law enforcement agencies. However, in line with statements by practitioners in this study, there is scholarship that shows that women's assessment of the perpetrator's level of risk is usually the most accurate prediction of future violence (Weisz, Tolman, & Saunders, 2000) and this forms an important part of risk assessment processes such as those in the Common Risk Assessment Framework commonly employed in Victoria (State of Victoria, 2012).

We assert that ultimately the above discussion and examples demonstrate that safety planning with women and children around the use of technology needs to be led by

women, with women and practitioners together assessing the particular benefits and risks for each woman. This principle of "survivor-led" or "survivor-determined" practice has been part of the grassroots feminist response to DV since the 1970s (Nichols, 2013). Academic discourse indicates that survivor-led approaches, such as collaborative safety planning, encouraging self-determination, involving women in decision-making and believing their accounts of violence, leads to better outcomes (e.g., better mental health, increased safety, and follow through with prosecution) for women and their children (Goodman & Epstein, 2008; Nichols, 2013). These survivor-led principles are clearly held in social work practice as stated in the Australian Association of Social Workers' (AASW) Code of Ethics with reference to client self-determination and participation in decision-making processes (AASW, 2010).

Australia-wide training on technology and DV, such as that offered by the government agency e-Safety and non-government agency WESNET, can provide information and guidance on how to best work with women around technology use, such as how to assist women to manage privacy settings on social media platforms. The findings of this project show that many DV practitioners who work in specialised DV organisations have practice-based expertise and insight into DCC and it may be that those working in non-specialised DV organisations in particular need further education about DCC. The findings also indicate that training (and indeed further research) needs to explore the particular issues and risks that DCC can pose to women with disabilities, Aboriginal women, and women from CALD communities, as well as other groups of women who are dependent on technology. We emphasise that practitioners do not need to be technology experts in seeking to protect and empower women and children. By taking DCC seriously, asking women about their needs, and working with them to assess the risks posed by the perpetrators, we can minimise the impact of DCC.

In conclusion, these research findings have contributed to the growing evidence base that abuse via technology is not a minor issue, and can have serious impacts on women and children's safety and wellbeing. DCC is a form of DV that has unique features and requires specific evidence-based responses. The development of a practice framework for responding to DCC would assist practitioners to respond to the risks posed by DCC, while still allowing women and children the freedom to participate in the digital world.

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