



# RITA

## Recognise and Interrupt Technology Abuse



### EVIDENCE, LEARNING AND EVALUATION SUMMARY

**JANUARY 2025**

“*[I] have a better understanding of how to use technology for my safety and wellbeing*”

Project RITA aims to **Recognise and Interrupt Technology Abuse**. The initiative is an action research partnership project between YFS Ltd and security experts Concentric Concepts to develop, trial and evaluate responses to technology-facilitated abuse.

Project RITA ran from January 2024 to December 2024.

#### Background

Domestic and family violence victim-survivors and services are grappling with escalating levels of technology-facilitated abuse, including financial abuse, stalking and coercive control. The impact of this type of abuse on victim-survivors can be significant and long-lasting. Yet many in the domestic and family violence sector feel ill-equipped to respond and find it challenging to keep up with the ever-changing landscape of technologies that are being used to abuse, control, stalk and harass.

## Project activities

**Project RITA supported 90 victim-survivors and 133 sector workers through the following activities:**

- **42 women** attended one of seven community hub sessions, where 71 personal devices were checked for threats which could compromise their safety
- **30 women** benefited from technology sweeps, where their vehicles or homes were checked for threats such as tracking devices, listening devices and cameras
- **20 women** benefited from in-home residential vulnerability assessments
- **26 women** benefited home security upgrades, including installation of security cameras, sensors lights, screen doors and changed locks
- **30 women** received specialised, wrap-around support, which included on-going risk assessment and safety planning
- **133 sector stakeholders** attended one of eight capacity-building sessions providing practical tools to identify and respond effectively to technology-facilitated abuse

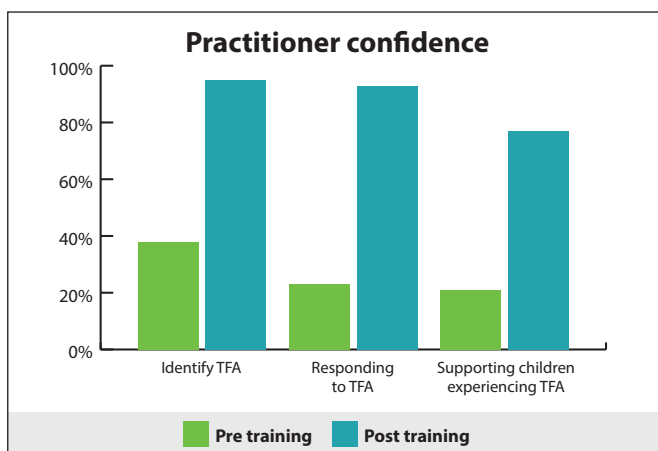
## Key outcomes

**For people impacted by technology-facilitated abuse:**

- **89%** had better knowledge and awareness of technology-facilitated abuse
- **86%** had a better understanding of how to use technology for their safety and wellbeing
- **95%** felt somewhat or very safe at the end of service
- **79%** improved their financial stability

**For sector workers:**

- **97%** felt they had a better understanding of technology-facilitated abuse
- **95%** felt confident to identify technology-facilitated abuse
- **93%** felt confident to respond and safety plan around technology-facilitated abuse
- **77%** felt confident in their practice supporting children experiencing technology-facilitated abuse



## Key learnings

**Project RITA highlighted:**

- **There are gaps and missed opportunities in the service system** in responding to technology-facilitated abuse. Ineffective screening and assessment leads to ineffective safety planning and actions that can inadvertently increase the risk of harm and put more pressure on already stretched resources.
- **Integrated responses are effective.** Identifying and responding to technology-facilitated abuse requires the dual expertise of a specialist domestic and family violence lens and a specialist technology-based security lens for comprehensive and effective risk assessment, safety planning and responses.

*“It’s a relief to know I can safely use [my devices] without my location being found”*

## Recommendations

**Opportunities to continue to improve responses to technology-facilitated abuse include:**

- 1 More sector education and training
- 2 Establishment of referral pathways for specialist advice and support
- 3 Embedding RITA team in High Risk Teams across Queensland
- 4 A targeted regional pilot focused on every victim-survivor entering emergency accommodation and/or refuge to minimise tracking risks, reduce pressure on already stretched resources to relocate women multiple times and improve system efficiencies
- 5 Investment in holistic, individualised support for victim-survivors experiencing technology-facilitated abuse and co-occurring forms of violence
- 6 Further research on practical strategies to interrupt technology-facilitated abuse without causing unintended safety consequences