

Mutually Beneficial Evaluation Tools: A Focus on Relevance, Value, and Organizational Context

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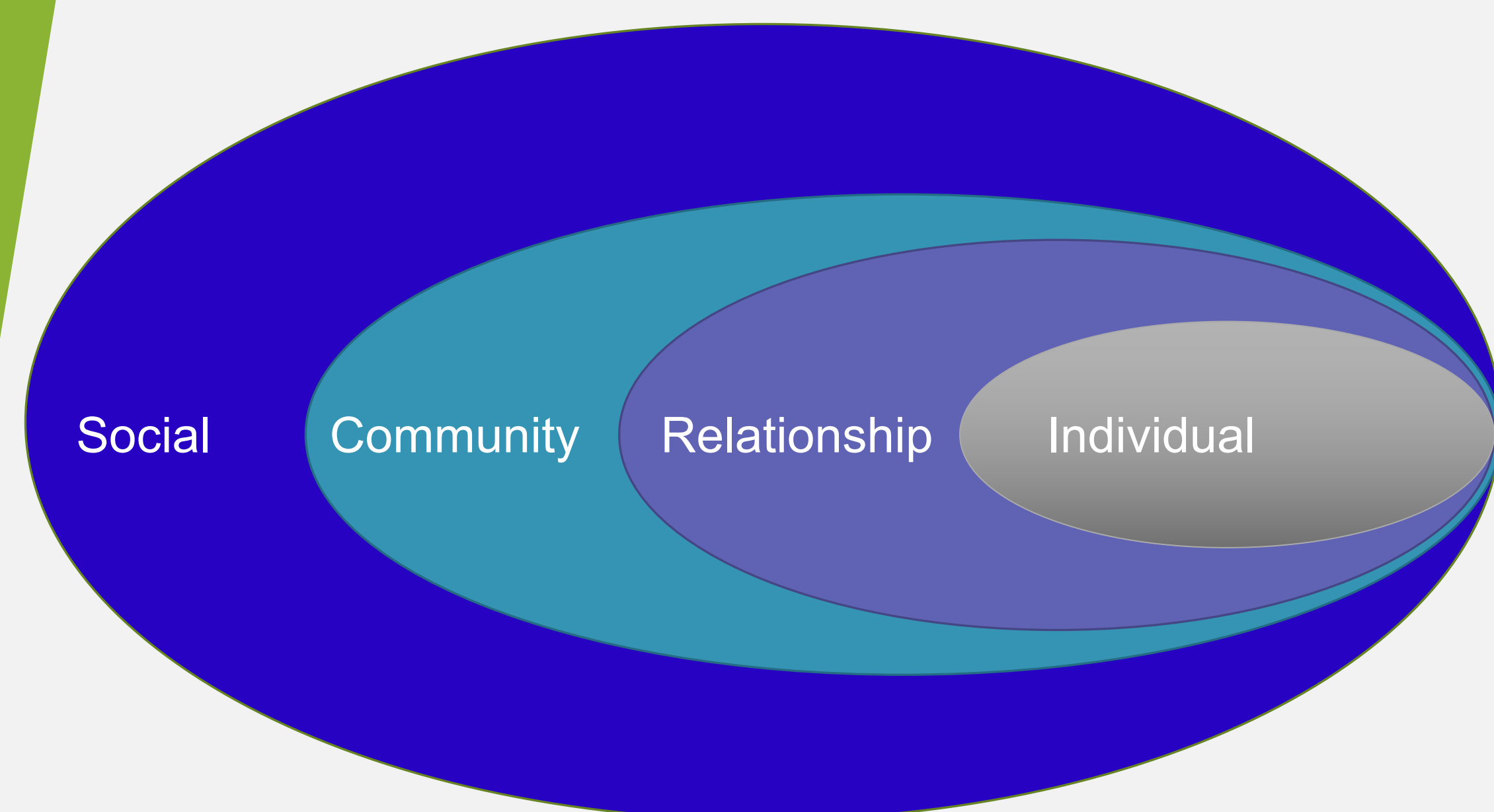
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Introduction

The DELTA FOCUS (Domestic Violence Prevention Enhancements and Leadership Through Alliances, Focusing on Outcomes for Communities United with States) Project is a five-year program funded through the CDC (Centers for Disease Control). The DELTA FOCUS project funds ten state domestic violence coalition grantees for intensive implementation and evaluation of intimate partner violence (IPV) primary prevention strategies that address social and structural determinants of health at the social and community levels of the social-ecological model.



The MCEDSV (Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence) DELTA FOCUS project aims to facilitate successful strategies for primary prevention of IPV that engage a diversity of stakeholders in addressing root causes of violence. The root causes of violence are conceptualized as oppression in its various forms (e.g., racism, sexual, ageism, etc.) and DELTA FOCUS participants receive training on how to identify these oppressions in their organizations' messaging, policies, and procedures (MPPPs), and revise these MPPPs to be more equitable and inclusive.

Process Indicator: Collaboration

One of our process indicators was expanding the number and nature of participants' collaborations, with the hope that the inclusivity of participants' MPPPs would benefit from a more diverse set of perspectives.

Measurement Attempt #1

Our first attempt at measuring collaboration was a survey that asked them how many people they collaborated with and what they did with those partners. But the results were terrible—our respondents selected the highest number of collaborators we gave as an option and checked off every activity we listed.

Course Correction

Why had our collaboration survey fallen flat? We identified three major issues: social desirability bias, a focus on *breadth* rather than *depth* of their collaborations, and lack of interest from our participants filling out the survey. Many of our participants were used to evaluation measures in the context of grant funding or other financial accountability. This may have encouraged them to respond with the "highest" or "best" ratings on the evaluation questions. Relatedly, financially-motivated evaluation measures typically ask participants to report on *how many* people they served, *how many* meetings they had, or *how many* things they did. Our survey asking about how deep their relationships went was likely not something they were used to. Finally, our evaluation gave nothing back to our participants, so they gave it little in return.

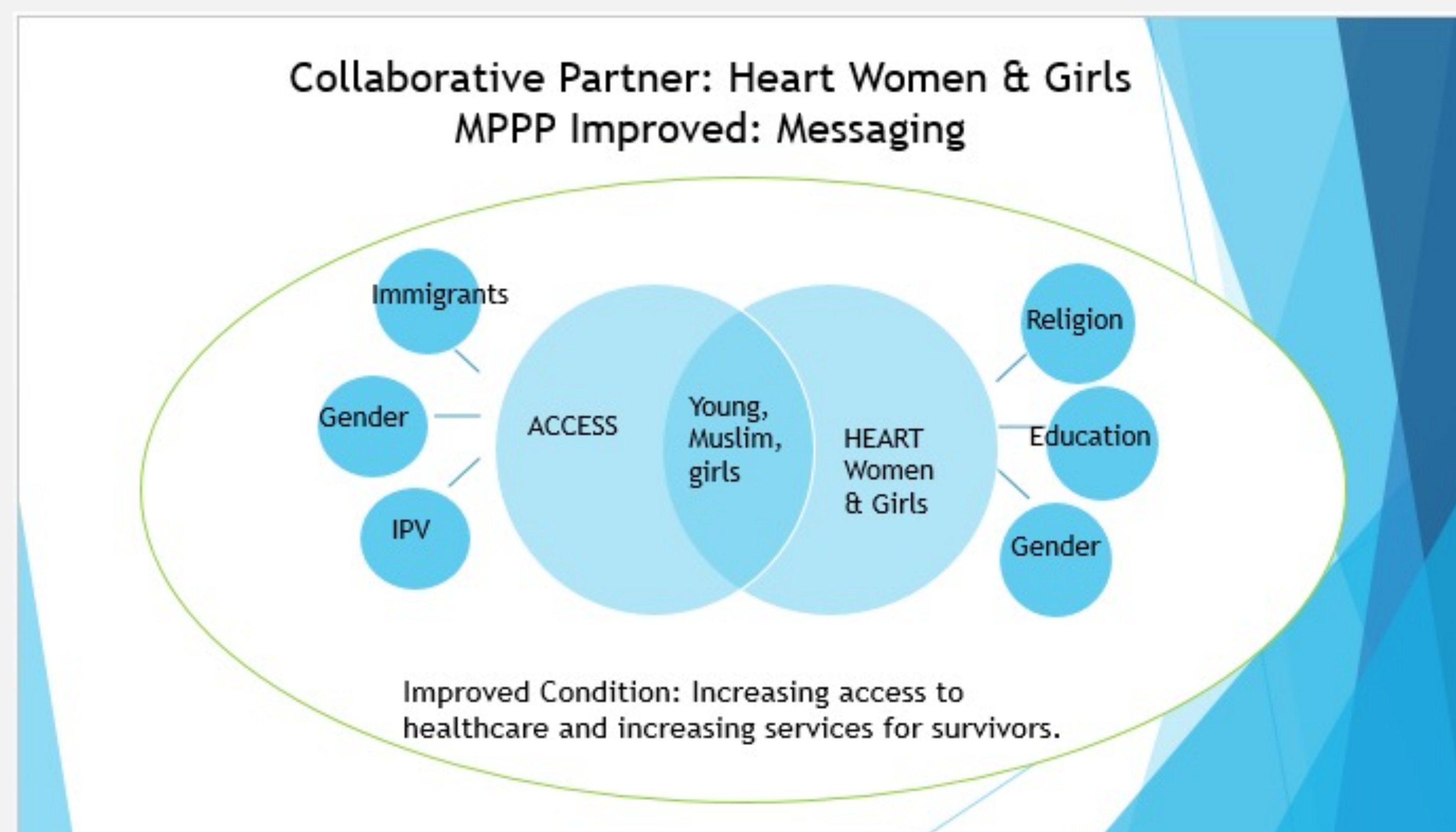
Collaboration Survey

How many partners do you collaborate with?
(A) None
(B) 1-2
(C) 3-4
(D) 5 or more ✓✓✓✓

What do you do with your collaborative partners?
(A) Edit your promotional materials ✓✓✓✓
(B) Edit their promotional materials ✓✓✓✓
(C) Work on your agency's website ✓✓✓✓
(D) Work on their agency's website ✓✓✓✓
(E) Receive feedback on your agency's policies, SOPs, or other procedures ✓✓✓✓
(F) Give feedback on their agency's policies, SOPs, or other procedures ✓✓✓✓

Measurement Attempt #2

We completely restructured our data collection to address these issues. Instead of a survey, we conducted interactive PowerPoint interviews. Using screen sharing software, our program coordinator asked evaluation questions of participants regarding their partnerships in the community. As the interviewees talked, she



summarized their responses in real time on the shared screen. She encouraged participants to approve and/or make changes to what she had written. When the process was completed, a presentation of how the DELTA FOCUS project had influenced their partnerships had been created. Through this method, we were able to gather the evaluation information we needed, while leaving our participants with a PowerPoint presentation they could share with their board, funders, and other stakeholders.

Discussion

Why did the Interactive PowerPoint Interviews provide better data?

- **Relevance.** The Interactive PowerPoint Interviews allowed us to steer the conversation to the most relevant points. If participants began listing all the people they had ever collaborated with, we could steer the conversation back to the depth of their collaborations.
- **Value.** The Interactive PowerPoint Interviews were potentially useful to participants. When they got something out of it, the participants were excited to participate in the evaluation and we got higher quality data..
- **Organizational Context.** Our initial Collaboration Survey had not considered the relationship most of our participants had with evaluation. Our participants were used to evaluation as potentially punitive, and may therefore have been used to responding with the highest value for every question asked.

What are the implications of this data collection method?:

- Evaluators should think creatively about how they can gather evaluation data in a format that is useful for participants. This has the potential to positively impact both participation and data quality.
- Data collection tools should be designed with an understanding of organizational context, with particular attention paid to contextual factors that may encourage different interpretations of evaluation constructs (e.g., breadth vs. depth of collaboration)
- In contexts where evaluators do have to use more traditional data collection tools (e.g., surveys), care should be taken to discuss the planned uses of the evaluation data and break down preconceptions that may encourage socially desirability bias.

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