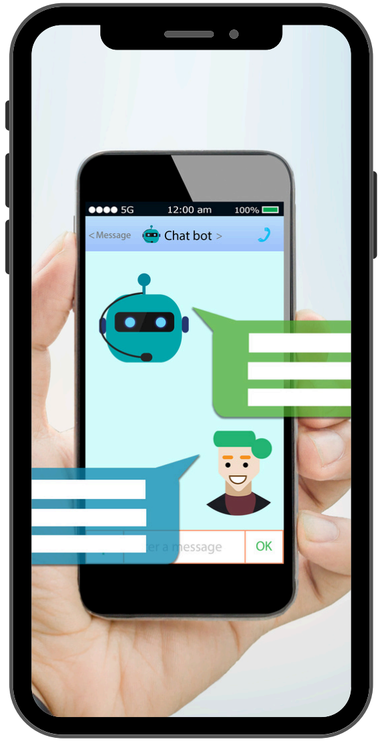

SB818 Qualitative Research

Integrating Digital Intervention to Reduce Sexual Harassment and Foster Justice

12/09/2024

Jessy Wang

Current Problem

Study in 2014:

82% of women and 42% of men in the United States have experienced sexual harassment or assault in their lives.

Study in 2018:

81% of women and 43% of men had experienced sexual harassment or assault.

The current policy and measures about sexual harassment do not function efficiently.

Current Problem

Sexual harassment:

gender harassment,
unwanted sexual attention
sexual coercion

Could happen in:

precarious working conditions.
hierarchical organizations.
a normalization of gender-based violence,
toxic academic masculinities,
a culture of silence,
a lack of active leadership

The complexity of sexual harassment makes it more challenging to identify.

Sexcual Harrassment

(National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine [NASEM], 2018).

Current Problem

More than half of students and faculty who experience sexual harassment do not report the incident

Barriers:

Fear of retaliation from the harasser;
Concerns about confidentiality;
Normalization of harassment in academic culture;
Victim-blaming attitudes;
Lack of faith in institutional responses

Huge Gap Between Harassment Rate and Reporting Rate

(Bondestam & Lundqvist, 2020)

Unpredictable Effect

Mental health challenges,

Substance use,

Decreased academic performance,

Impaired career trajectory,

Isolation,

and helplessness for individuals,

...

Solution

1.Reduce Assaulters : Education, Law, ...

2. Enough support to the (potential) victims

(Bondestam & Lundqvist, 2020)

Research Motivation:

I grew up in a small city in China, where there were barely any resources for sex education, let alone education on sexual harassment. It wasn't until I went to school in U.S. that I started learning about these topics, but by then I had already gone through a lot of confusion and challenges from not having that knowledge earlier.

What stood out to me was that the less people know about sexual education, the less likely they are to open up about issues like harassment, which can lead to much more serious consequences.

For places lacking resources, how to build a scalable solution for reducing sexual harrassment?

Research Question:

How could Conversational AI being integrated to alleviate obstacle between current sexual harassment issues and solutions?

1. **What are the barriers that Conversational AI could solve?**

2. How could conversational AI being built to solve the barriers?

- **Facilitator**
- **Ethical Issues**

Theoretical Framework

The Socioecological Model

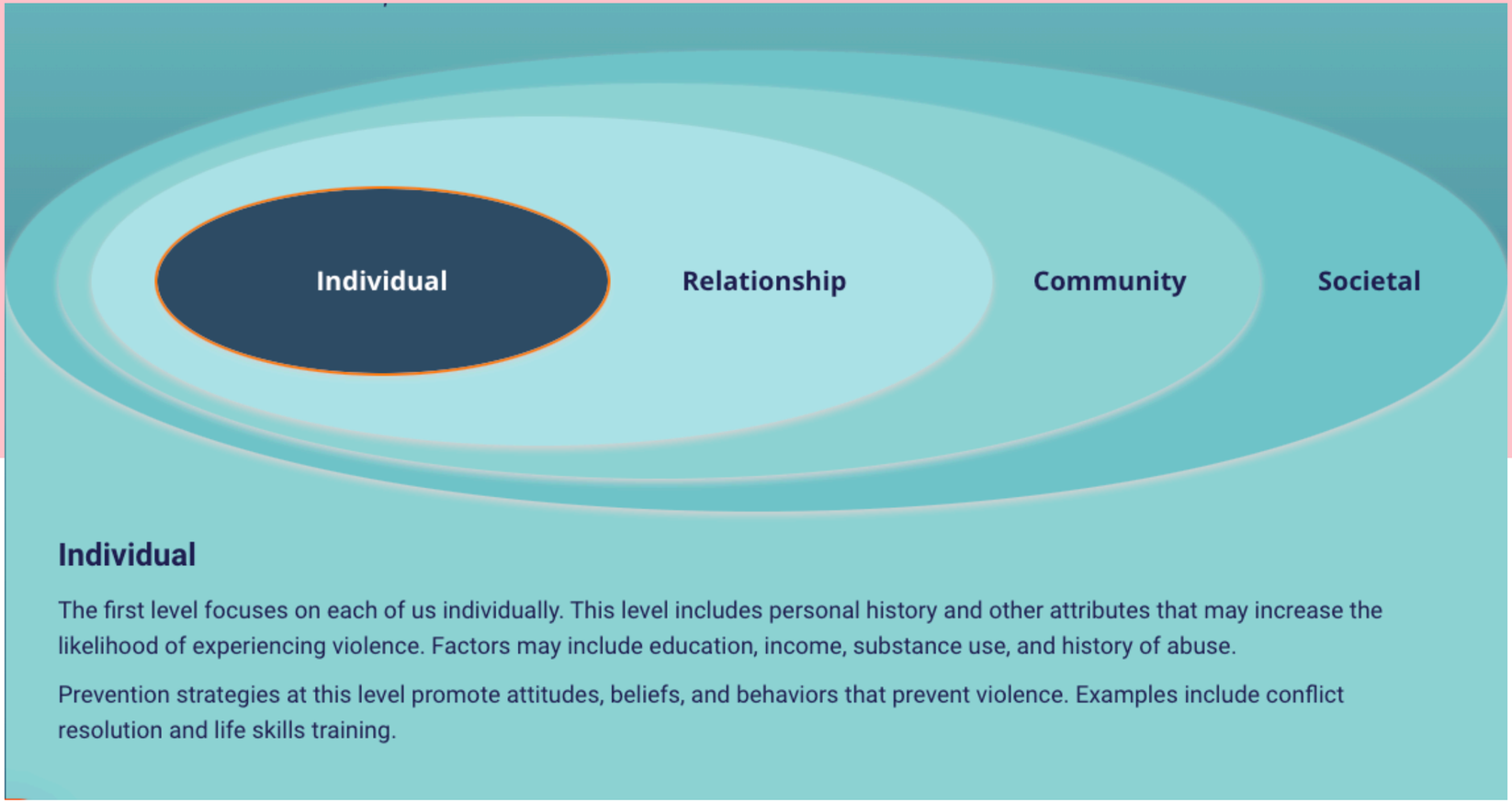

Image source: https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/main/prevention-information/violence-prevention-fundamentals/

Theoretical Framework

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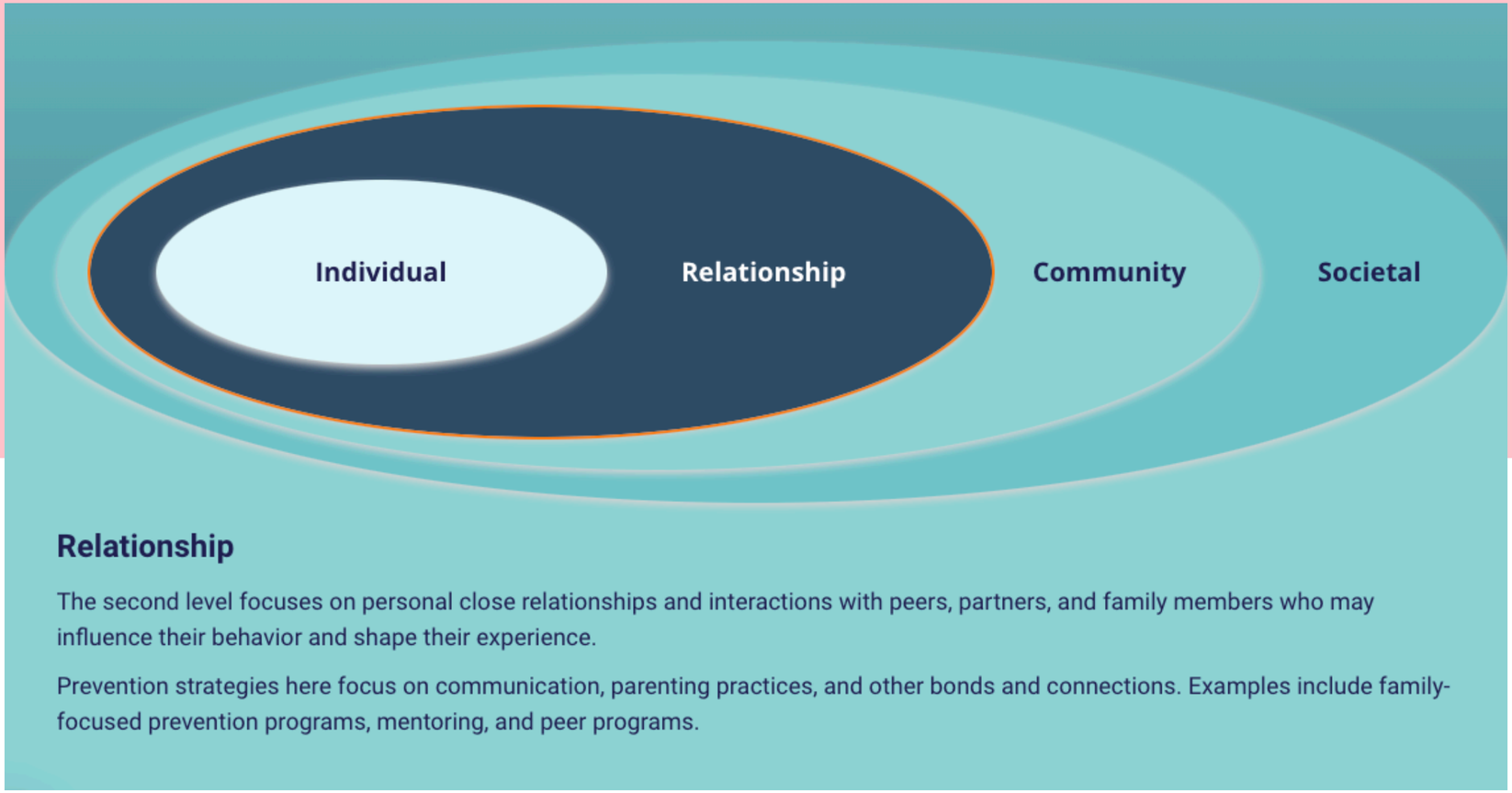

Relationship

The second level focuses on personal close relationships and interactions with peers, partners, and family members who may influence their behavior and shape their experience.

Prevention strategies here focus on communication, parenting practices, and other bonds and connections. Examples include family-focused prevention programs, mentoring, and peer programs.

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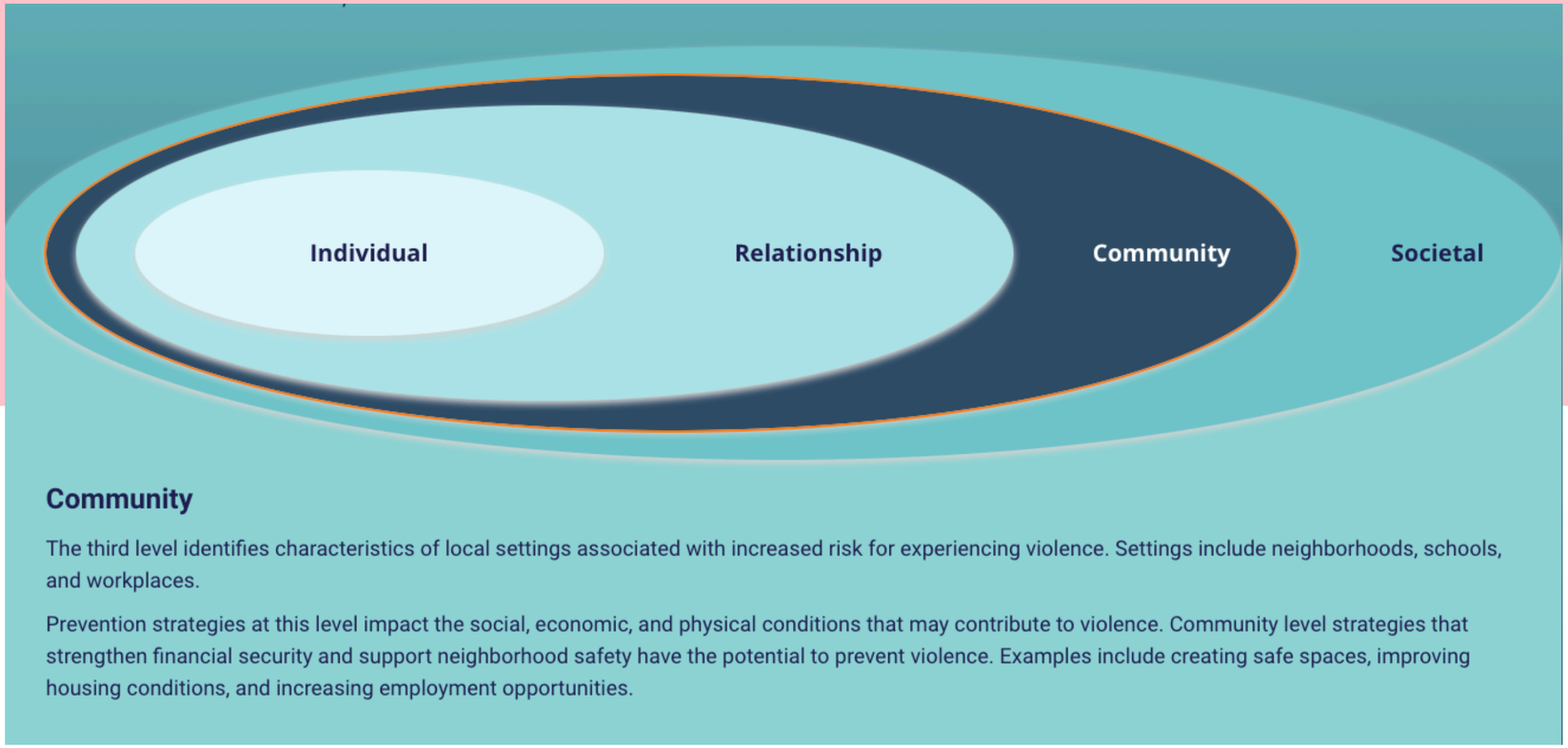
Theoretical Framework

The Socioecological Model



Community

The third level identifies characteristics of local settings associated with increased risk for experiencing violence. Settings include neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces.

Prevention strategies at this level impact the social, economic, and physical conditions that may contribute to violence. Community level strategies that strengthen financial security and support neighborhood safety have the potential to prevent violence. Examples include creating safe spaces, improving housing conditions, and increasing employment opportunities.

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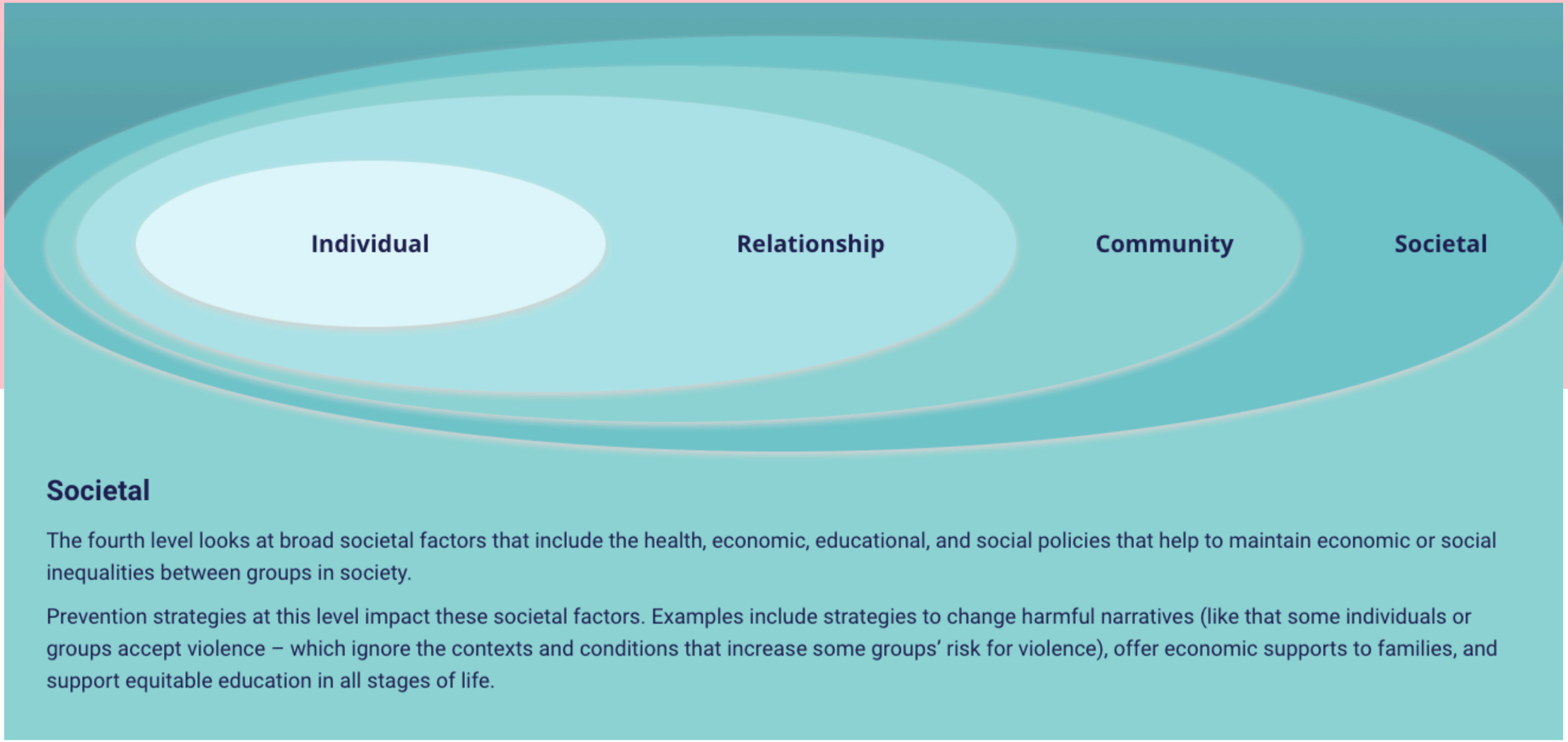
Theoretical Framework

The Socioecological Model



Societal

The fourth level looks at broad societal factors that include the health, economic, educational, and social policies that help to maintain economic or social inequalities between groups in society.

Prevention strategies at this level impact these societal factors. Examples include strategies to change harmful narratives (like that some individuals or groups accept violence – which ignore the contexts and conditions that increase some groups' risk for violence), offer economic supports to families, and support equitable education in all stages of life.

Image source: https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/main/prevention-information/violence-prevention-fundamentals/

Sexual Harassment

SAMPLING& RECRUITMENT

Potential Informants

Sex Educator, Policy Maker, Social Worker, Survivor...

Purposive/Convenience Sampling

1. Talking to my former co-workers in a Sex Education organization for Chinese

2. Reaching out to people working at Title IX

CODEBOOK

Individual Level

1. Personal Barriers	Users' hesitation to discuss sexual harassment topics due to the fear of social judgment or stigma.
1.1 Social Stigma	Societal shame associated with discussing sexual harassment, leading to reluctance in engaging with the topic.
1.2 Embarrassment	Personal discomfort or awkwardness when discussing sexual harassment-related topics in public or private settings.
1.3 Fear of Judgment	Concern that discussing sexual harassment might lead to being judged by others, reducing willingness to engage.

CODEBOOK

Individual Level

2. Confidentiality and Sense of comfort	Importance of maintaining privacy for individuals engaging in sexual harassment education.
1.1 Privacy Concerns	Worries about personal information being exposed.
1.2 Confidentiality Needs	Need for a secure environment that ensures anonymity and protects users' identities.
3. Flexibility in Learning	Users can selectively explore topics at their own needs.

CODEBOOK

Interpersonal Level

4. Influence of Friends and Family	Social stigma within interpersonal social circles that discourages individuals from discussing sexual harassment related topics.
5. Non-Judgmental Support	Chatbots provide a non-judgmental safe space for users who may feel uncomfortable discussing harassment topics with others.

CODEBOOK

Organizational Level

6. Integration into Institutional Settings	Embedding chatbots within educational or corporate systems to enhance accessibility to sexual harassment education.
6.1. School Curriculum Integration	Incorporation of chatbot-assisted learning into school programs
6.2. Workplace Program Integration	Embedding chatbot tools within workplace training

CODEBOOK

Community Level

7. Social and Cultural Norms	Cultural norms that affect open discussion about sexual harassment.
7.1 cultural taboo	Content of sex harassment education is hard to discuss in some culture
7.2 Adaptation to Cultural Contexts	Chatbots' potential to provide education in a culturally sensitive manner

CODEBOOK

Policy Level

8. Legal and Ethical Boundaries	Requirement for chatbots to adhere to privacy laws and confidentiality standards.
8.1 Compliance with Privacy Laws	Adherence to privacy regulations to protect user data and maintain confidentiality.
8.2 Ethical Standards for AI	Ensuring that AI-driven chatbots operate within ethical guidelines, particularly in dealing with sensitive topics.
9. Systematical adaption	Efforts to encourage policies that support the use of AI-driven tools for accessible sexual harassment education.

MAJOR THEME #1

Confidentiality, combined with a secure and non-judgmental environment, allows users to explore difficult sexual harassment topics without fear of exposure or judgment.

"... It's easier for them to engage with the chatbot than to ask these questions to people they know, **who might not understand or might judge them**"

- Informant #1

MAJOR THEME #2

Limited interpersonal support allow potential role of chatbots in providing safe conversation spaces.

"... People don't always feel they can talk to their family or close friends about these things, which **makes it even harder to access reliable information and support.**"

- Informant #1

MAJOR THEME #3

Flexibility is an essential design feature for chatbots in sexual harassment education, allowing users to engage with content at their own pace.

"...A chatbot can bypass this by **going straight to what the learner cares most about**"

- Informant #2

MAJOR THEME #4

Adapting language and examples to users' cultural backgrounds helps reduce stigma and makes the chatbot more relatable.

"...The language and examples provided should **align with the cultural background** of the user..."

- Informant #1

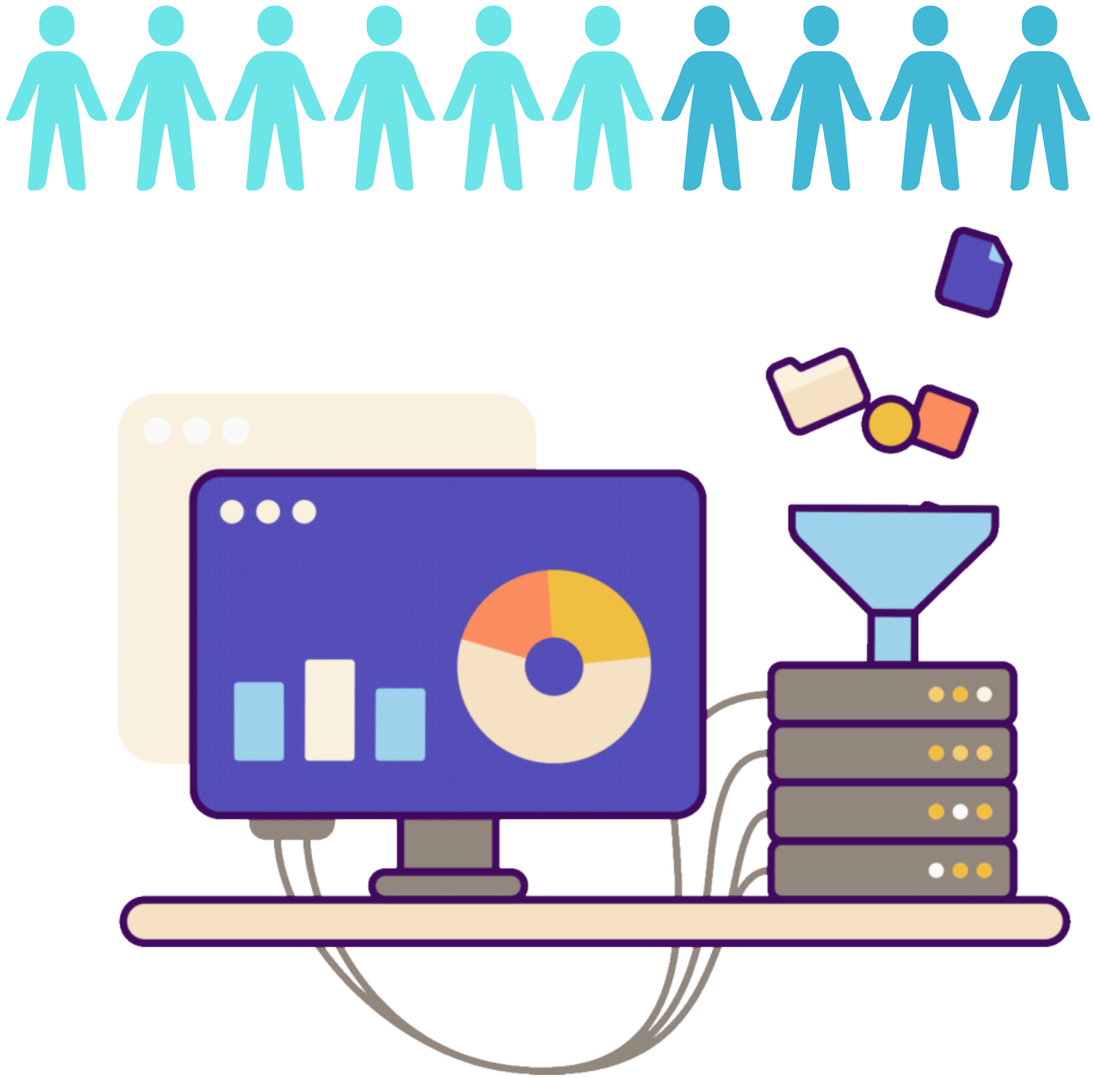
MAJOR THEME #5

Embedding chatbot-driven resource within institutional settings—like schools and workplaces—can greatly enhance its accessibility.

“...Workplaces need to implement this type of training to make it accessible for all employees.”

- Informant #2

Data Displays



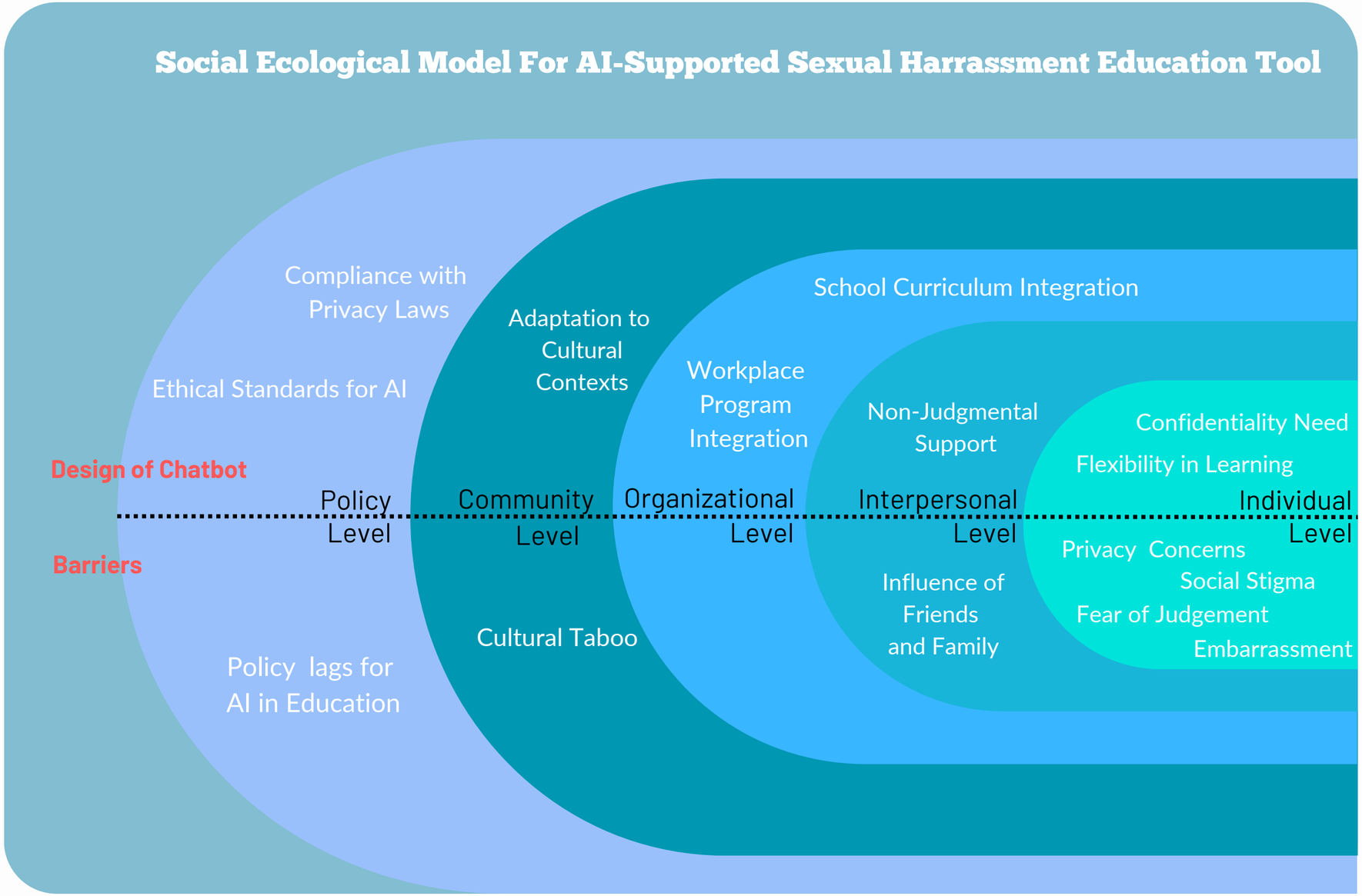

Social Ecological Model For AI-Supported Sexual Harrassment Education Tool
Compliance with Privacy Laws
Ethical Standards for AI
Design of Chatbot
Barriers
Policy Level
Policy lags for AI in Education
Adaptation to Cultural Contexts
Community Level
Cultural Taboo
School Curriculum Integration
Workplace Program Integration
Organizational Level
Non-Judgmental Support
Interpersonal Level
Influence of Friends and Family
Confidentiality Need
Flexibility in Learning
Individual Level
Privacy Concerns
Social Stigma
Fear of Judgement
Embarrassment

Figure 1.

Figure 2.

Core Design Features of Sexual Harassement Education Chatbot

Self-Paced Learning

Users can search and explore specific content about sexual harassment, accessing accurate and reliable educational material.

Cultural and Contextual Adaptability

Content lies on users' cultural contexts, helping reduce stigma and making education more relatable.

Reporting Portal

Providing users a secure and private channel to report incidents of sexual harassment before interacting with an in-person professional

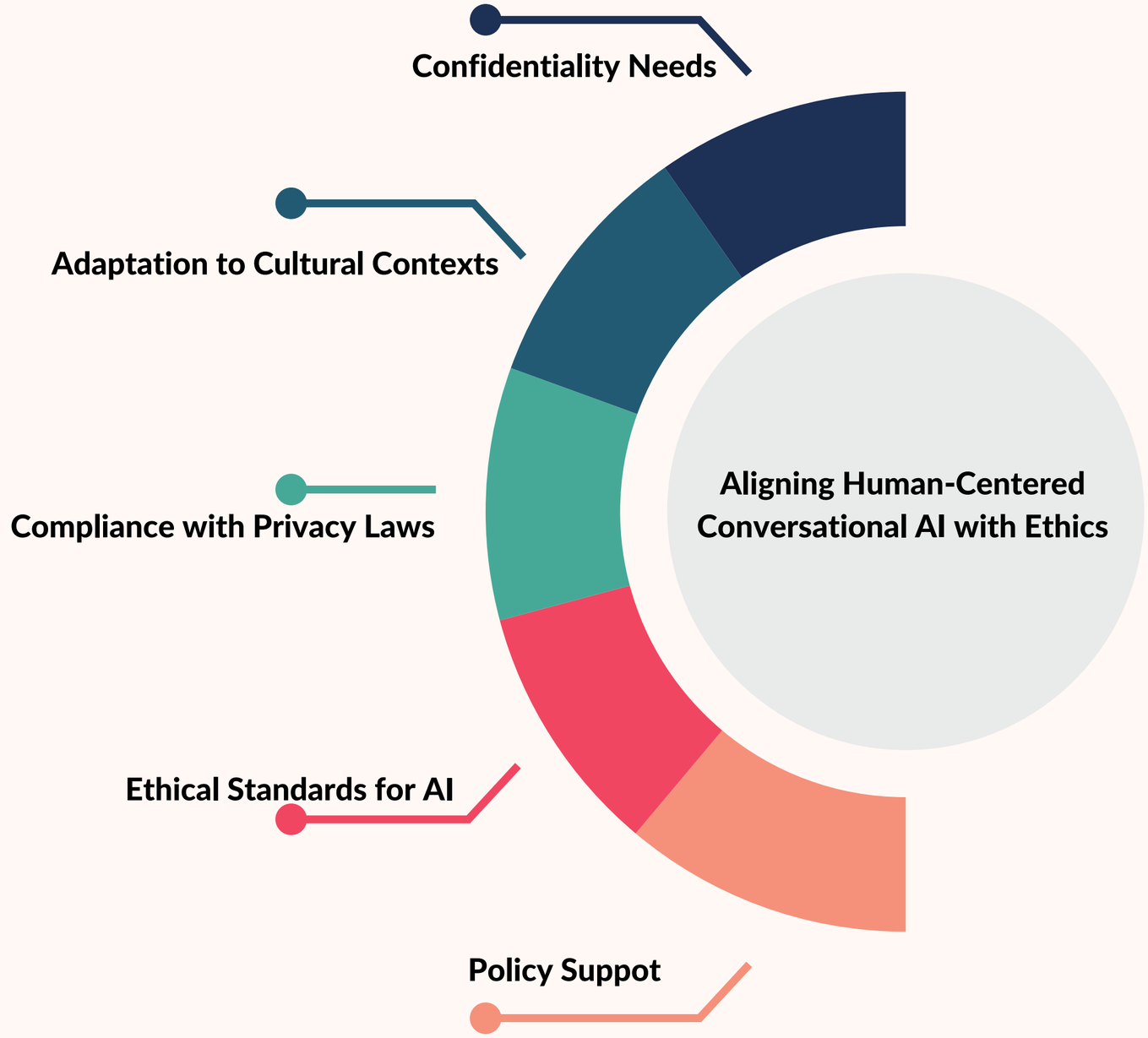
Scenario-Based Practice

Simulate real-life situations involving harassment

Self-Disclosure Facilitator

Act as a guide to help individuals disclose their concerns, validate their expressions

Figure 3.


Confidentiality Needs
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Policy Suppot
Aligning Human-Centered Conversational AI with Ethics

Thank You

December 2024