

Contextual Safeguarding: An Introduction

Swindon Safeguarding Partnership

Session overview

1. Adolescence and extra-familial harm – the target for Contextual Safeguarding
2. Challenges of the existing system
3. What would a Contextual Safeguarding system look like?

What is contextual safeguarding ?

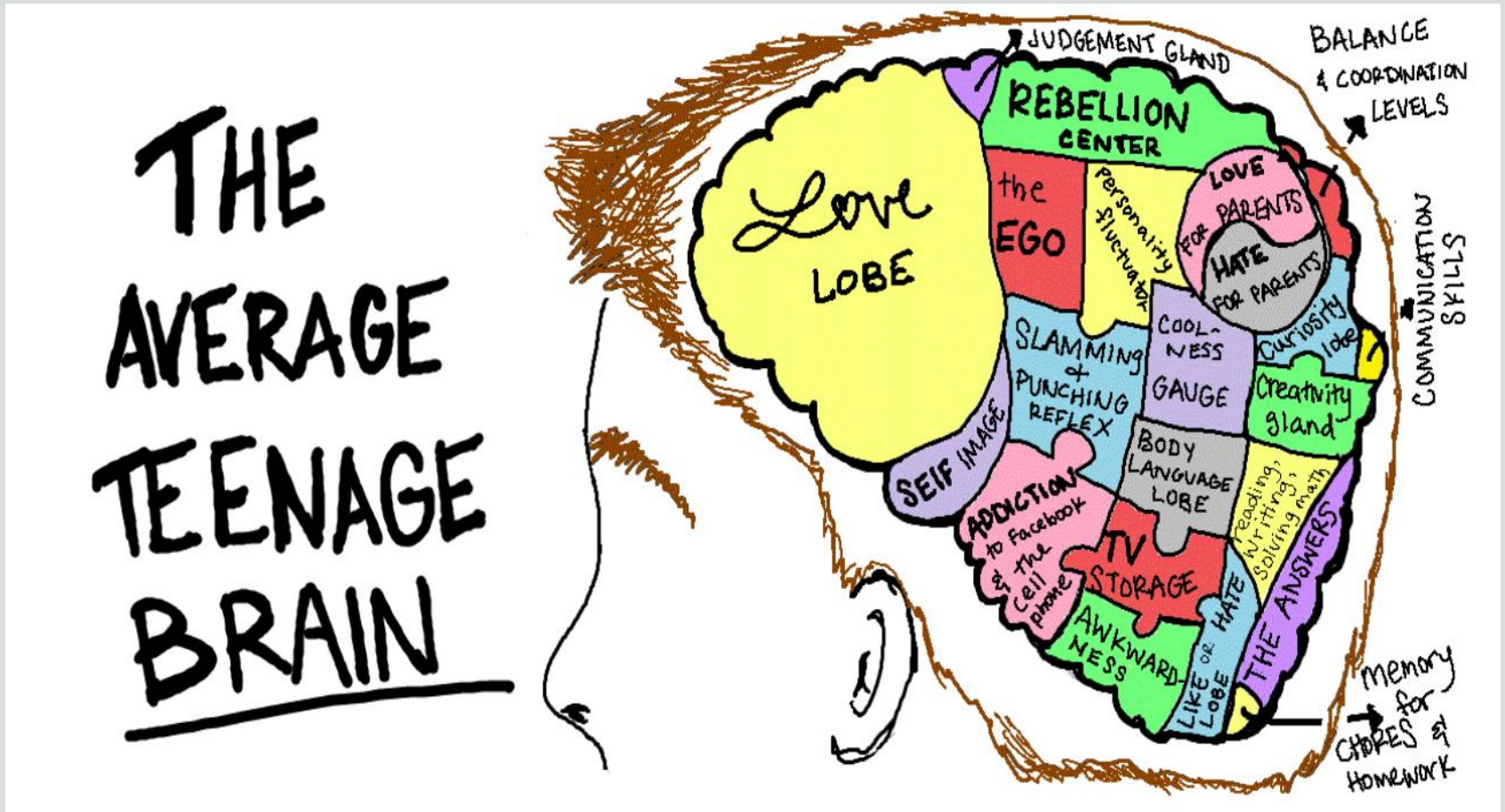
Developed by Dr Carlene Firmin at the University of Bedfordshire.

An approach to understanding, and responding to, risk to young people beyond their families.

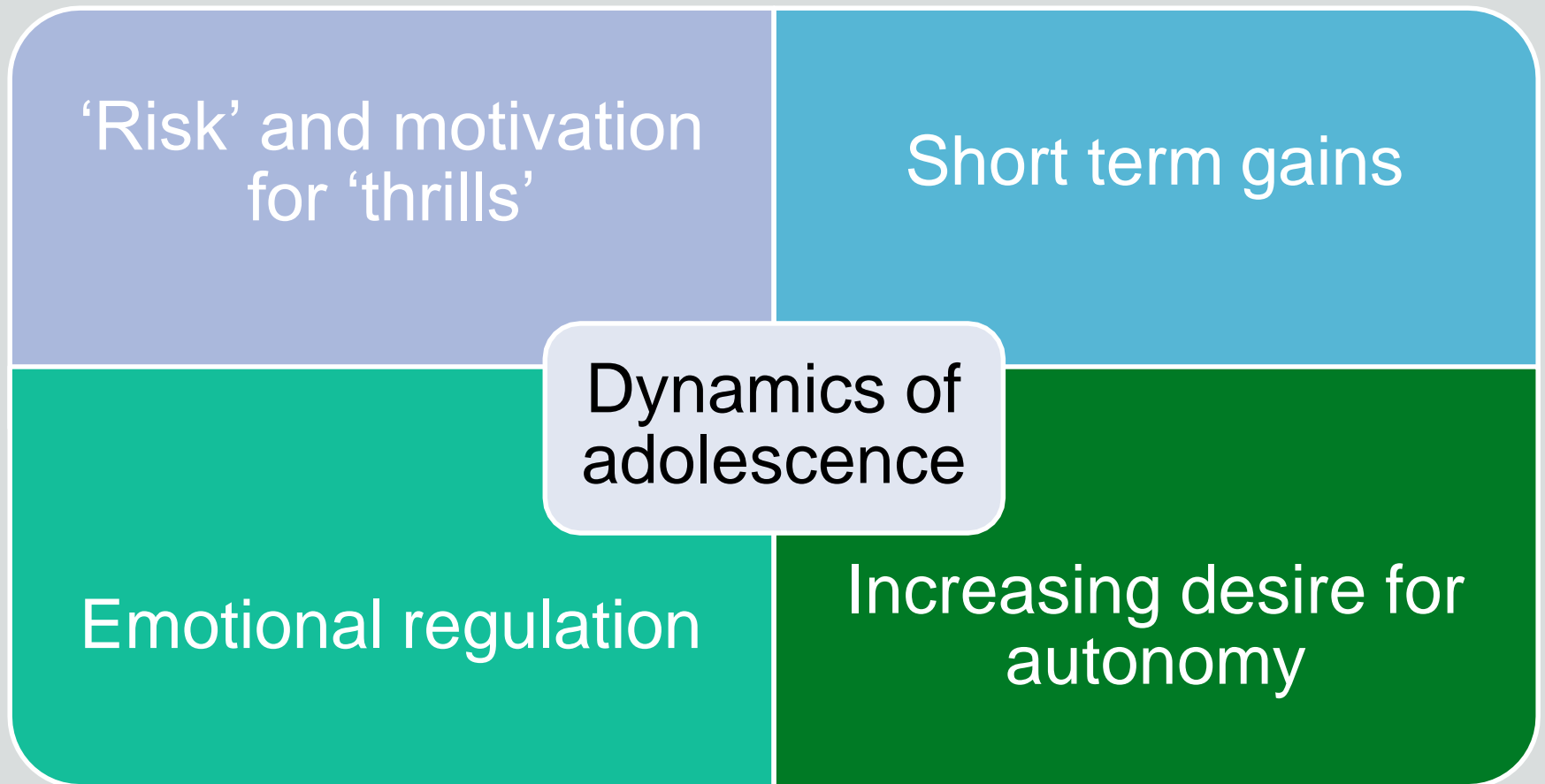
It looks at how and when interventions can change processes and environments, to make them safer for all young people.

Involves rethinking how we can all work together to safeguard young people, reducing the risks they face.

Why contextual safeguarding



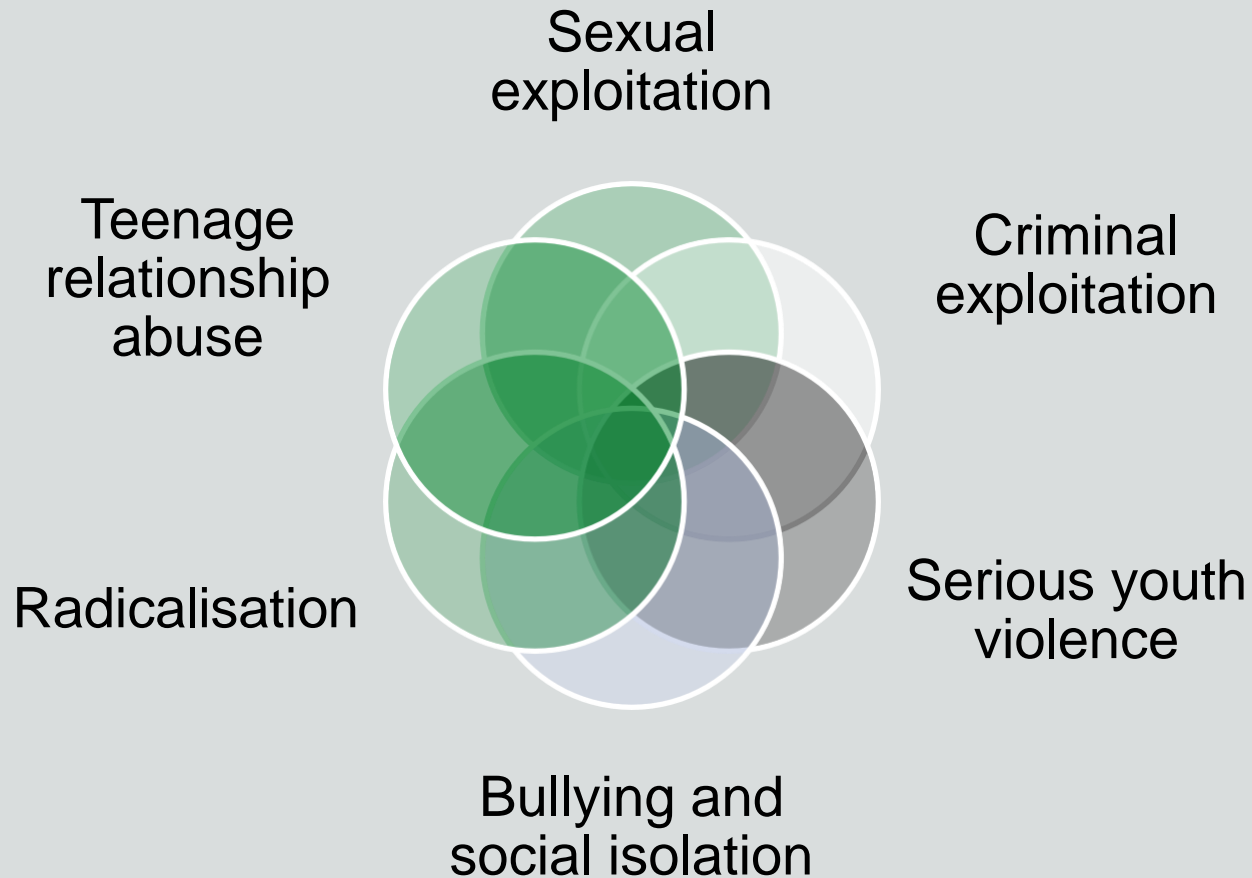
To safeguard young people, we need to understand their developmental stage



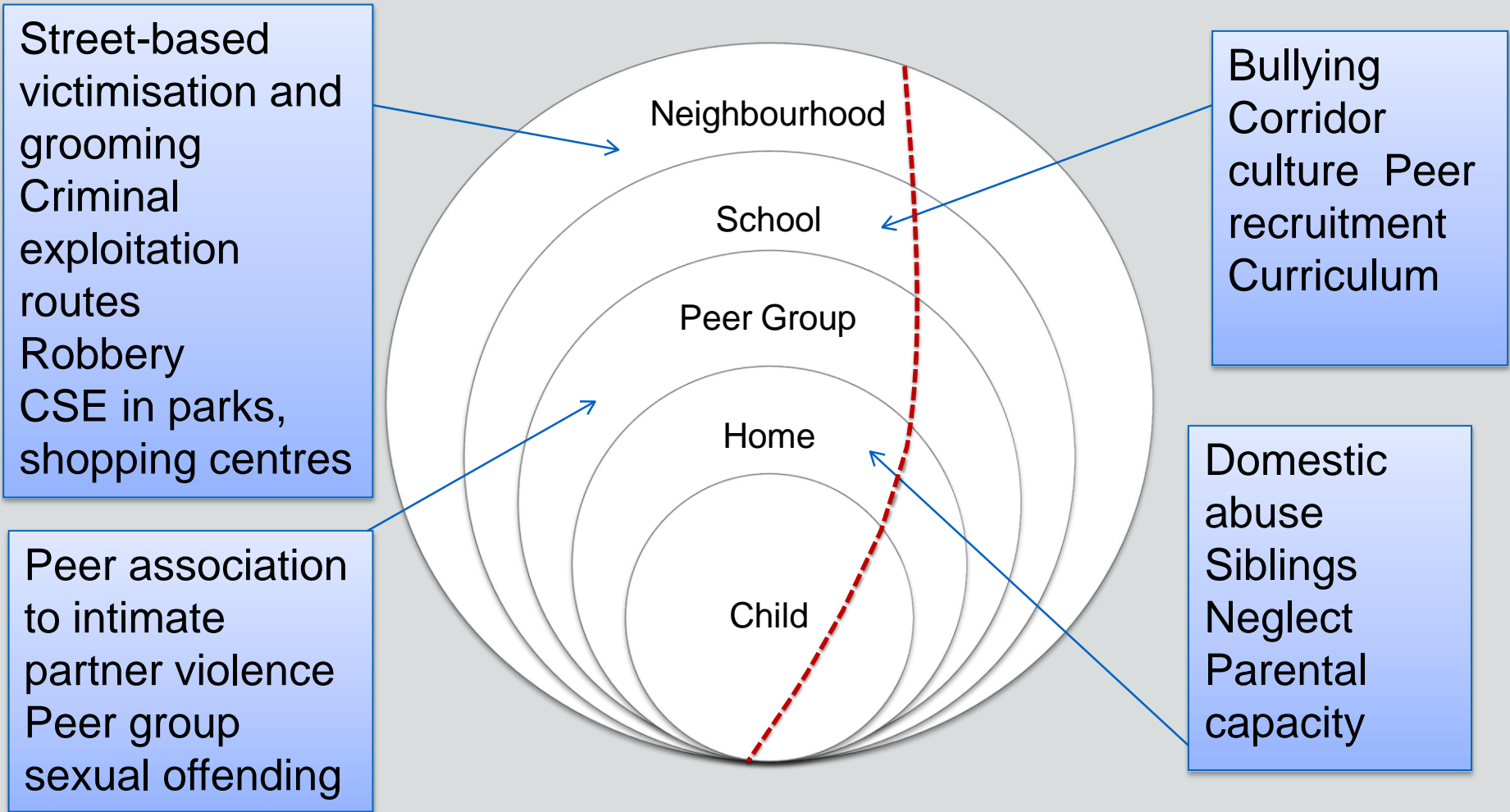
DVD clip

<https://www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/en/about/what-is-contextual-safeguarding>

Adolescents can experience various forms of *extra-familial* harm



To address these forms of harm, we need to look at the context of risk and vulnerability (Firmin, 2015)



Not
individuals

The child safeguarding system as it stands is **challenged** to respond to extra-familial harm to adolescents...

The system
wasn't built to
respond to this
type of harm

Professionals want to
and do provide a welfare
response for these
young people

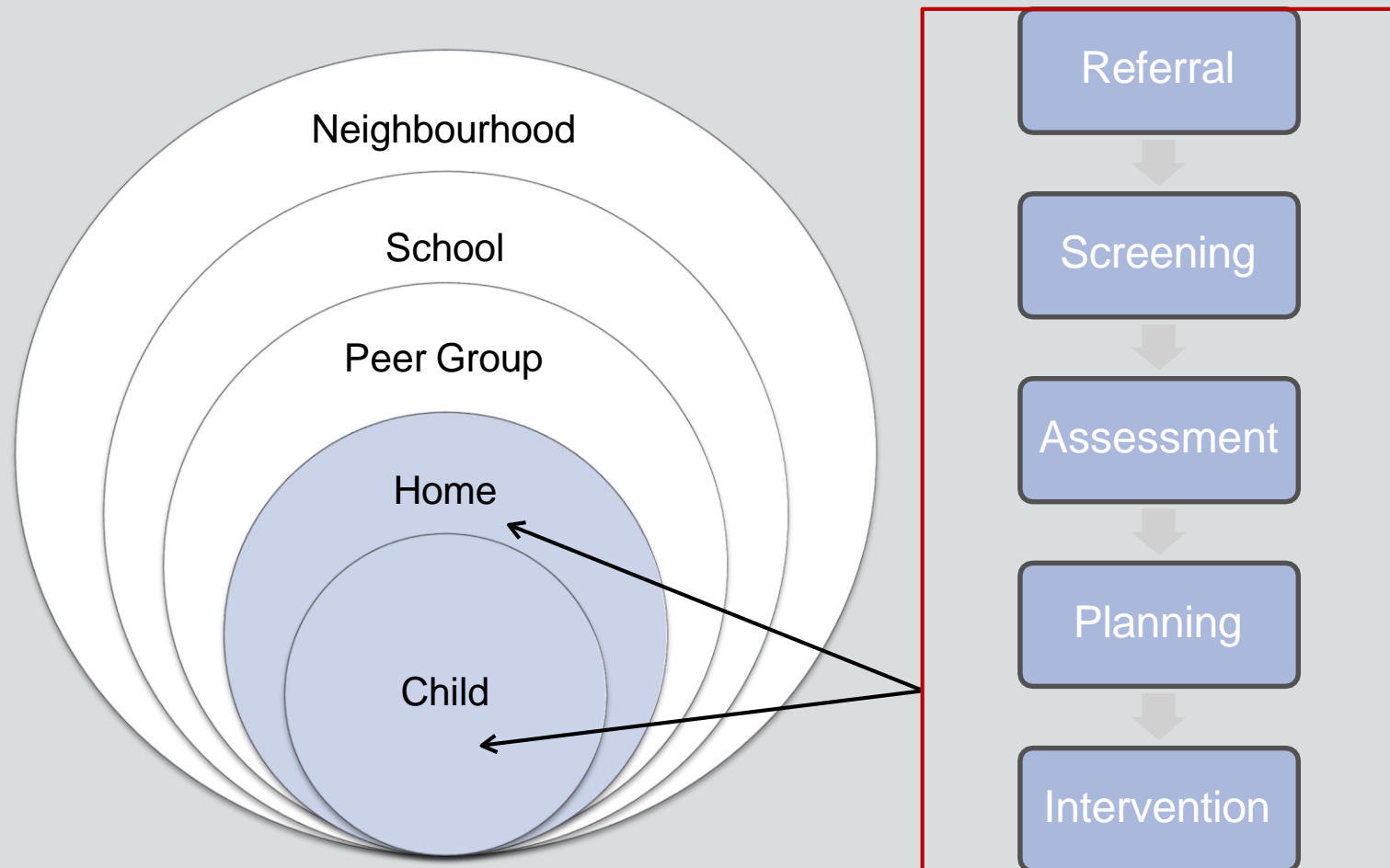
Our existing legal framework is focused on parents

- Harm **caused by the parent/carer**

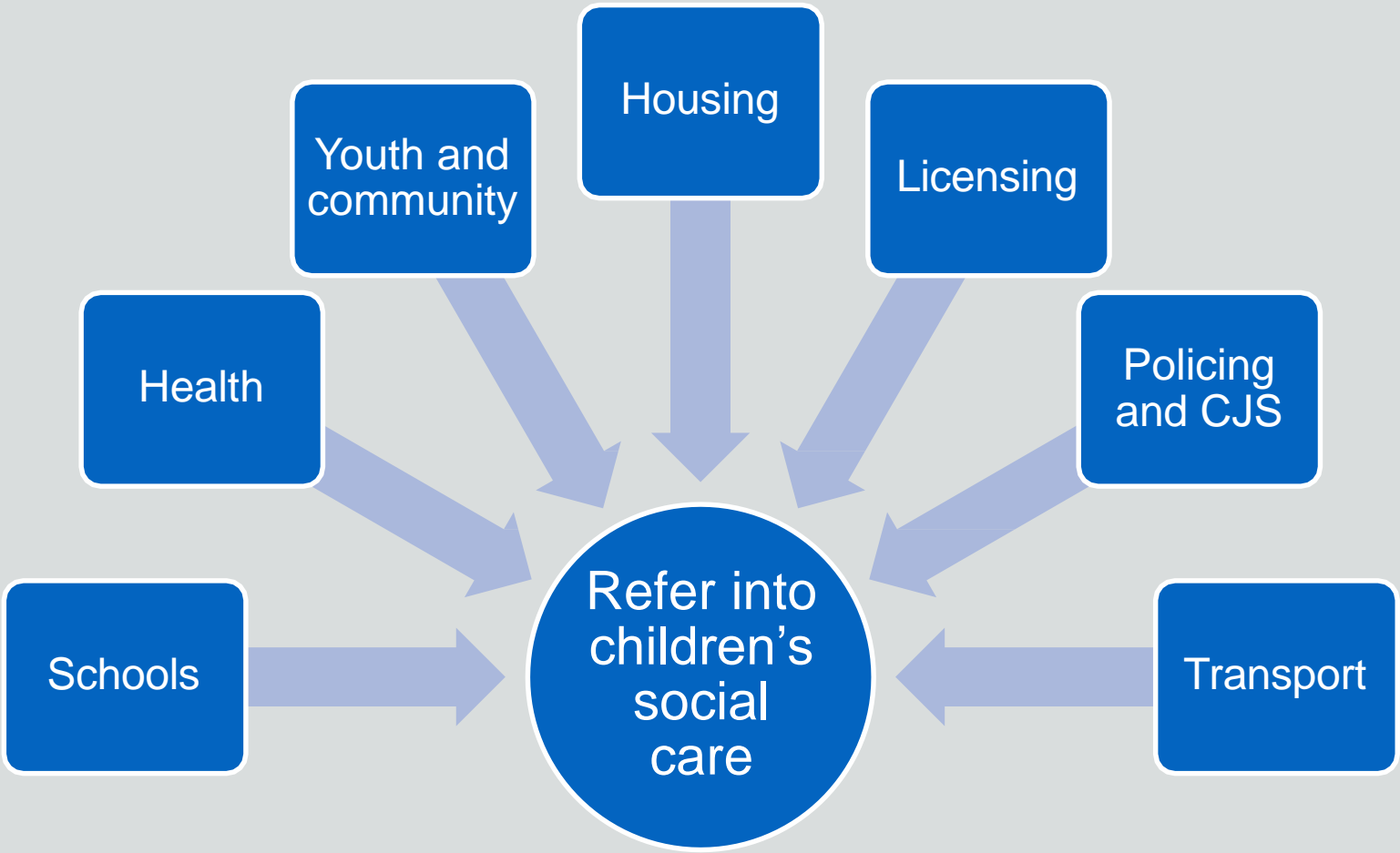
OR

- **Capacity of parents** to safeguard young people from significant harm

Traditionally, child protection systems addresses and responds to risk in the home only



'Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility' = referral and information



'It hasn't reached a threshold'

Vulnerable
adolescents
vs.
Vulnerable
children

Risk outside
the home vs.
Risk within
the home

Abuse by
young people
vs. Abuse by
adults

Unsafe social
spaces vs.
Unsafe
individuals

A Contextual Safeguarding system will make changes across four domains

(Firmin et al. 2016)



Domain 1: Target

Seeks to prevent, identify, assess and intervene with the social conditions of abuse



Domain 2: Legislative framework

Incorporate extra-familial contexts into child protection frameworks



Domain 3: Partnerships

Develop partnerships with sectors/individuals who are responsible for the nature of extra-familial contexts



Domain 4: Outcomes measurement

Monitor outcomes of success in relation to contextual, as well as individual, change



Inclusion in Working Together (2018) (1)

Contextual Safeguarding (Chapter 1 – Paras 33-34)

Explained in paragraph 34 – recognition that extra-familial risks such as sexual and criminal exploitation are forms of abuse requiring safeguarding response

‘interventions should focus on addressing...wider environmental factors’

It is important to address the contextual risks faced by young people who have instigated or perpetrated harm as well as those who they have abused

Inclusion in Working Together (2018) (2)

Five detailed changes

🌀 Early help services will typically include ... *responses to emerging thematic concerns in extra-familial contexts* (Chp 1, para 12)

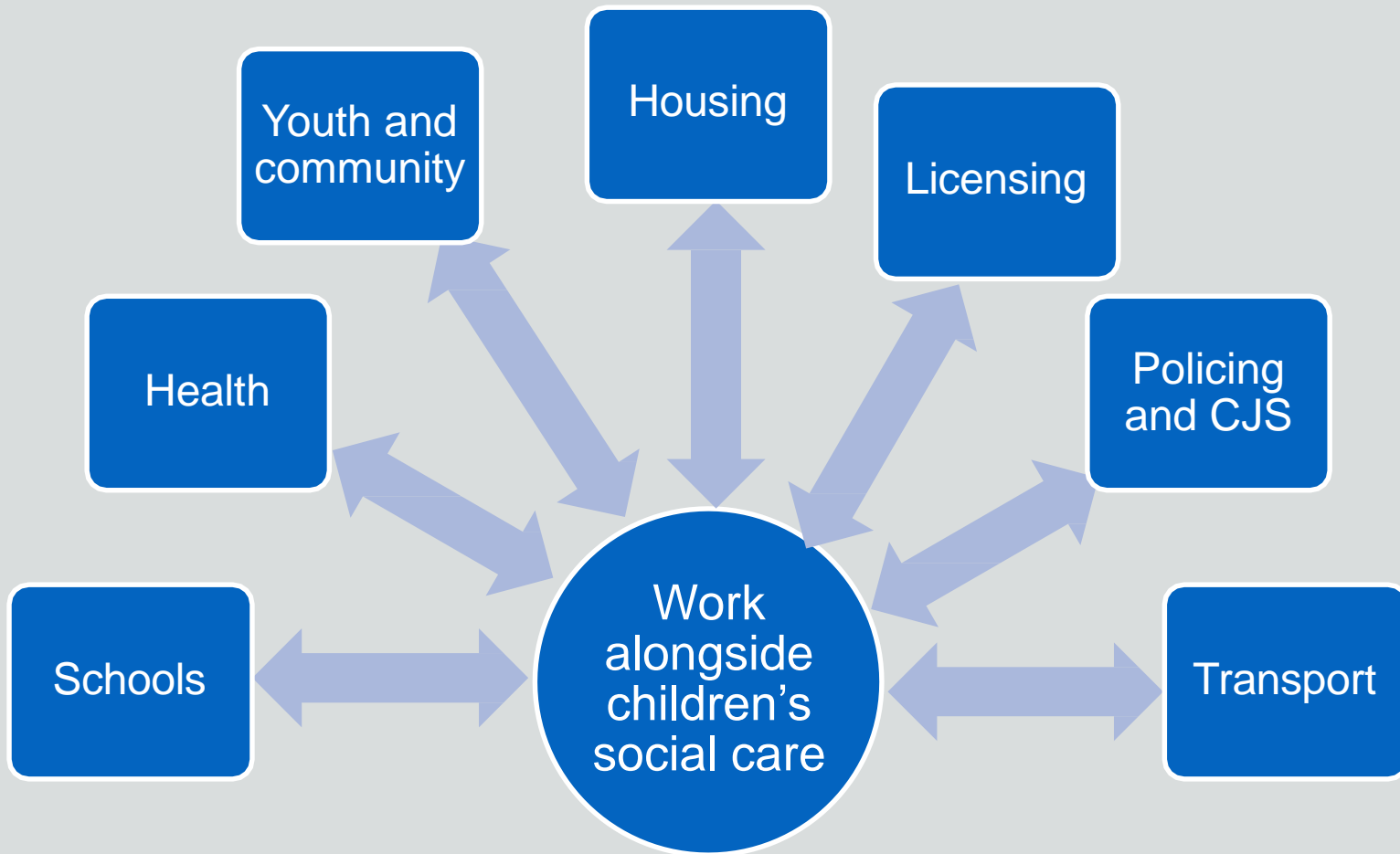
🌀 'information sharing is also essential for the ... *when multiple children appear associated to the same contexts or locations of risk* (Chp1, para 25)

🌀 Social workers...understand the level of need and risk in, *or faced by,* a family from the child's perspective (Chp 1, para 56):

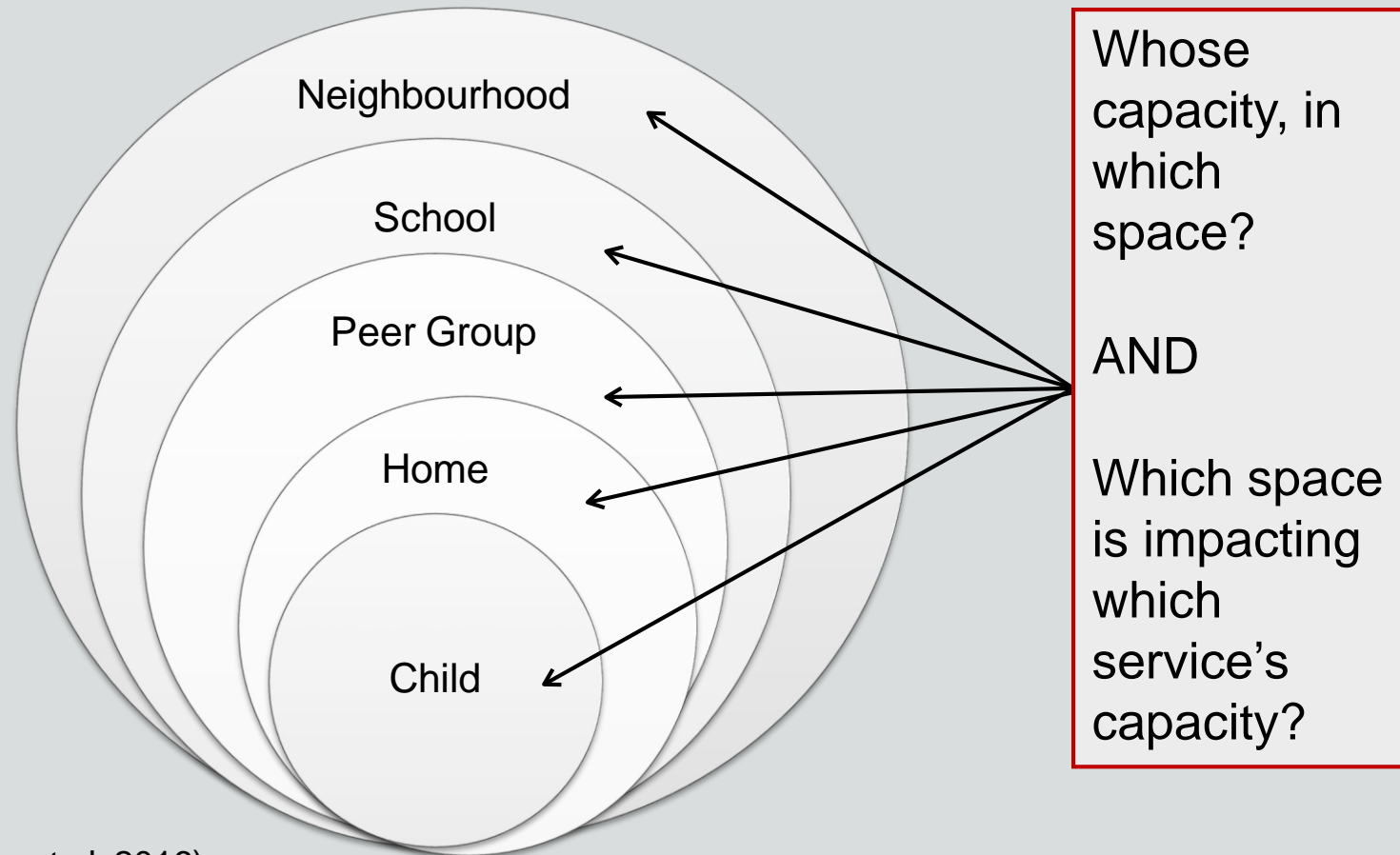
🌀 YOTs...are therefore well placed to identify children ... *and the contexts in which they may be vulnerable to abuse*'. (Chp 2, parah 41-9)

🌀 [organisations] should have arrangements in place for: '*creating a culture of safety, equality and protection within the services that they provide*'. (Chp2 Para 3)

'Everyone's responsibility' will mean creating safe spaces

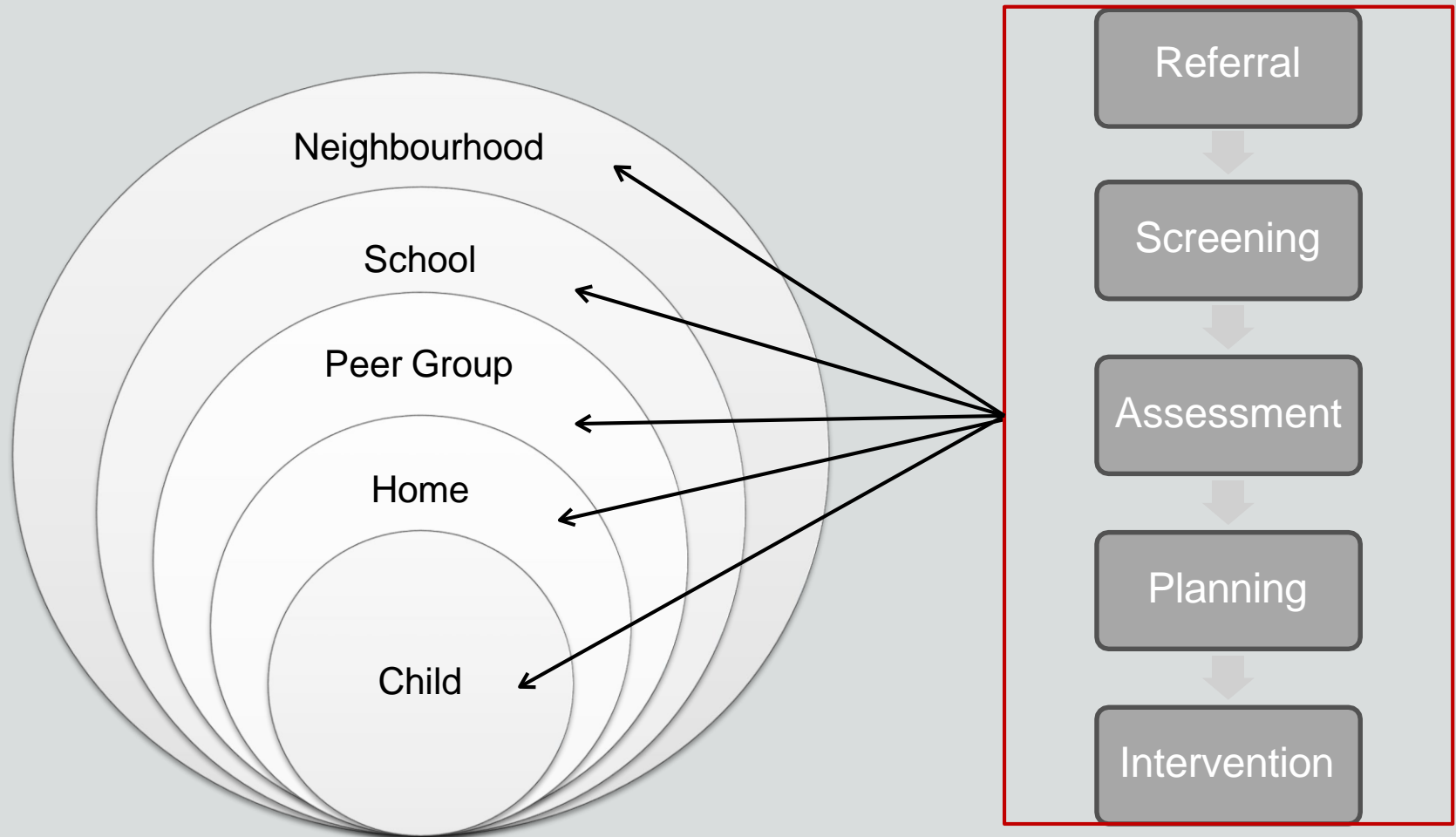


A CS system will look beyond the parents' capacity to safeguard



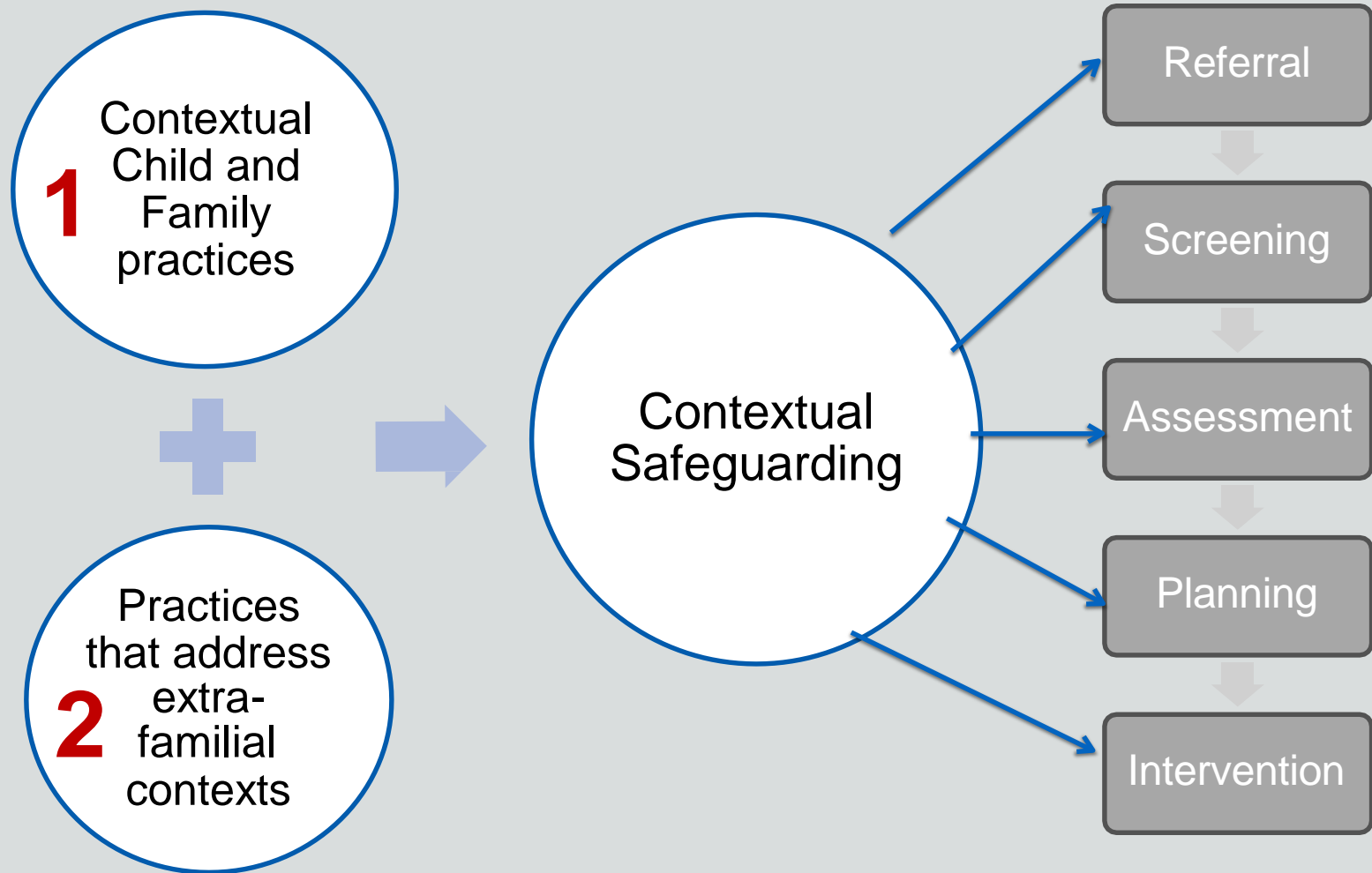
(Firmin et al. 2016)

A Contextual Safeguarding system will respond to risk and harm across contexts

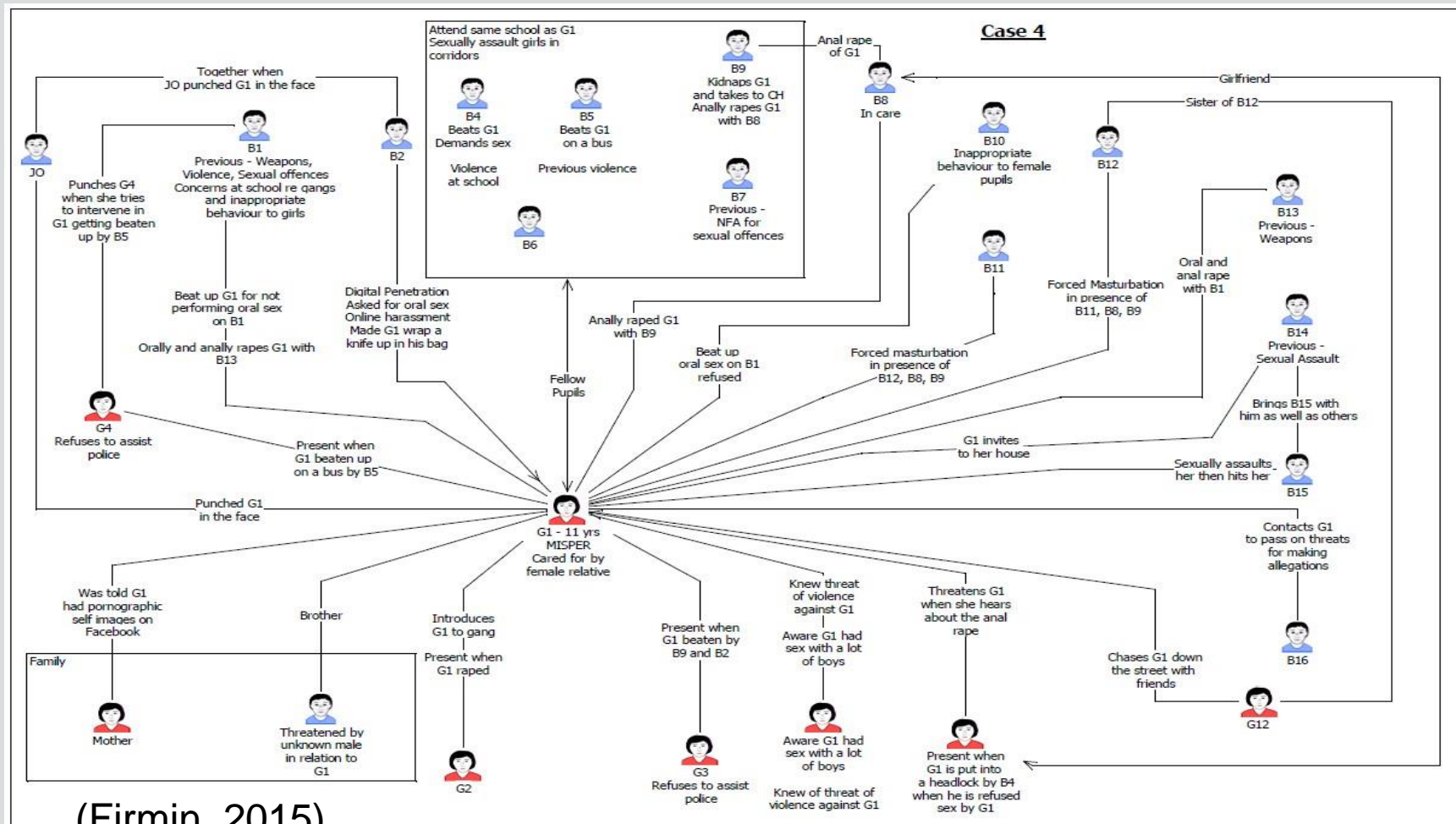


(Firmin et al. 2016)

We found that system change requires two types of development work



Peer maps can support work with individual young people, and peer groups themselves

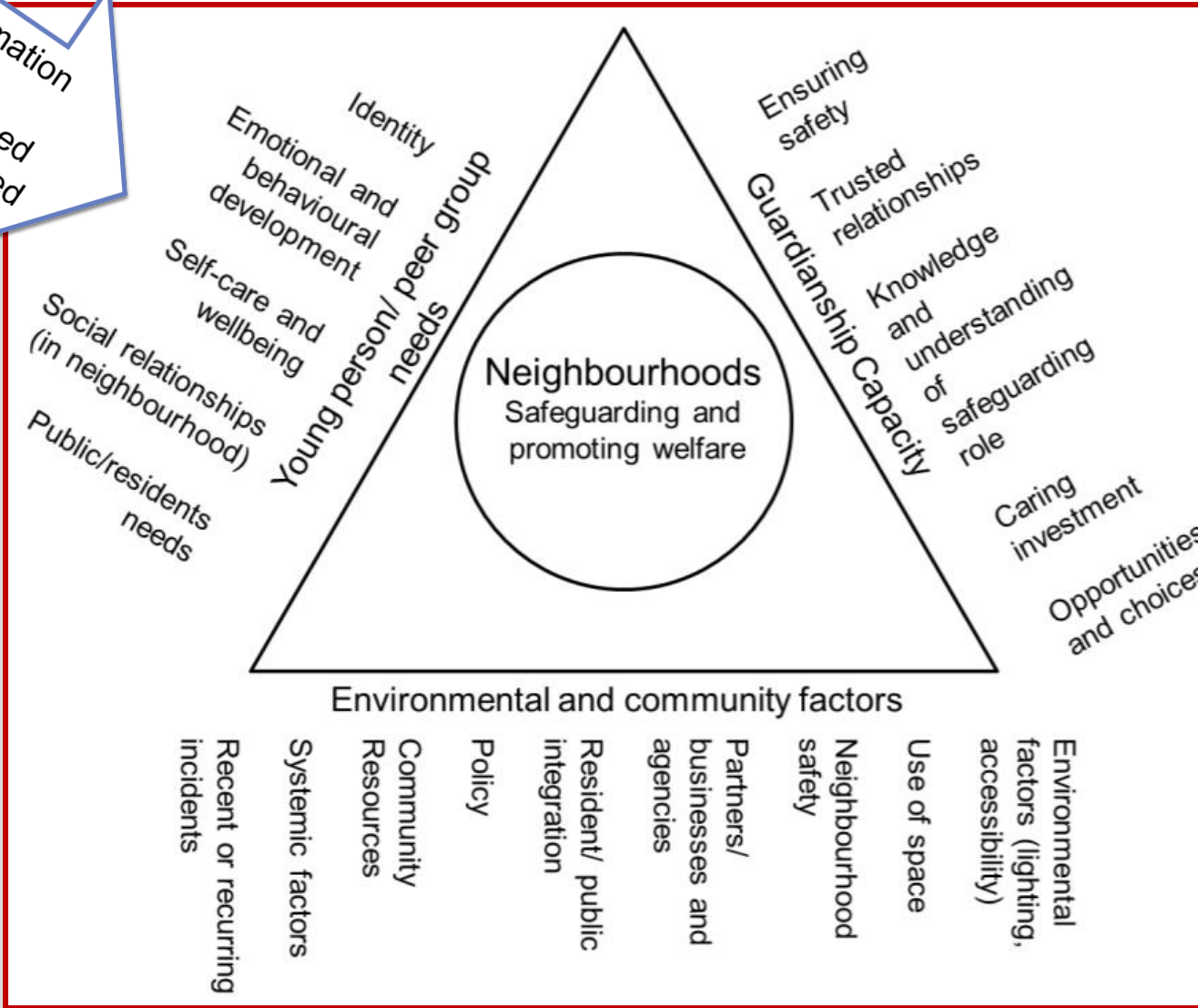


(Firmin, 2015)

School mapping (Taylor et al 2013)



Information can be generalised /anonymised



What does this mean for me?

Taking what you have learnt today into your practice

Identify agency champions

Submit intelligence to the Police using the link below -

<https://www.wiltshire.police.uk/4795>

More information visit contextual safeguarding website

<https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/>

Next stage...

Further awareness sessions

Half day multi-agency sessions for those working directly with children such as, school nurses, YEW, Family Intervention Practitioners, social workers, Police early intervention

Further training for champions