



Bullying Prevention: Research and Implementation

SuEllen Fried, A.D.T.R.

BullySafe USA

Andrew M. Terranova, Ph.D.

Department of Psychology, Rutgers University

Presented March 2008 to Prevent Child Abuse America

Overview

Outline of Presentation

What is Bullying
Who is Involved
Why Intervene
What "Causes" Bullying
How to Intervene
Review

Background

What is Bullying?

Bullying involves aggressive behaviors characterized by...

- ▶ an intent to cause pain
- ▶ intensity and duration (i.e., repeated)
- ▶ an imbalance of power
- ▶ establishment of dominance
- ▶ negative consequences



Background

What is Bullying?

Types of Bullying:



Google internet searches...

322,000 hits for "Prevent Child Abuse America"

544,000 hits for "Star Wars Kid"

688,000 hits for "cyber-bullying"

9,320,000 hits for "bullying"

Searches conducted March 11th, 2008

Background

Bullying, Who's Involved

- ▶ Bullies (13% of youth)
- ▶ Targets (11% of youth)
- ▶ Bullies/Targets (6% of youth)

(Nansel et al., 2001)

Background

Why Intervene?

Negative impact of bullying on teachers

On a daily basis...

- ▶ 6250 teachers are threatened by students
- ▶ 260 teachers are physically attacked

In an average month in public secondary schools...

- ▶ 5000 public teachers are actually harmed

Teacher Shortages

- ▶ 29% of teachers leave within 3 years
- ▶ 38% of teachers leave within 5 years

(see Fried & Fried, 2003 for review)

Background

Why Intervene?

Negative impact of bullying on the targets

- ▶ Absences/dropping out
- ▶ Academic difficulties
- ▶ Somatic symptoms
- ▶ Suicide
- ▶ Homicide

(see Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Fried & Fried, 2003; Juvonen & Graham, 2001; Orpinas & Horne, 2006; Zins, Elias, & Maher, 2007 for review)

Background

Why Intervene?

Negative impact of bullying on bullies

- ▶ Dropping out
- ▶ 1 in 4 had a criminal record by age thirty
- ▶ Males at greater risk for domestic violence
- ▶ Females at risk for becoming abusive mothers

(see Fried & Fried, 1998, 2003 for review)

Background

Why Intervene?

Child Abuse

- ▶ 3,598,000 reports of child abuse annually
- ▶ 899,000 reports substantiated
- ▶ National prevention/intervention efforts

(Prevent Child Abuse America, 2005)

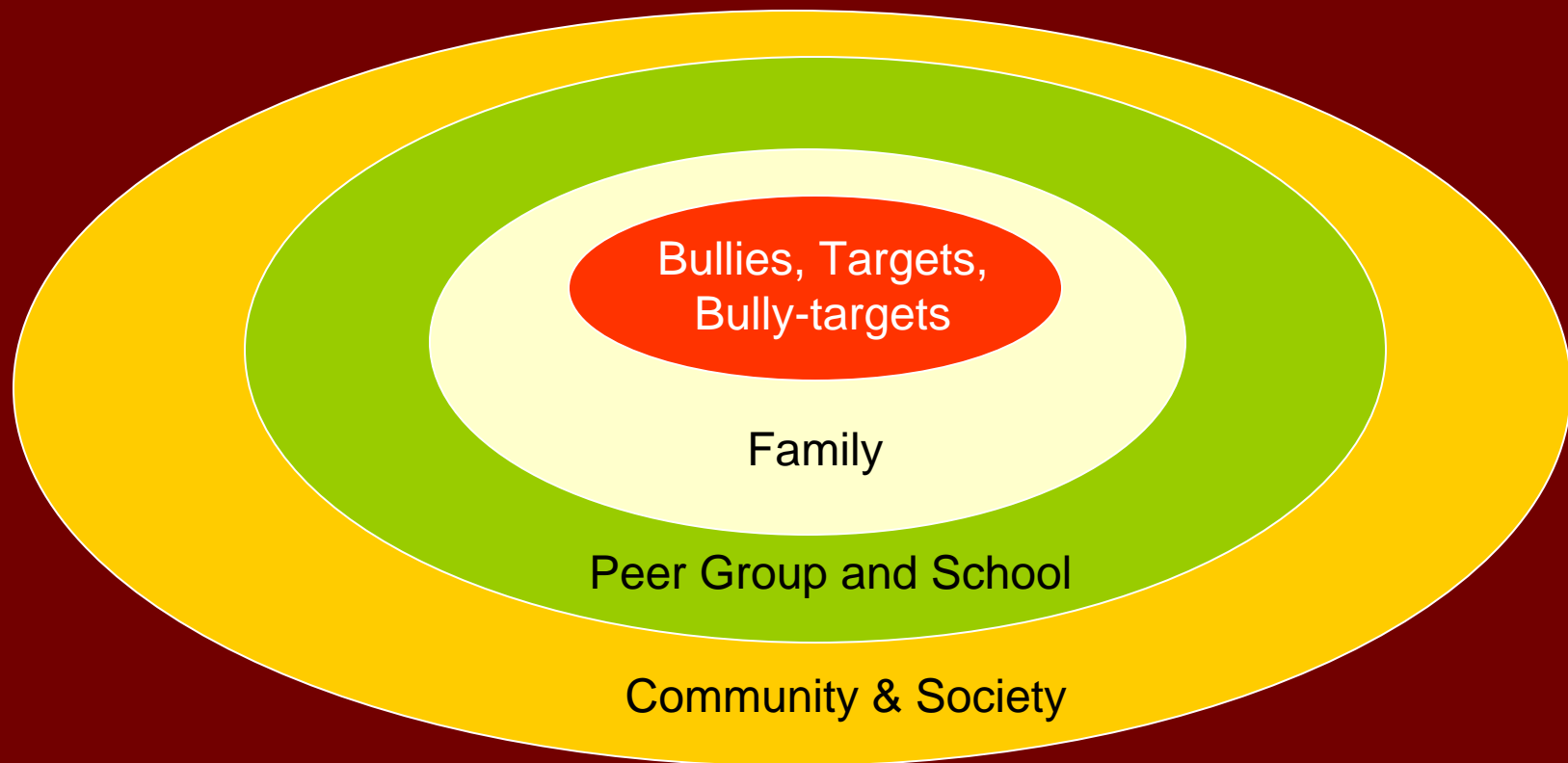
Bullying/Peer Abuse

- ▶ 5,736,419 youth involved in bullying at any given time (Nansel et al., 2001)
- ▶ No national prevention efforts

Background

"Causes" of Bullying

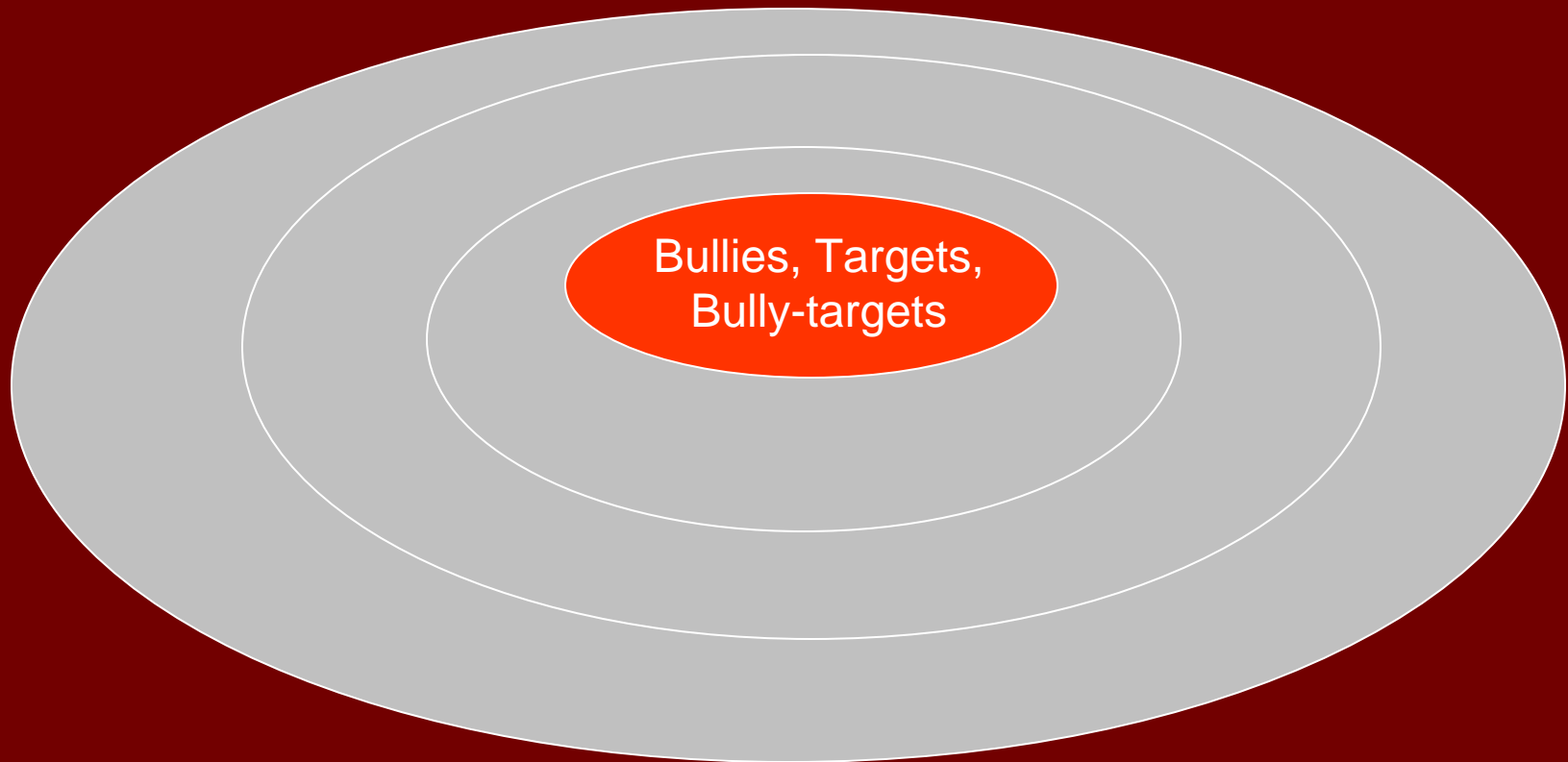
A Socio-Ecological Model of Identifying
the Factors that Contribute to Bullying



Adapted from Espelage & Swearer (2004) and Fried & Fried (2003)

Background

Child Characteristics



Background

Child Characteristics

Bullies

- ▶ Value dominance
- ▶ Aggression supporting attitudes
- ▶ Impulsive
- ▶ Poor regulatory abilities
- ▶ Little empathy for targets
- ▶ Important to consider development

(see Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Fried & Fried, 2003; Orpinas & Horne, 2006; Zins, Elias, & Maher, 2007 for review)

Intervention

Child Characteristics

Intervening with the Different Types of Bullies

Reactive Bullies - anger management
impulse control, empathy
training, conflict mediation

Proactive Bullies - consequences, boundaries,
restorative justice

Elitist Bullies - service learning projects

Background

Child Characteristics

Targets

- ▶ Physical weakness
- ▶ Do not "fit in"
- ▶ Internalizing difficulties
- ▶ Poor regulatory abilities
- ▶ Can identify effective responses, but have problems responding

(see Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Fried & Fried, 2003; Juvonen & Graham, 2001; Orpinas & Horne, 2006; Zins, Elias, & Maher, 2007 for review)

Intervention

Child Characteristics

Targets

- ▶ Body Language
- ▶ Cry - Comply - Deny - Fly off the handle
- ▶ Stand up for Yourself
- ▶ Use humor

Background

Child Characteristics

Youth who are both Bullies and Targets

- ▶ Emotionally reactive
- ▶ Difficulties regulating emotions and behaviors
- ▶ Internalizing and externalizing difficulties
- ▶ Social information processing biases
- ▶ Respond poorly to peer conflict

(see Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Fried & Fried, 2003; Juvonen & Graham, 2001; Orpinas & Horne, 2006; Zins, Elias, & Maher, 2007 for review)

Intervention

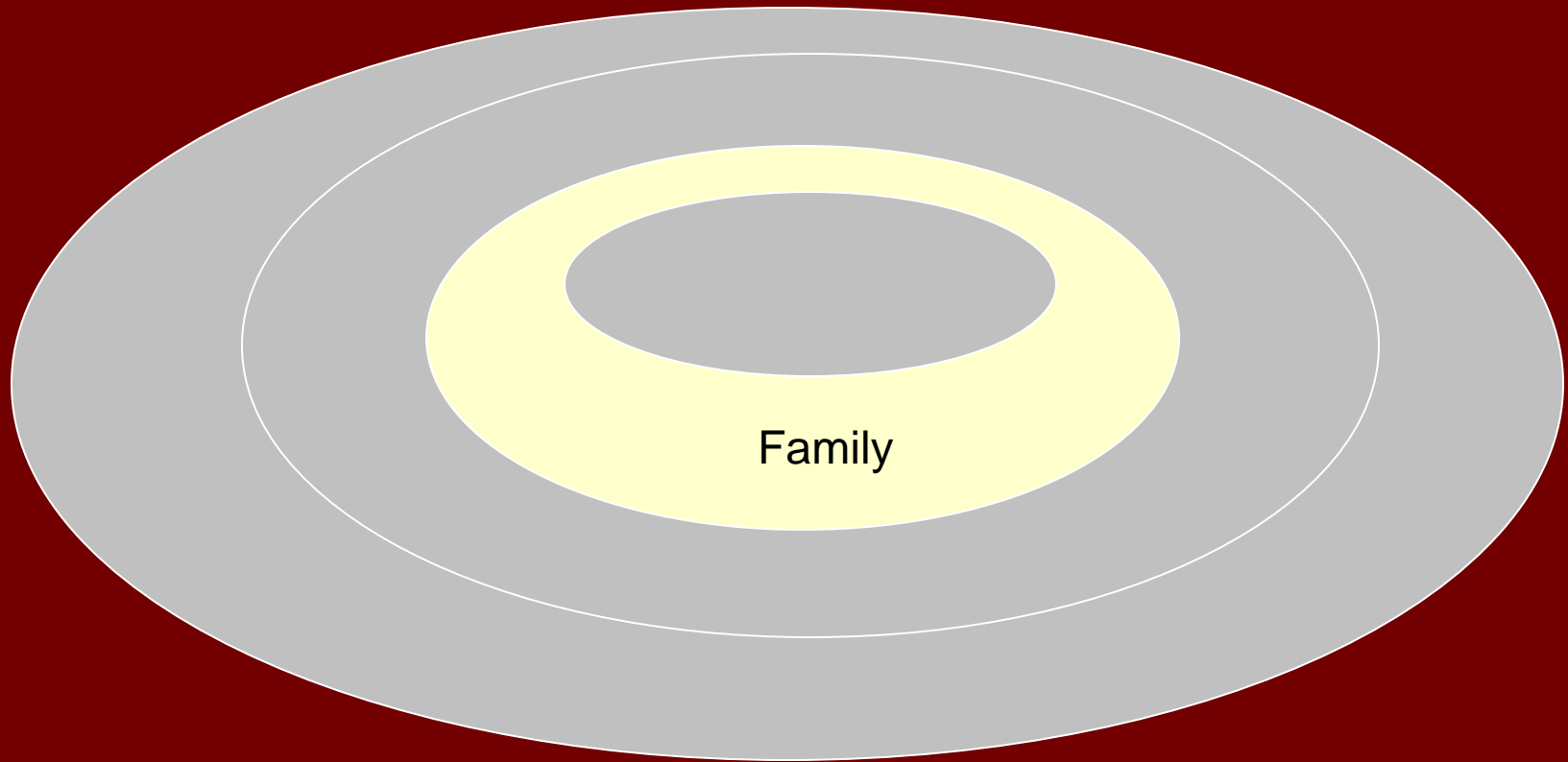
Child Characteristics

Intervening with the Different Types of Bullies

Pain - Rage - Revenge

Background

Family Influences



Background

Family Influences

Family Influences on Bullying

- ▶ Inconsistent parental discipline and monitoring
- ▶ Family interactions high in negative emotions
- ▶ Family interactions low in positive emotions
- ▶ Parents are tolerant of aggression
- ▶ Family interactions model the use of bullying and aggression
- ▶ Domestic violence and child abuse

(see Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Fried & Fried, 2003; Orpinas & Horne, 2006; Zins, Elias, & Maher, 2007 for review)

Background

Family Influences

Family Influences on Peer Victimization

For males

- ▶ Mothers (particularly for males) are over-involved, over-protective, & controlling
- ▶ Fathers tend to be distant, critical, or absent
- ▶ Child abuse
- ▶ Overly enmeshed relationships with siblings

(see Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Fried & Fried, 2003; Juvonen & Graham, 2001; Orpinas & Horne, 2006; Zins, Elias, & Maher, 2007 for review)

Background

Family Influences

Family Influences on Victimization

For females

- ▶ Family interactions characterized by poor communication and low levels of emotional closeness
- ▶ Mothers withholding affection as punishment
- ▶ Physical and emotional abuse
- ▶ Overly enmeshed relationships with siblings

(see Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Fried & Fried, 2003; Juvonen & Graham, 2001; Orpinas & Horne, 2006; Zins, Elias, & Maher, 2007 for review)

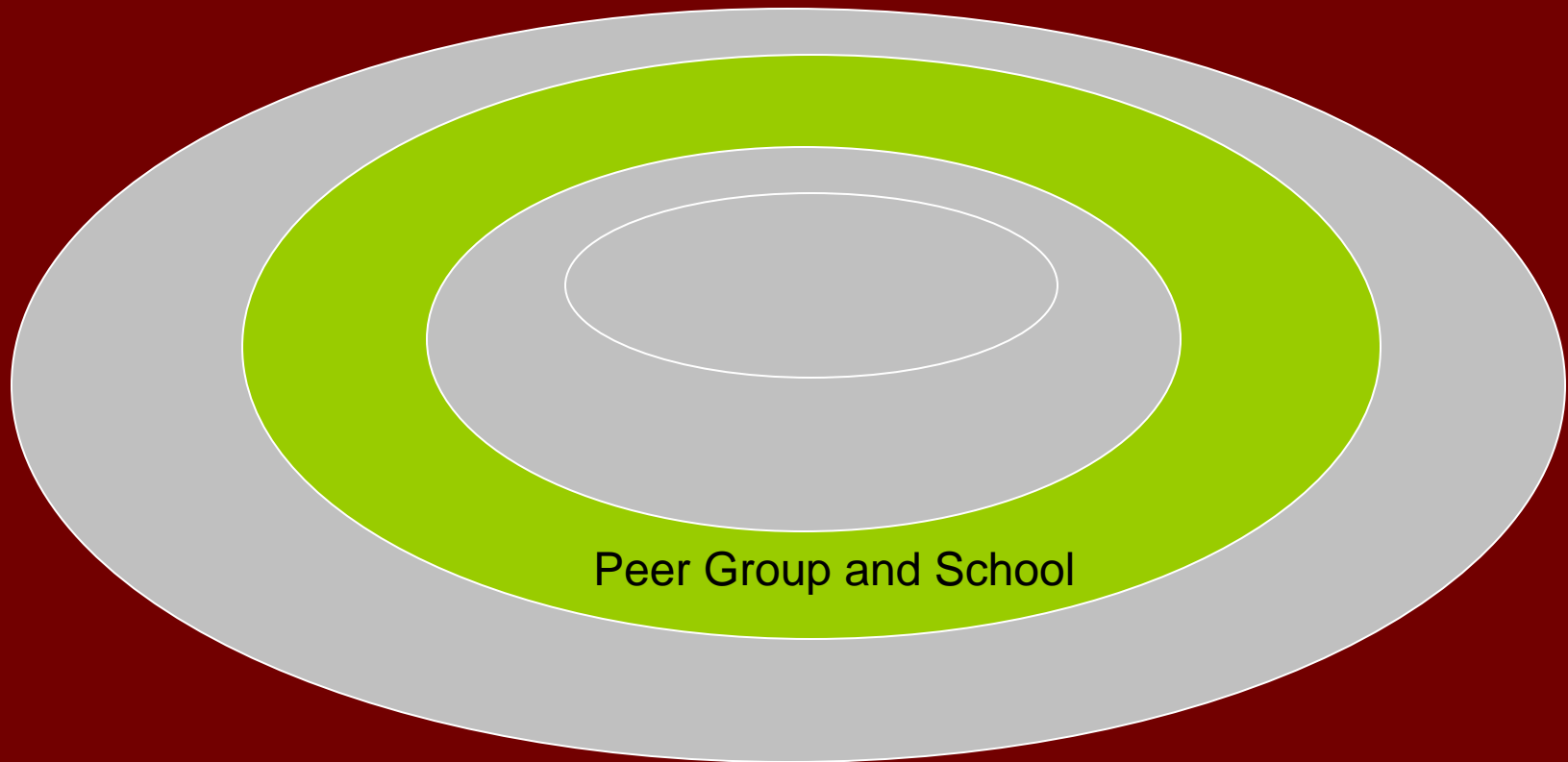
Intervention

Family Influences

- ▶ Attachment
- ▶ Home Visitors
- ▶ Nurturing programs
- ▶ Parent education programs
- ▶ Sibling abuse prevention

Background

How to Intervene?



Background

Peer & School Influences

Peer Influences on Bullying

- ▶ Homophily - affiliating with similar peers
- ▶ Peer rejection and a lack of friends
- ▶ Witnesses
 - ▶ Blaming the target
 - ▶ Rewarding the bully

(see Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Fried & Fried, 2003; Orpinas & Horne, 2006; Zins, Elias, & Maher, 2007 for review)

Intervention

Peer & School Influences

Peer Influences on Bullying

Empower bullies, targets and witness to change their behavior

Witness role - Skill Training for Witnesses

E - empathy

L - language

K - kindness

Background

School & Peer Influences

School Influences on Bullying

- ▶ Poor classroom management
- ▶ Lack of adult supervision
- ▶ Lack of awareness of the problem
- ▶ Poor understanding of bullying
- ▶ Teachers less likely to consider verbal and relational/emotional forms of aggression as bullying
- ▶ Discomfort in responding students' aggression
- ▶ Tacit acceptance of bullying which increases as students get older

(see Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Fried & Fried, 2003; Juvonen & Graham, 2001; Orpinas & Horne, 2006; Zins, Elias, & Maher, 2007 for review)

Intervention

School & Peer Influences

School Influences on Bullying

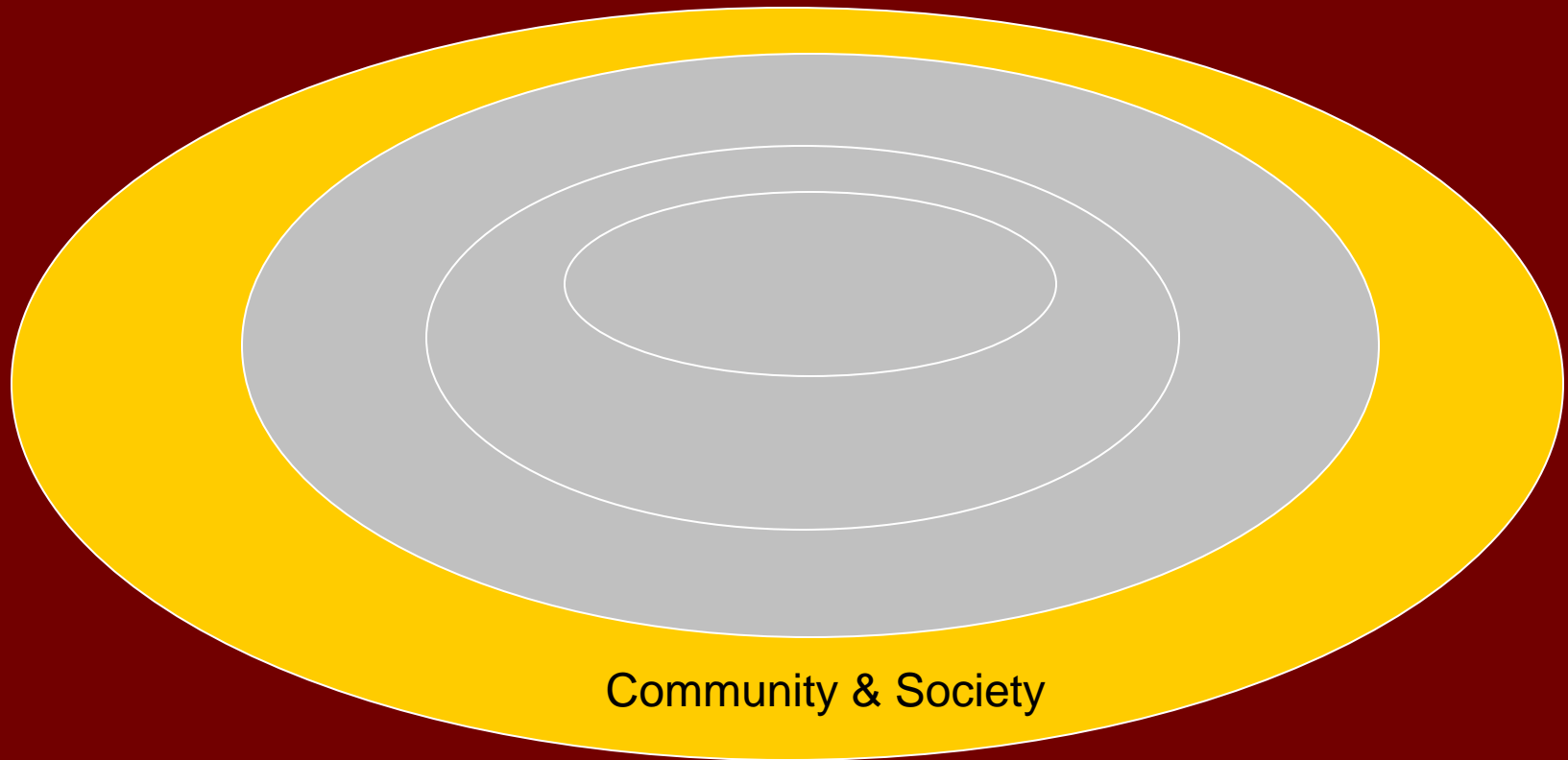
Change the Culture

- ▶ policies - code of conduct
- ▶ staff training
- ▶ team approach
- ▶ teachers who bully
- ▶ parent involvement
- ▶ evidence based programs
- ▶ suicide prevention

Background

Societal Influences

The Community, Society, & Culture



Background

Societal Influences

Community, Society, & Culture

- ▶ Violent Media (Television, Video Games, Music, Internet)
- ▶ Community Violence
- ▶ Access to weapons
- ▶ Lack of civility

(see Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Fried & Fried, 2003; Juvonen & Graham, 2001; Orpinas & Horne, 2006; Zins, Elias, & Maher, 2007 for review)

Intervention

Societal Influences

- ▶ Recognize bullying is peer abuse
- ▶ Need for anti-bullying legislation
- ▶ Expand research on bullying and its intervention
- ▶ Reduce access to weapons
- ▶ Improve teacher training in university education programs
- ▶ Address homophobia
- ▶ Confront the sexualization of children
- ▶ Promote prevention

Review

Putting it all Together

TAKING ACTION

BullySafeUSA Program - www.bullysafeusa.com

- ▶ Student empowerment sessions
- ▶ Staff training
- ▶ Parent Seminars
- ▶ Train the Trainer Institutes

Review

Putting it all Together

Preliminary Research on BullySafeUSA Suggests...

- ▶ Youth learn the material presented in the intervention
- ▶ Youth are more likely to seek assistance from teachers when bullied
- ▶ Up to 19% reductions in bullying over the course of a school year

(Results from Louisiana Evaluation conducted in 2003/2004)