



CLOSING THE PROTECTION GAP

FROM INSIGHT TO INNOVATION IN PREVENTING CHILD ONLINE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION



ESOMAR Congress 2026 – Metamorphosis

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21.3 Million

Reports to the NCMEC Cyber Tipline last year



1.6 Million

Online sexual exploitation, molestation, abuse and trafficking of children

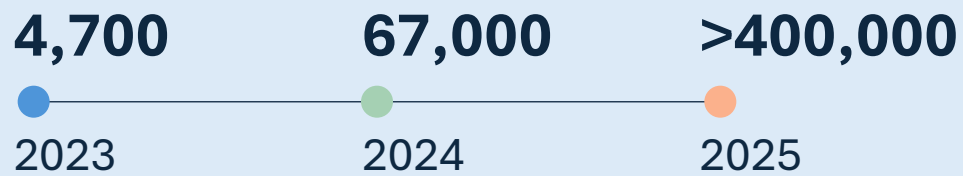


137

sexortion reports per day



Generative AI igniting online child exploitation



NCMEC Cyber Tipline Report 2025



3 in 5 minors

Reported experiencing potential harm online



1 in 3 boys ages 9-12

reported an online sexual interaction;
1 in 5 minors told no one

Thorn, Youth Perspectives on Online Safety 2025



1.2 Million +

Incidents of AI being used to create fake sexual images /
videos of children globally in 1 year

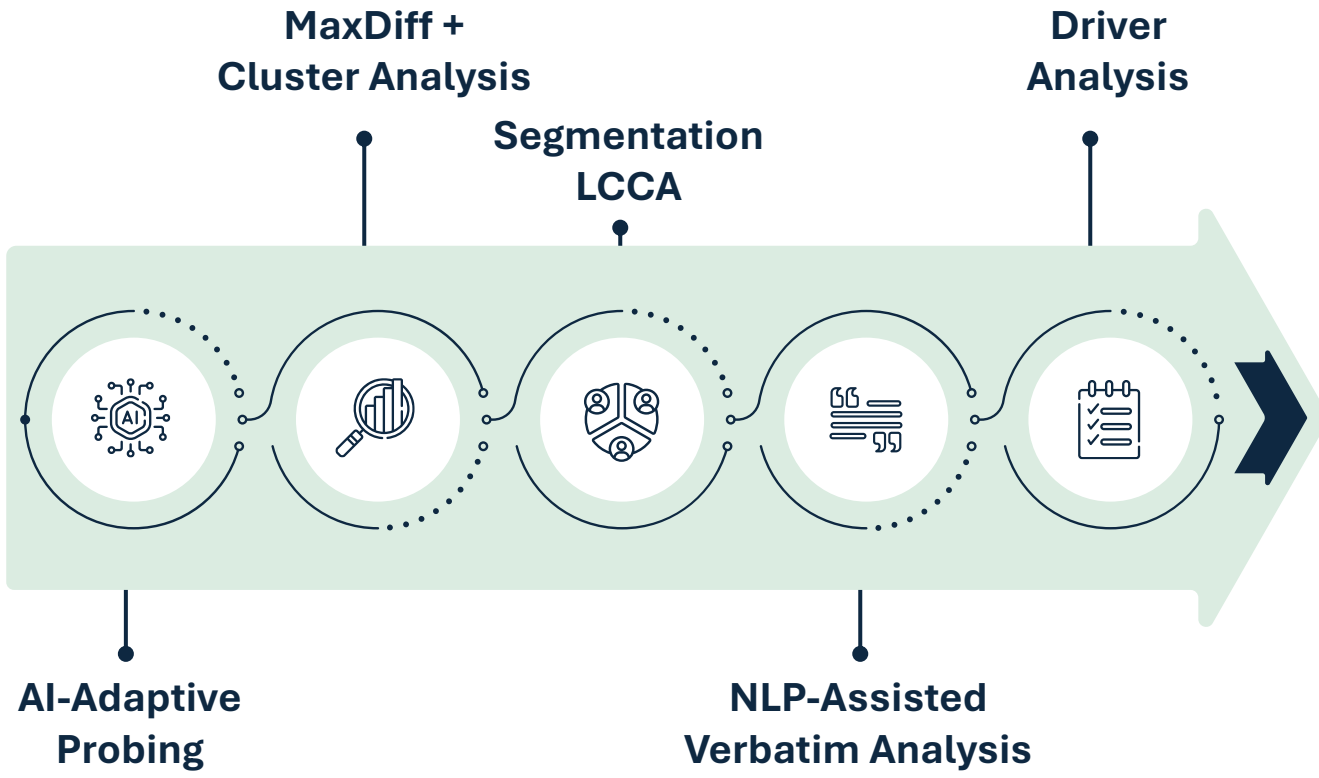
UNICEF Innocenti June 2026

WHAT WE DID



Online Survey Among 1,000 US Parents

- ✓ Technology Usage
- ✓ Perceived Risk
- ✓ Protection Behaviors
- ✓ Privacy vs Protection Dynamics
- ✓ Child Sexual Abuse Materials (CSAM) Experience and Perceptions
- ✓ Solution Priorities
- ✓ Support Needs and Responsibility



AI-Enabled Intervention Development

Sexual exploitation and content are by far the top parental concerns related to online risks

VERBATIM ANALYSIS: MAIN TYPES OF CHILDREN'S RISK EXPOSURE

52%

Sexual exploitation & sexual content

33%

Harassment, toxicity & hateful content

18%

Harmful content exposure

17%

Deception & financial exploitation

14%

Privacy, device security & surveillance

7%

Psychosocial & developmental impacts

5%

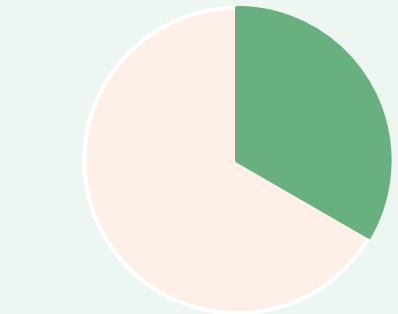
Parental perceptions & mitigation behaviors

3%

Offline escalation & physical-safety threats

7%

Other



but only **1/3** of
parents feel well
prepared to deal with
an incident

Sexual exploitation + lack of visibility + relationship barriers = Vulnerability



Half report their child has experienced an inappropriate or exploitative online situation

- suspicious or uncomfortable interactions
- being asked to keep an interaction secret
- exposure to inappropriate sexual content



Parents know there may be a hidden layer they cannot fully see

32% say their child is likely to have a second/private account, rising to **45%** among parents with high-risk perceptions.

The biggest barriers are relational, not just technical



Concern about the child's reaction/trust



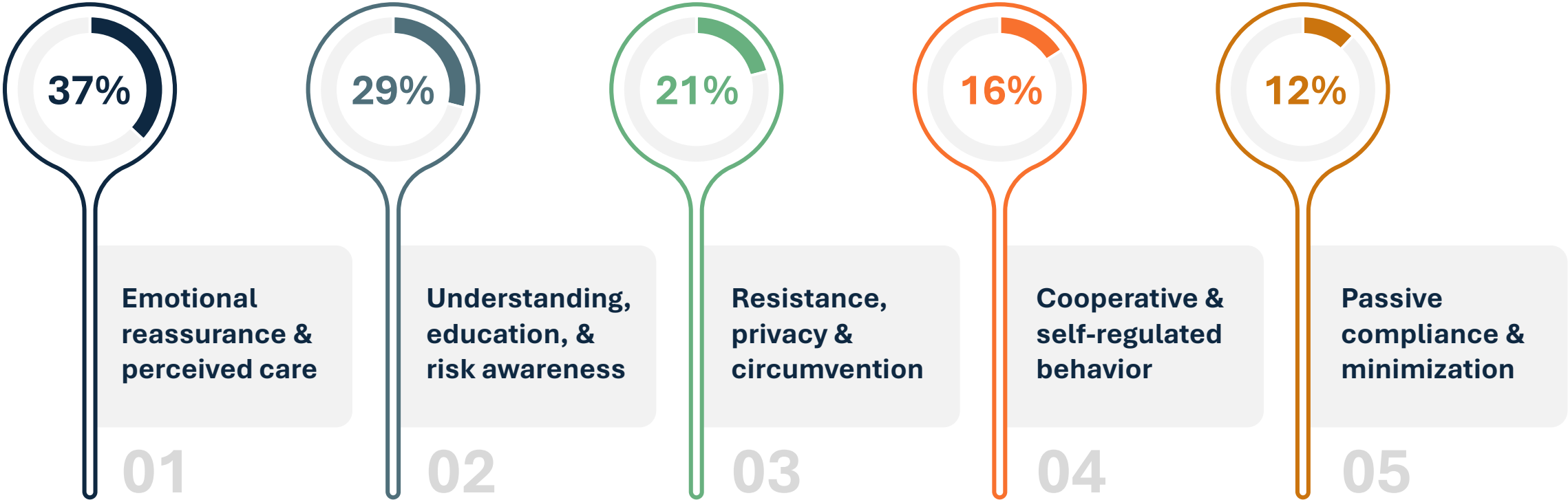
Concern about overreacting



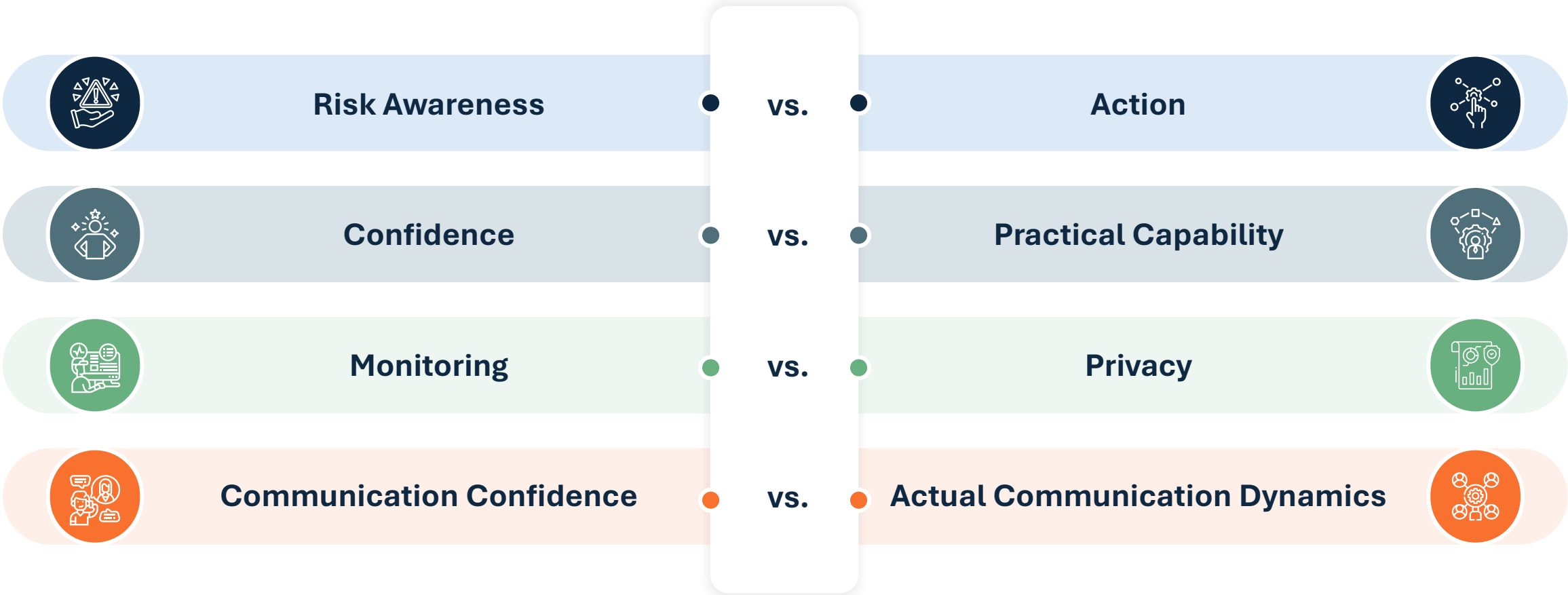
Belief that the child would not tell them or would not want them to know

And children react differently to parental intervention

VERBATIM ANALYSIS: CHILD’S PERSPECTIVE ON PARENT INTERVENTION



The protection gap emerges across multiple dimensions



Parents Want Balance — Not Total Surveillance

Four parent mindsets shape the protection gap, differing on 5 core dimensions



**Risk and
Safety
Orientation**



**Tech
Confidence
and Controls**



**Online
Exploitation
Exposure**



**Solution
Decision
Priorities**



**Communication
and
Engagement**

41%

PRAGMATIC BALANCERS

Practical, moderate parents who want to protect their children without over-monitoring.

Opportunity:

Make safety easy, normal, and low-friction

11%

SOCIAL RISK NAVIGATORS

Parents especially focused on who their child interacts with online.

Opportunity:

Focus on contact risks, grooming, suspicious interactions, and when to intervene

12%

VIGILANT MANAGERS

Highly proactive, hands-on parents who actively use and customize safety tools.

Opportunity:

Provide stronger controls, alerts, and monitoring capabilities

37%

ENGAGED PROTECTORS

Confident, active parents who combine tools, rules, and ongoing conversations.

Opportunity:

Give them integrated solutions that support both protection and trust

Less Management

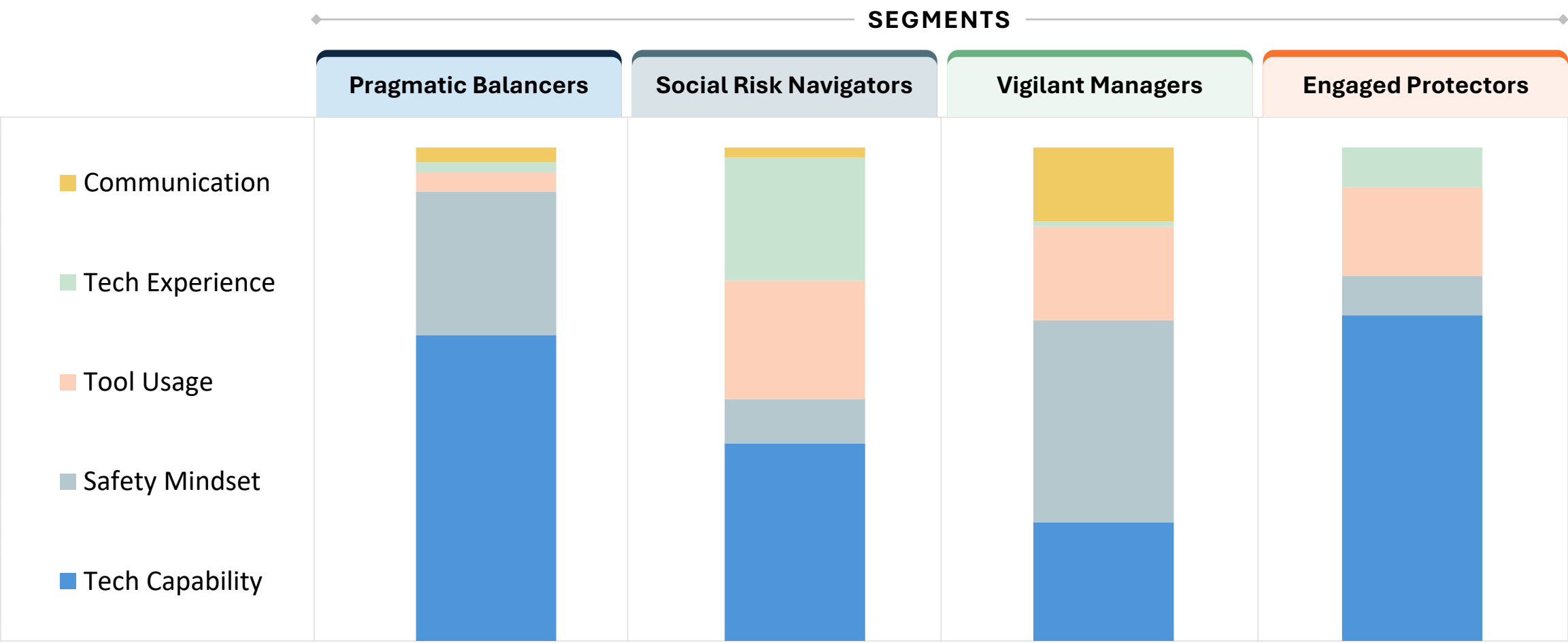
More Management

Segments demonstrate the immediate intervention need: low protective readiness = high exposure



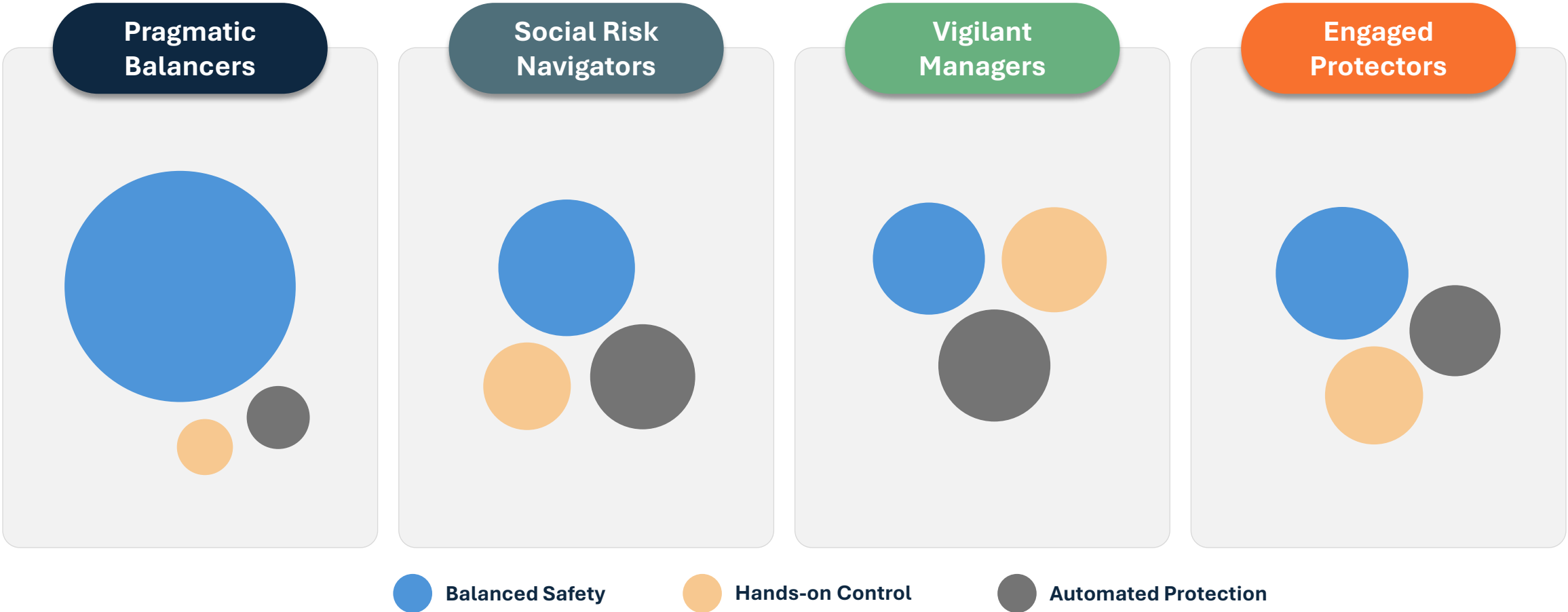
Effective intervention needs to match the parent’s mindset, not just the child’s risk level

DRIVERS OF PREPAREDNESS



Solutions designed to close the protection gap require the ability to modulate the approach between balance, monitoring and autonomy

SOLUTION CLUSTERS



- To quickly move beyond the data and into intervention strategies, an **AI-enabled human-at-the-helm platform** was used to develop innovative solutions targeted to each segment. ●

Total Time To Complete = 1 hour + experimentation

Pitch Deck: TrustProxy Privacy Anomaly Engine

Product Reference Sheet



Pragmatic Balancers (41%)

The AI platform **applied design thinking** to develop solutions that targeted the tension between maintaining trust and providing sufficient oversight.

These concepts **emphasize “balanced safety”** approaches that **reduced technical complexity** while **preserving family autonomy and communication**.

Three primary concepts emerged:

1

TrustProxy
Privacy
Anomaly Engine

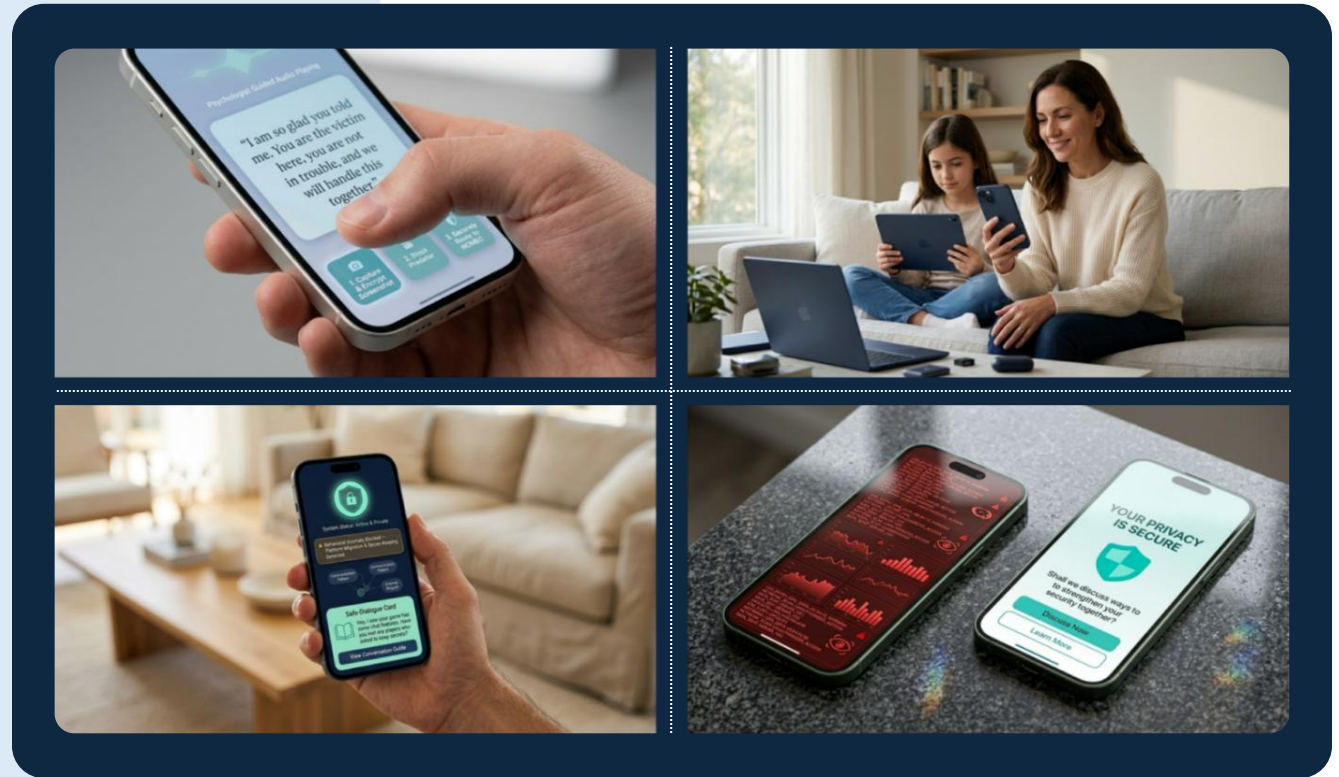
2

CalmResponse
Emergency
Protocol

3

GuidePost
Conversational
Co-Pilot

Consistent themes across these concepts: **low-friction implementation, trust-centered intervention, AI-enabled guidance, and privacy-preserving safety architectures.**



Social Risk Navigators (11%)

For Social Risk Navigators, the analysis identified a unique profile centered on **social and relational risks** rather than **technical or platform-based concerns** alone.

The resulting concepts developed by the AI platform **emphasized relational safety, communication transparency, and social-context awareness**:

1

**Unified Family
Gating Profile**

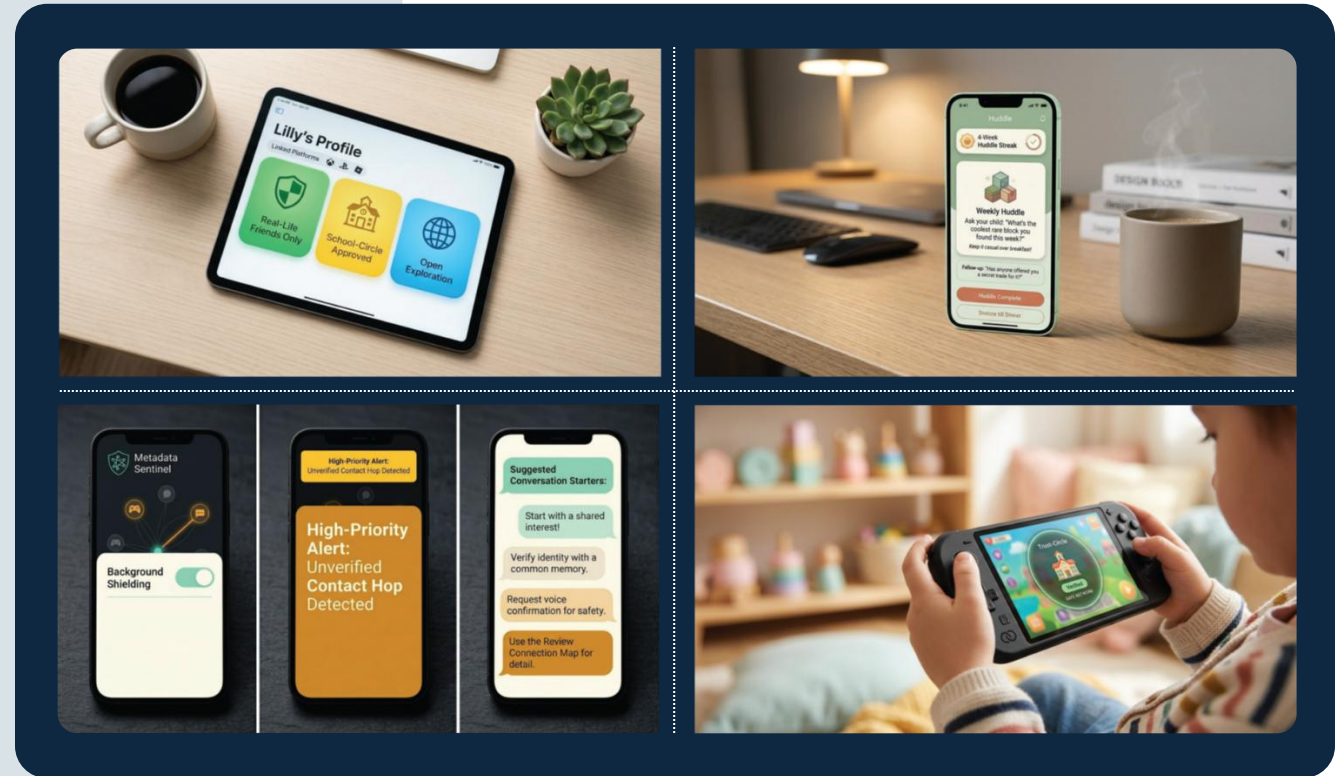
2

**Safe Circle and
Communication
Mapping Tools**

3

**Crisis and
Emotional Support
Workflows**

The AI-generated concepts consistently **framed digital safety as a family communication challenge** rather than purely a technical enforcement problem. Unlike other segments, the solutions for Social Risk Navigators **emphasized emotional intelligence, social interpretation, and collaborative coaching over device control**.



Vigilant Managers (12%)

For Vigilant Managers, the AI-powered ideation process addressed a fundamentally different challenge: these parents **strongly favored active oversight and robust controls** *but frequently experienced high levels of parent-child conflict and resistance to monitoring.*

The AI platform generated concepts focused on **converting adversarial monitoring into transparent, collaborative protection systems:**

1

**Unified Device
Trust Engine**

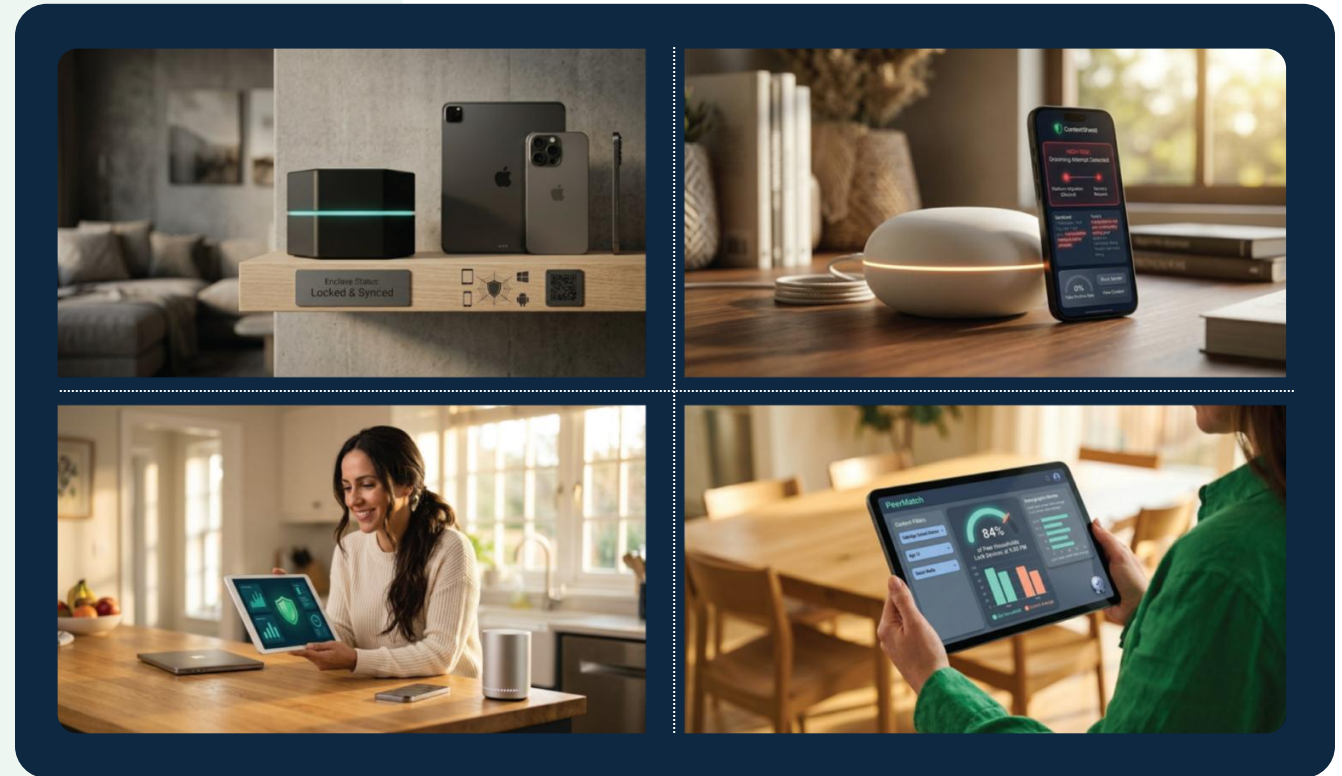
2

**ContextShield
AI Alerting**

3

**Collaborative
Safety
Governance Tools**

Unlike the Pragmatic Balancers' solution concepts, these solutions **prioritized enforcement reliability, ecosystem integration, and sophisticated technical controls.** The AI-powered synthesis emphasized the **importance of reducing emotional escalation and rebuilding trust** within highly monitored households.



Engaged Protectors (37%)

The solution development focused on solving the **“surveillance dilemma”** for Engaged Protectors. These parents are highly engaged, **technologically confident**, and **proactive about online safety**, yet **strongly opposed to intrusive monitoring systems** that undermine trust or adolescent autonomy.

The generated concepts **centered on privacy-preserving intelligence and cooperative family safety**:

1

**Trust-Respecting
Safety Telemetry**

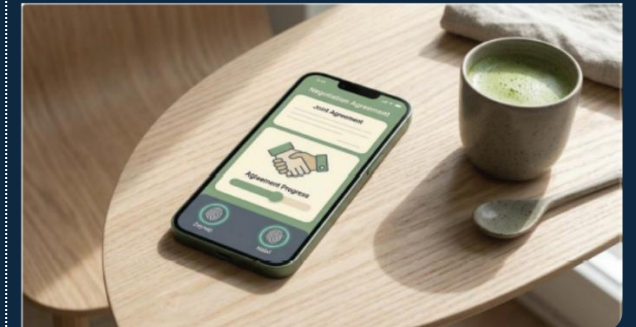
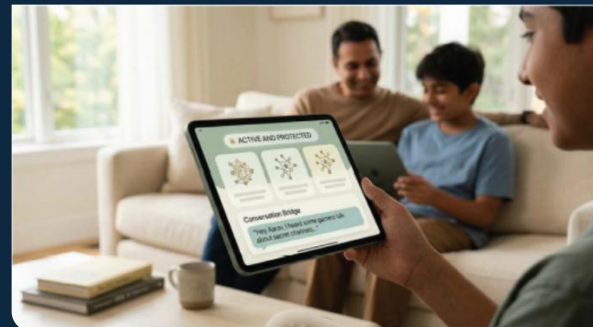
2

**Co-Navigation
Frameworks**

3

**Incident Response
Suite**

A defining theme across this segment was the **rejection of traditional “spyware-style” parental monitoring in favor of cooperative, privacy-first safety architectures.**



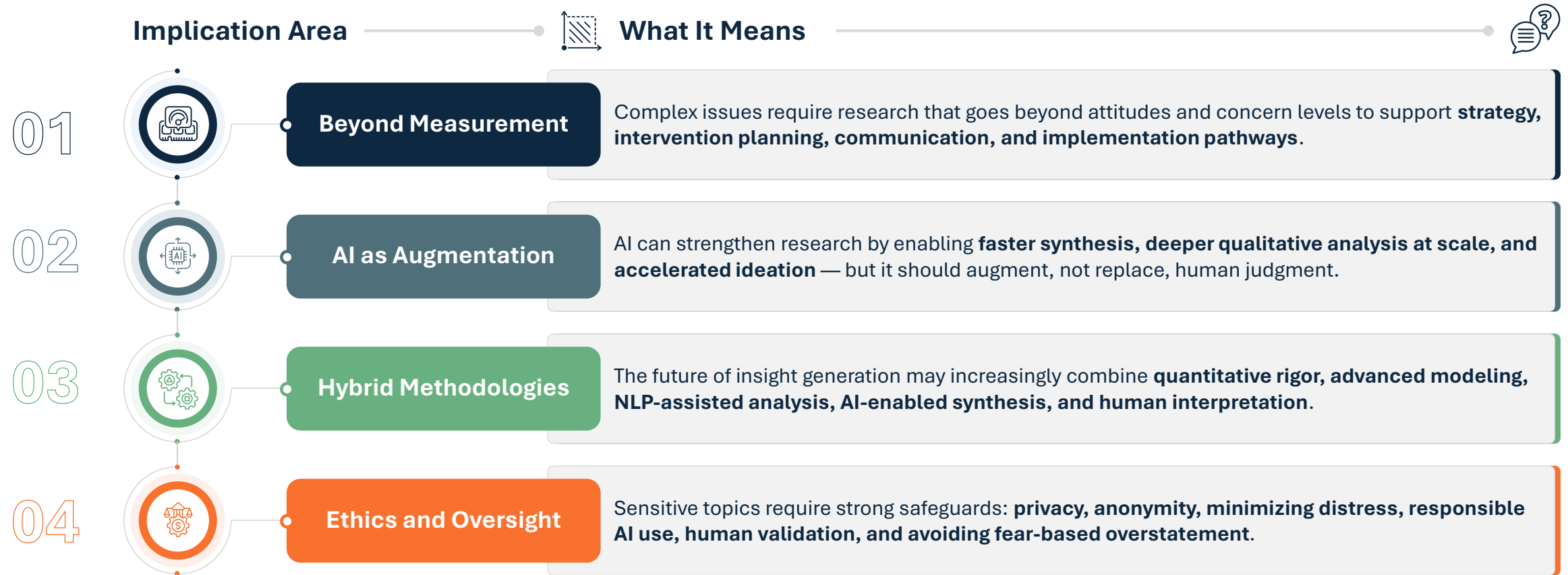
Fundamentally, any solution must serve all stakeholders

Closing the protection gap will require coordinated, trust-based action.

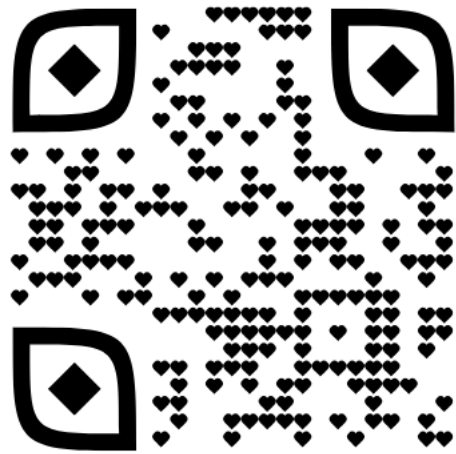
Stakeholder	Key Implication	Needs
 Technology Companies	Build safety solutions that are adaptive, configurable, and trust-centered — not one-size-fits-all control models.	Parents need stronger protection, but many are wary of intrusive monitoring that could damage trust or autonomy.
 Educators & Schools	Expand the role of schools beyond digital literacy to include practical safety skills, age-appropriate risk education, parent resources, and reinforcement of healthy online behavior.	Families need support that reflects different parenting styles and confidence levels.
 Policymakers & Child Safety Organizations	Support clearer guidance, shared safety standards, public education, and privacy-preserving frameworks.	These must balance child protection with autonomy, encryption, and healthy digital development.
 Parents & Families	Move beyond restriction alone toward a balanced approach combining communication, clear expectations, practical tools, trust, and digital judgment-building.	Families need support that is simple, actionable, and not overly technical or invasive.

Research has always been strongest when it connects insight to action

The future is not about *replacing* the fundamentals but *strengthening* them — using new tools to deepen understanding, accelerate synthesis, and expand value creation.



**We hope
you can
help build
the future
with us**



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