

Strengthening partnerships to enhance trans-affirming care for sexual assault survivors: An initial evaluation of the trans-LINK Network



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CONTEXT

- Sexual assault against trans persons is a pervasive and complex health and human rights concern that cannot be appropriately addressed by any single sector
- An intersectoral network of trans-positive healthcare and community organizations was developed to enhance care and supports for trans survivors in Ontario (the trans-LINK Network)
- Although rarely rigorously evaluated, network development and cross-sector coordination holds the potential to facilitate collaborative action on and improvements in health equity
- We used a social network analysis (SNA) tool to conduct a baseline evaluation on connectivity, communication, and collaboration among members of the trans-LINK Network

METHOD

- Data were collected and analyzed using a validated survey tool, the Program to Analyze, Record, and Track Networks to Enhance Relationships (PARTNER)
- Survey contained relational-level data (e.g., areas, frequency, and activities of collaboration)
- June 22, 2021, survey was sent to trans-LINK Network organizations, representing all seven regions of Ontario and providing a diverse range of direct services and supports (e.g., LGBTQI2S+, counselling, healthcare, sexual assault)
- Reminders to complete the survey were sent on June 30, July 7, and July 14, 2021
- Data analysis began July 22, 2021, with the generation of Network maps through the PARTNER tool as well as frequencies and proportions for key variables (see Tables 1 to 4)
- Survey findings were shared with Network members via a consultation session on July 28, 2021
- Jamboard was used to facilitate discussion on recommendations for next steps for the Network
- Consultation data were analyzed using a content analysis which generated 12 recommendations (see Discussion for examples)

RESULTS

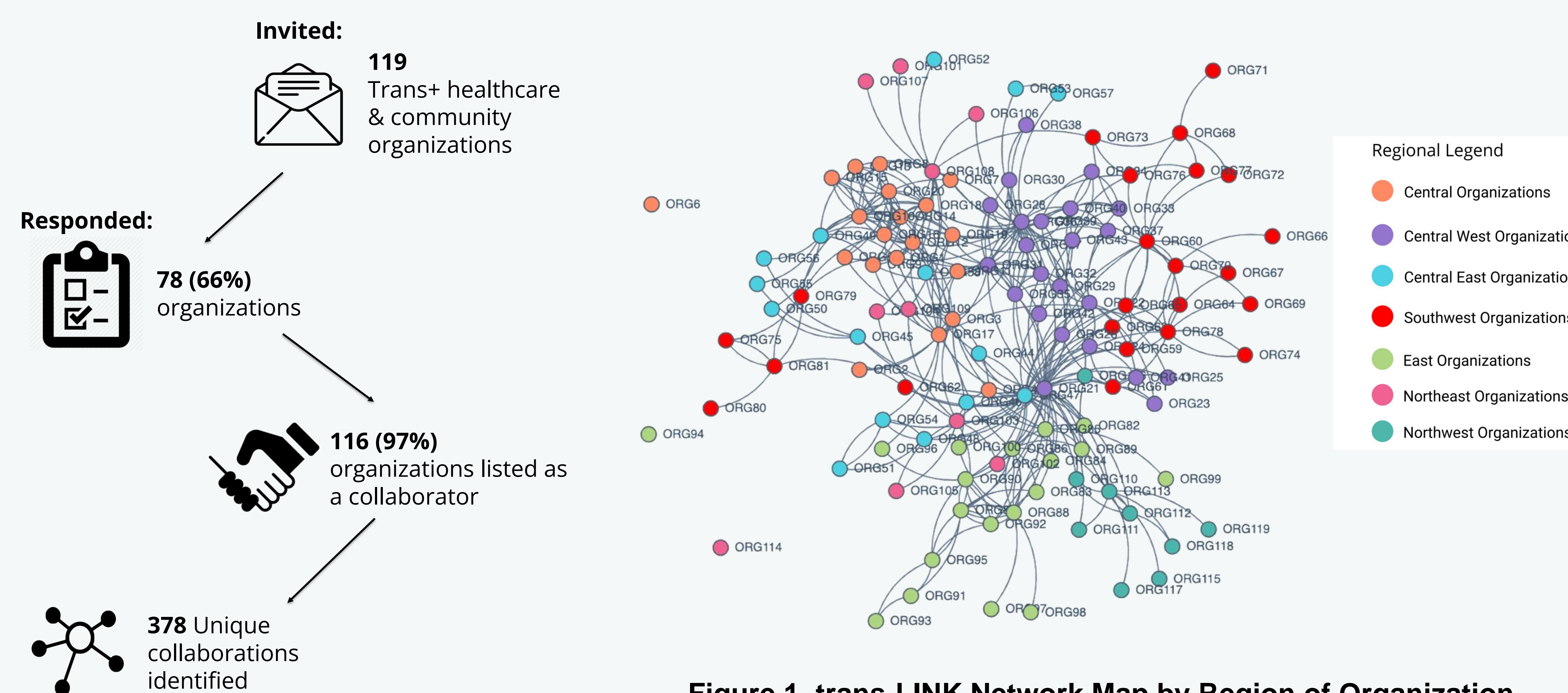


Figure 1. trans-LINK Network Map by Region of Organization

Table 1. Network scores

Density ^a	Trust ^b	Value ^c
2.7%	83.4%	70.4%

a: Density - actual number of connections / total potential number of connections
 b: Trust - a composite of individual organizations' data for i) being reliable in following through on commitments, ii) having a shared vision with the Network, and iii) being open to discussion
 c: Value - a composite of individual organizations' data for i) power and influence, ii) level of commitment, and iii) overall resource contribution

Table 2. Current level of activities of collaboration

Level of Collaboration	Specific Activities	N*
Cooperative	Sharing resources	131
	Attending the same meetings	83
Coordinated	Developing new resources (e.g., guidelines, standards, & tools)	46
	Hosting joint events	32
	Developing new programs and/or sharing existing programs	31
Integrated	Sharing funding & applying for joint funding	11
	Sharing administrative processes	10

Note. Data are not mutually exclusive
 *N is based on the number of activities listed for each collaboration identified

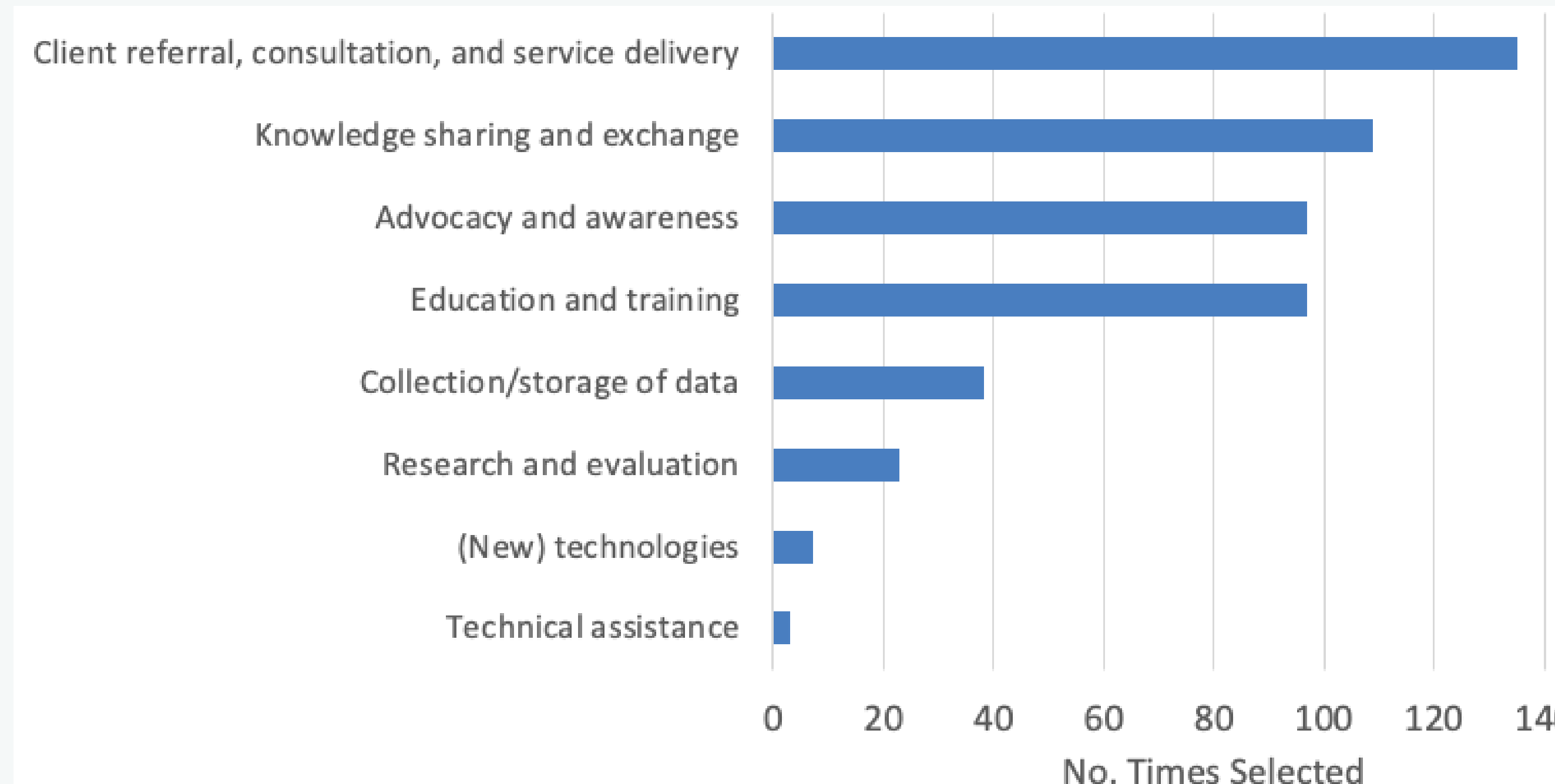


Figure 2. Current areas of collaboration

Table 3. Frequency of collaborations

Frequency	%*
Once a year or less	36.4
About once a quarter	36.4
About once a month	19.5
Every week	7.3
Every day	0.5

*% is based on the number of collaborations listed

SUMMARY

- The Network has a low density, however, overall organizations within the Network were found to highly value and trust one another, providing a solid foundation from which to enhance collaborations
- The two most prominent broad areas of collaboration were client referral, consultation, and service delivery and knowledge sharing and exchange; few organizations identified collaborations related to (new) technologies or technical assistance
- Majority of Network organizations engage with one another through specific cooperative activities (e.g., sharing resources, attending the same meetings), indicating a superficial level of engagement
- Majority of organizations engage with their collaborators infrequently, highlighting the potential for increased involvement and participation in coordinated and integrated activities

Recommendations for Action

Recommendations for Action	Representative Quote
Recommendation 1. Create new communication and knowledge exchange channels for trans-LINK Network members, including an interactive virtual platform to enable regular check-ins and casual training opportunities (e.g., lunch and learns)	"Given the limited capacity - perhaps regular check in opportunities have more of a lunch and learn format with opportunities for member agencies to bring up their services/best practices/new programs etc."
Recommendation 2. Clarify trans-LINK Network member roles, contributions, and needs through the establishment of a live, member-facing repository of this information	"A clear breakdown listing what organizations DO want to contribute, and WHAT they are looking for so we can fill gaps."
Recommendation 3. Design and implement strategies to enhance regional collaboration, including the formation of regional working groups and establishment of new partnerships with 2SLGBTQ+ services	"Formal support with bringing together organizations within regional areas."
Recommendation 4. Promote awareness of the trans-LINK Network through social media and the development of tailored communication products	"Tailored communication products that member agencies may use to build awareness of the network - easily reproduced and leveraged within agency staff work plans."
Recommendation 5. Identify key measures of Network success, including number of new partnerships, formal agreements, advocacy initiatives, and social media engagements	"Measure how well members connect or link with each other because it's important we team up together and not feel like we have to individually create results, a specific evaluation for that."

NEXT STEPS

- Conduct a follow-up SNA to evaluate the Network's success in achieving the recommended actions