Oral Health: First-Year Case Study

The Oral Health CoP

- an inter-professional CoP that enables dissemination of evidence-based and clinically relevant oral health information to care providers of frail older adults through 3 interconnected methods:
  - awareness-raising strategies
  - education/learning opportunities
  - collaboration and networking opportunities (health and oral/dental care sectors)

The case involved

- Small group of very dedicated and connected individuals with an interest in seniors' oral health care
- Meetings to plan how to push oral health care best practices to providers in the community and LTC homes:
  - Complex information
  - Various stakeholders (PSWs, nurses, dental hygienists, educators)
  - Differing contexts and need (and levels of understanding)

In our case…

- Inside: the OH group was tightly knit and had a lot of combined experience and previous connections that were vital to their success
- Outside: lack of integration amongst the different levels of care, and thus a lack of standardization related to OH. Generally, OH care not currently positioned as an issue in the larger sector

Connection and Integration

•The CoP brings professionals together – but it is the connections of these individuals outside the group that made the OH knowledge translation events a success

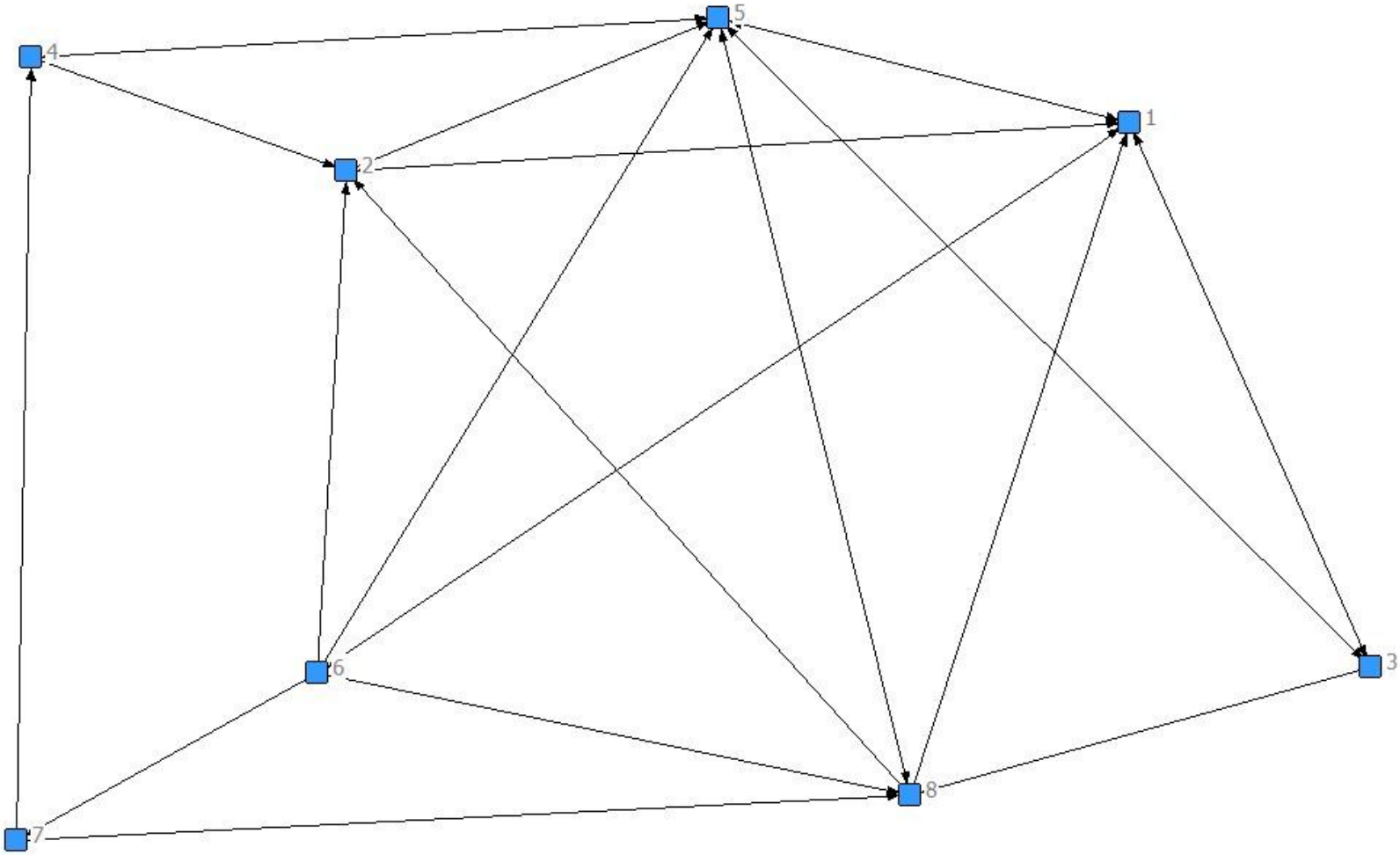
Evolving membership
Varied experience
Positive collaboration
Synergistic activities

Identity Matters

- Branding was central to CoP activities to ensure knowledge was transferred, AND that knowledge endured (credibility)
- Led to increased awareness of OH issues and improved knowledge products (uphold credibility)
- Branding meant choosing a focus and developing shared goals

Context Matters

- LTC is a complex context and multiple tailored interventions are needed to connect with the end-user groups (health, dental, PSWs)
  - Webinar product (explicit knowledge) is combined with discussion and/or demonstration (tacit knowledge); still figuring out best combination
  - Unexpected end-user: dental and nursing **educators;** potential for broad reach
  - How to stimulate organizational buy-in to support change in oral health practice?????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