

The Impact of a Member-Led Virtual Support Group for Kinship Caregiver Well-Being

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BACKGROUND: Kinship caregivers experience increased isolation in their roles and poorer outcomes related to well-being. Kinship Caregivers Connect (KCC) is one of the first online, statewide support groups for kinship caregivers, providing a peer-led community for kinship caregivers throughout the State of Ohio since it’s founding in 2020.

METHODS

- 1. Online open-ended questionnaire evaluating the useability and acceptability with a Participatory Action approach
- 2. Kinship caregivers (n= 66) who have attended at least one meeting
- 3. Coding using Grounded Theory, including two caregivers as coders

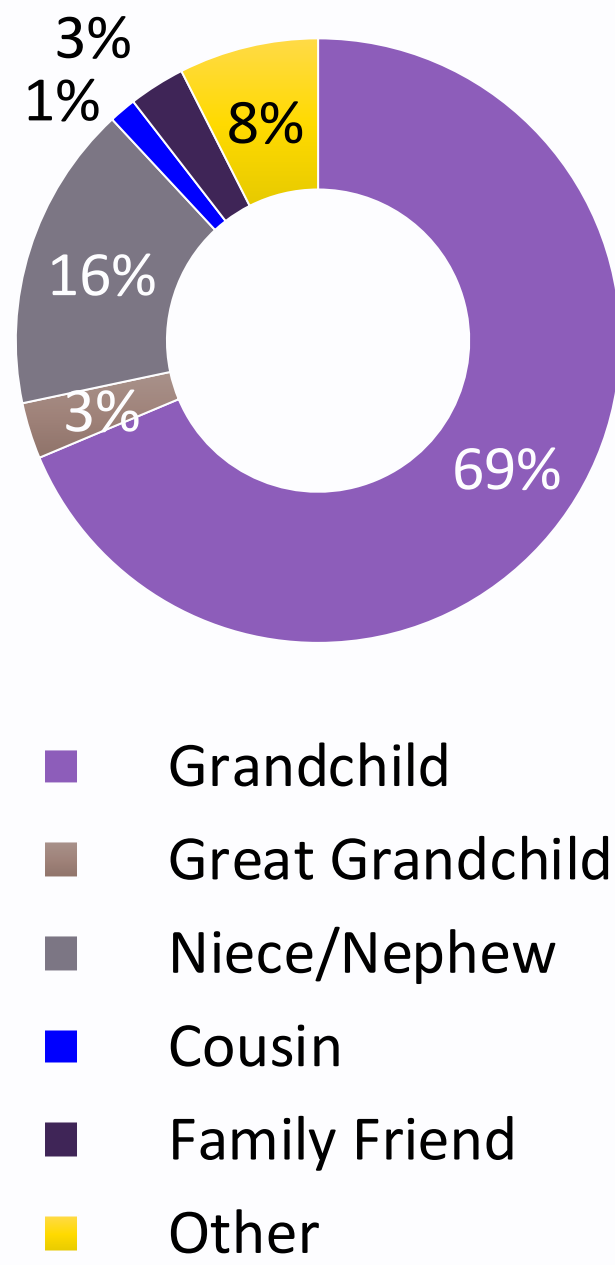


RESULTS

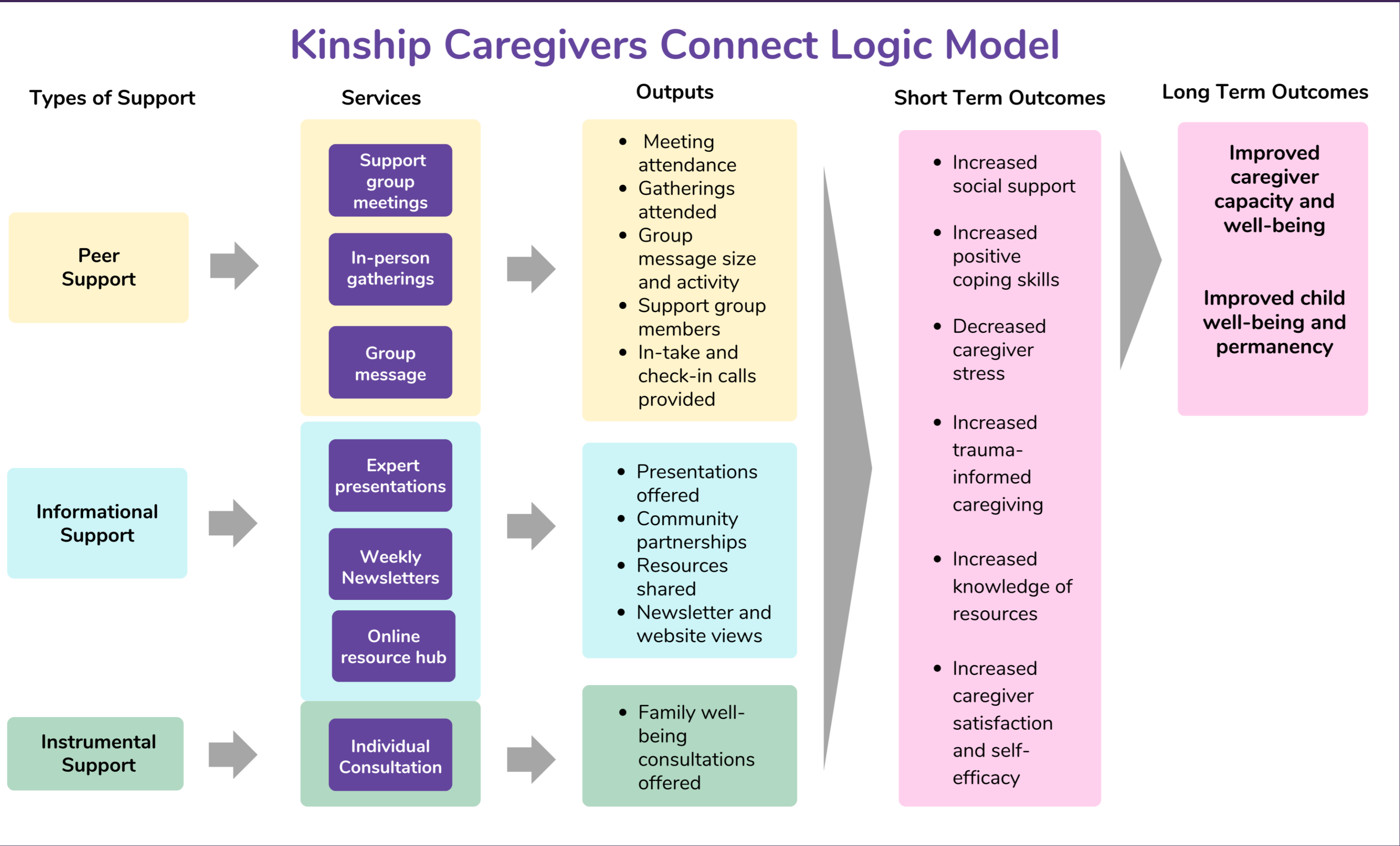
Table 1: Participant Demographics (n = 66)

| Gender | |
|---------------------|------|
| Male, % | 3 |
| Female, % | 97 |
| Race | |
| White, % | 65.7 |
| Black, % | 24.8 |
| Other/Unknown, % | 3 |
| Ethnicity | |
| Non- Hispanic, % | 93.5 |
| Hispanic, % | 1.6 |
| Other/Unknown, % | 4.8 |
| Caregiver Age (av.) | |
| | 54.9 |
| Geographic Location | |
| Rural, % | 33.3 |
| Urban, % | 20.6 |
| Suburban, % | 46 |

Fig 1 : Relationship to child in care (%)



A peer-led online support group enhances kinship family well-being.



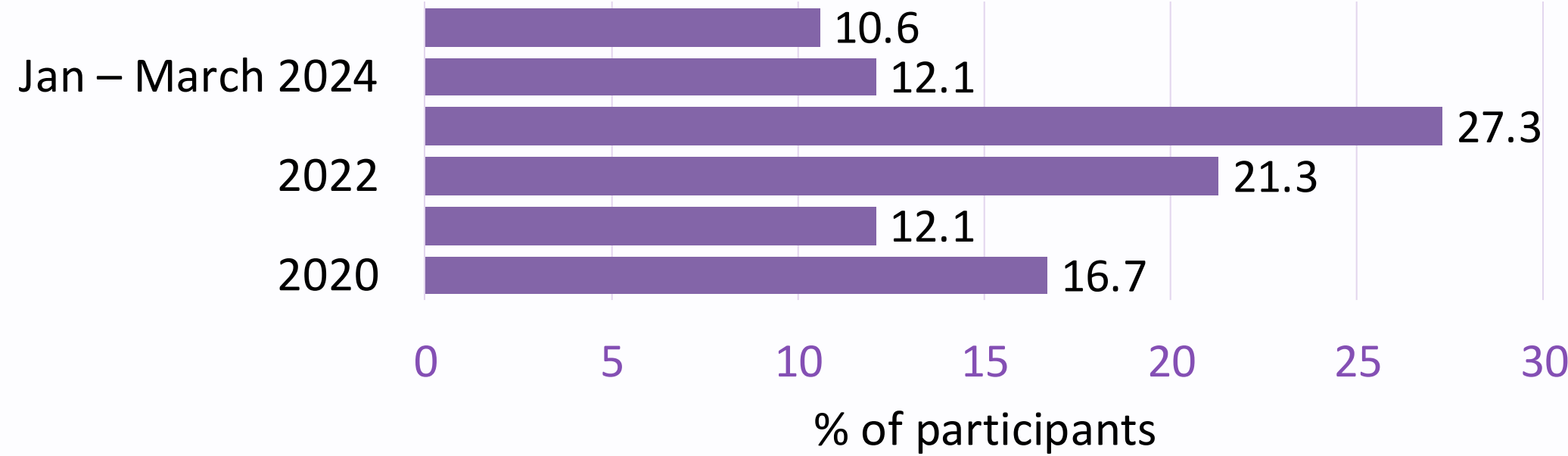
“KCC was critical to my confidence and fear of being thrust into a kinship arrangement in the beginning of the process. I was introduced to some resources that I did not know existed, but most importantly, I was connected with other people my age that were not only in the same ocean, but in my boat.” –KCC Participant



Kinship Caregivers Connect

Organizations/Institutions:
¹Kinship Caregivers Connect; ²Cincinnati Children’s Hospital & University of Cincinnati

Fig 2: When Began Attending Support Group (%)



Qualitative Themes + Subthemes

| Themes | Description | Codes |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| Peer support | Connecting with other kinship caregivers | Safe space to share; not alone; sense of family; encouragement; similar experience |
| Learning | Gaining information, tools, and resources from various sources | Information, strategies, resources, guest speakers, peers, topics |
| Impact on Family well-being | Overall positive impact on caregiver well-being, parenting strategies, and family well-being | Confidence, hope, coping, overall well-being, understanding child, trauma-informed parenting strategies |
| KCC Model | Support provided within context of an online, statewide community | Virtual community, accessibility, additional supports, group leader, caregiver ‘s experience |

Quantitative Findings

- 94.4% report KCC is helpful or very helpful*
- 94.1% agree or strongly agree they would recommend KCC to another caregiver*
- Increased meeting attendance is linked to better emotion-focused coping skills (p > 0.01)

*Remaining respondents selected neutral. None selected disagree or strongly disagree

CONCLUSION: KCC has implemented an online, statewide peer-led support program for kinship caregivers in Ohio, including support groups and informational sessions. A representative sample of participants reported positive useability, acceptability, and impacts on caregiver and family well-being. Future studies will compare outcomes with a control group

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