

<b>ABSTRACT SUBMISSION</b>	
Presenter's full name (title, name, surname)	Lixin Zhang, PhD
Nationality	China
Gender	Female
Country of residence	China; but currently work in United States.
Institutional affiliation	University of Minnesota Alumni Nationwide Children's Hospital
Contact information including email and telephone	Email: <a href="mailto:lzhang8959@gmail.com">lzhang8959@gmail.com</a> Telephone: (1)612986-8802
Title of the abstract	Advancing the Use of Social Network Analysis in Program Evaluation: An Introduction to SNA-Evaluation Conceptual Framework
Conference session	<input type="checkbox"/> Stream A. Responsive National Evaluation Systems <input type="checkbox"/> Stream B. Inclusive National Evaluation Systems <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Stream C. Future Driven Systems and Approaches</b>
Name(s), title(s) and institutional affiliation(s) of all other authors/contributors (if applicable)	NA
Preferred format:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Formal presentation (maximum 10 minutes)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Participation in a panel discussion where the experience can be shared <input type="checkbox"/> Participation in an interactive session where the example can be shared, without a formal presentation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____
I will need to apply for bursary support, if selected.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> No
Language to be used for presentation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>English</b> <input type="checkbox"/> French <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese

Annex 2: Abstract submission template (to be uploaded to the submission portal)

**Abstract Text (max. 500 words)**

In recent years, attention has been paid to the complexities of social programs as effective solutions to social programs depending on coherently and purposefully collaborative efforts across organizational, sectoral, and geographical boundaries to solve complex problems (Benjamin & Greene, 2009). The collaboration of many organizations often forms a complex system consisting of a network of actors. To address the methodological challenges of complex networks, evaluators have expressed interest in applying social network analysis to explore the structures that form the

networks and examine the nature of relationships of the networks relative to the program (Durland & Fredericks, 2005).

While this call to action raised interest in embracing the SNA method to assess complex networks and the interrelationships within the networks, evaluators may fail to effectively use the SNA method if (a) there is no evidence of the role of SNA in the program evaluation; (b) there is little knowledge exists as to how and when to apply SNA; and (c) evaluation practitioners focus on the simple descriptions of a complex network rather than maximizing the use of SNA method to improve programs. Furthermore, the existing literature does not speak to the needs and practice of program evaluation due to the divergent and inconsistent practices in the evaluation field, and evaluators need advice on understanding the implications of using SNA to support their evaluation work.

Given the need to structure the use of SNA in program evaluation, this study developed an SNA-Evaluation Conceptual Framework to facilitate the use of SNA in program evaluation. More importantly, it demonstrated the systematic approach used to develop the conceptual framework by addressing three assumptions: (1) the nature of reality, (2) the justifications of knowledge, and (3) the methods used for this knowledge (Shadish et al., 1991, p. 42). In addition, this study offered SNA-Evaluation Screening Tools with an integrated checklist of fundamental elements to support evaluators. As such, this session will summarize and share the work within the framework of the 2024 Theme: Amplifying and Empowering Voices in Evaluation by empowering evaluators with innovative instruments noted above to (a) understand why SNA matters in program evaluation, (b) determine when and how to apply the SNA method, and (c) advance the evaluation methodology for better learning, understanding, decision-making, and judging.

#### References

- Benjamin, L. M., & Greene, J. C. (2009). From program to network: The evaluator's role in today's public problem-solving environment. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 30(3), 296–309.
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- Shadish, W. R., Cook, T. D., & Leviton, L. C. (1991). *Foundations of Program Evaluation: Theories of Practice*. Sage.