

# Mental Health Groups at USU's Sorenson Center Support Northern Utah Residents

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Dallas Spencer, licensed clinical social worker at the USU Sorenson Center, leads a group discussion.

In Spring 2026, clinicians at the Sorenson Center are hosting a total of seven new and continuing community-focused groups, ranging from caregiver support and seasonal affective disorder to parenting skills training, religious scrupulosity, and more. Residents of Cache Valley and Northern Utah are encouraged to participate.

"We are excited to offer a variety of support and therapeutic groups," said Gretchen Peacock, director of the Sorenson Center. "Groups are a good way to access supports and/or services with others who have similar concerns, and the peer-engagement aspects of groups can provide an increased sense of belonging. With all groups overseen by experienced clinicians, participants should develop skills that will help them address current concerns in a time-limited and cost-effective manner."

The Sorenson Legacy Foundation Center for Clinical Excellence is a community-facing clinical services facility located on USU's Logan campus within the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services. In addition to providing ongoing, individual clinical services to the community, the center also provides single-day and multi-week groups designed to provide support and education on a variety of topics.

## Adult Skills Training Group

This skills-based group is designed for adults who struggle with emotion dysregulation and want practical tools to improve daily life. Participants will learn strategies to stay present, manage intense emotions, tolerate distress, and navigate communication and relationships more effectively. The group aims to foster an improved relationship with self and others through guided practice and support.

The group will meet on the third floor of the Sorenson Center Thursdays from 6:30-7:30 PM for 12 weeks beginning March 26. Cost is on a sliding scale fee. This group will be led by doctoral psychology students and supervised by Sara Boghosian, Ph.D., licensed psychologist.

## Religious Scrupulosity Group

The Religious Scrupulosity group aims to help individuals who struggle with moral or religious OCD. They will use Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) skills to manage intrusive thoughts and reconnect with their faith and values. Led by doctoral student therapists and supervised by Michael Twohig, Ph.D., licensed psychologist, the group teaches participants to distinguish obsessive thoughts from meaningful ones and engage more fully in life.

This group will meet on the third floor of the Sorenson Center in the Behavioral Health Clinic on Tuesdays from 5:30-7:30 PM beginning February 24. It will last eight weeks. Group providers will be doctoral student therapists Mercedes Woolley and Francesca Knudsen, supervised by Twohig. Cost is \$450, which covers an individual intake session with a therapist and eight group therapy sessions.

## My Neurodivergent Brain

The new disability support group "My Neurodivergent Brain" aims to create a space for community, connection, and acceptance where participants can openly discuss their experiences. Designed to promote social support and inclusion—key factors in adjusting to disability—the group will seek to help individuals improve functioning and build more meaningful lives. The group will be run by social work graduate students Olga Tolbert and Hillary Thornley, with the support of Jakob Newlon, an associate clinical mental health counselor at USU.

"My Neurodivergent Brain" is a free support group that will be offered every Tuesday from 6:00-7:00 PM in room 304

of the Sorenson Center until April 28 (except March 10). At its conclusion, facilitators will gauge participants' interest in continuing the group into the summer months.

## Parenting Skills Group

The parenting skills group aims to help families respond more effectively to children's behavior problems and anxiety-related avoidance, such as school refusal or social withdrawal. Led by doctoral psychology students at USU and supervised by licensed psychologist Sara Boghosian, Ph.D., the group teaches practical behavior management strategies while fostering nurturing, close parent-child relationships. Parents can expect more positive interactions and less time spent managing challenging behaviors.

The group will begin on February 25 and will run for 6-8 weeks on Wednesdays from 6:30-7:30 PM on the third floor of the Sorenson Center. Cost is on a sliding scale fee. Please note that children should not attend these sessions.

## Social Language Group for Children

The Social Language group offers children ages 8-14 a safe, engaging space to practice essential friendship skills, including listening, cooperation, problem-solving, and respectful communication. Designed especially for children with social challenges, including those with autism spectrum disorder, the group helps participants apply social rules in real-life interactions. Through guided practice and supportive feedback, children build confidence and meaningful connections.

This group occurs weekly on a semester-by-semester basis, usually on Wednesday afternoons at 4:00 PM in the Speech and Language Clinic at the Sorenson Center. Cost is on a sliding scale fee. Groups are created based on ages and needs. Daphne Hartzheim, Ph.D., licensed speech-language pathologist and behavior analyst, is the supervising clinician for this group.

## Dementia Caregiver Support Group

The Dementia Caregiver Support Group meets virtually twice a month to provide caregivers of individuals with dementia or cognitive decline a safe, supportive space to share experiences and gain guidance. The group covers topics like communication strategies, stress management, coping with grief, and accessing community resources. Participants will build confidence, learn practical tools, and connect with others who are facing similar challenges,

benefiting from both emotional support and practical strategies to navigate the demands of caregiving.

The Dementia Caregiver Support Group is a free virtual group held on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month at 1:00 PM via Zoom. It is facilitated by members of the Dementia Caregiver Clinic staff at USU.

## Seasonal Affective Disorder Group

The Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) group will educate participants about Seasonal Affective Disorder, its causes, and ways to manage symptoms at home or with professional support, including medication and light therapy. Affecting 10 percent of Utahns—especially young people and women—SAD is worsened by Utah's early nightfall and daylight savings. Attendees will gain practical strategies and a deeper understanding of seasonal depression. "Learning about effective treatments and at-home strategies can make a real difference in managing SAD," said Dallas Spencer, a licensed clinical social worker at USU.

This free group will be held February 24 at 6:00 PM via Zoom. Amalia Gridley, a graduate student in social work, will lead the seminar, and Spencer will facilitate.

To register for one or more of these groups, visit the Sorenson Center's [Groups and Workshops](#) webpage. Directions to the Sorenson Center at the USU Logan campus can be found [here](#).