

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS BY TRACK

CONNECTIONS - Plaza Ballroom C

- **Dating and Intimate Relationships - Jared Stewart/ 11:00am-11:45am**

Explore the foundations of healthy dating and intimacy, with tools for communication, boundaries, and building trust.

- **Can you have a Social Life Without Friends? - Melissa Nellsen/ 12:00pm-12:45pm**

Learn how to find belonging and community even outside of traditional friendships, with strategies for connection and support

- **Interpersonal Aspects of Employment - Jared Stewart/ 2:00pm -2:45pm**

Learn how to navigate workplace communication, teamwork, and professional relationships.

- **Social Trauma and Relationships - Amy Corry/ 3:00pm-3:45pm**

Understand the impact of trauma on social life and relationships, and explore pathways to healing and resilience.

- **Style and Confidence - Natalie and Angie Castro/ 4:00pm-4:45pm**

Build self-expression through clothing and presentation, while boosting confidence and self-esteem.

LIVING WELL - Plaza Suite E

- **Eating Habits - Josh Olivas/ 11:00am-11:45am**

Learn how small changes in eating routines can support health and independence.

- **Financial Planning - Tanner Withers/ 12:00pm-12:45pm**

Tools and resources for building a stable financial future for you and your family.

- **Exploratory - Taylor Walters/ 2:00pm-2:45pm**

This open, discussion-based session invites participants to explore new ideas, ask questions, and reflect on personal growth. With a flexible format, it's a chance to discover strategies that fit your unique needs in a supportive environment.

- **Life Hacks - Taylor Walters/ 3:00pm-3:45pm**

Everyday life can be stressful. This workshop focuses on simple, effective strategies to make things easier. From time management and organization to reducing daily stress, participants will learn practical hacks they can adapt to their own routines.

- **Mental Health and Employment - Julia Connely/ 4:00pm -4:45pm**

Explore the connection between well-being and workplace success, with strategies to manage stress, build resilience, and thrive on the job.

CAREERS AND OPPORTUNITIES - Plaza Suite C

- **Utah Uniquely Abled Manufacturing Program - Amy Wadsworth and Johnny Ferry/ 11:00am-11:45am**

Discover a specialized training pathway that prepares autistic adults and other neurodiverse individuals for rewarding careers in advanced manufacturing.

- **Employment Options - Mark Fister/ 12:00pm-12:45pm**

Explore different career paths and workplace opportunities to match strengths and interests.

- **Employment Basics and Job Readiness - Amy Wadsworth and Lisa Willis/ 2:00pm -2:45pm**

An introduction to key skills and expectations for starting and sustaining meaningful work.

TECH AND TOOLS - Plaza Suite D

- **Staying safe on social media - Katie Kablacka and Riley Merrill / 11:00am-11:45am**

Social media offers connection and community, but it can also attract unsafe interactions. This session will teach you how to spot fake profiles and protect yourself by confidently rejecting suspicious friend requests.

- **Kulture City APP and other mobile resources - Meg Raby/ 12:00pm-12:45pm**

A showcase of apps that can help with organization, time management, independence and safety.

- **The Stories We Tell - Reframing How We Talk About Neurodiversity - Samantha Easter/ 2:00pm -2:45pm**

Story changes what we notice, how we feel, and what we do. This session uses narrative to reframe neurodiversity and autism in everyday moments so responses become clearer, kinder, and more effective.

- **ALT Autism - Mark Fister/ 3:00pm-3:45pm**

Explore innovative tech designed to support autistic adults in communication and independence.

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SUPPORT NETWORKS - Suites 204 & 205

- **Transportation Safety - Sgt. John Pearce and Justin Pearce/ 11:00am-11:45am**

Learn practical strategies to navigate buses, trains, and other transit safely and with confidence, while reducing stress and challenges.

- **Autistic Parents Panel - Jared Stewart, Kyra DeSantos/ 12:00pm-12:45pm**

Hear from autistic parents raising autistic children as they share their lived experiences, challenges, and successes. This panel highlights unique perspectives on parenting, advocacy, and creating inclusive family and community spaces.

- **LGBTQ Panel/ 2:00pm -2:45pm**

A safe discussion of how gender identity and autism intersect, offering resources and lived experiences.

- **Activity and Education Groups - NextWork, Spectropolis, Utah Parent Center, Utah Independent Living Center, National Ability Center, TETONS/ 4:00pm-4:45pm**

Learn how activities and education groups build skills, confidence, and community.

PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND BEYOND - Plaza Suite B

- **College Strategies - Taylor Walters/ 11:00am-11:45am**

Heading to college or already enrolled? This session shares practical tools for success, including study habits, using campus resources, self-advocacy, and finding balance between school and life. Participants will leave with strategies they can apply right away.

- **Higher Ed Disability Services/ 2:00pm -2:45pm**

Learn how college disability resource centers support autistic and neurodiverse students. This session explains available accommodations, how to request them, and strategies for self-advocacy to ensure a successful higher education experience.

- **Vocational Trades -**

Discover career pathways in skilled trades and vocational programs. This session highlights training opportunities, hands-on learning, and the supports available to help neurodiverse individuals succeed in these high-demand fields.

RESILIENCE THROUGH FILMS -Plaza Ballroom A

- **What is Mental Health? How can we use Mental Health F.I.T. tips? - Brian Higgins/ 11:00am-11:45am**

Explore the basics of mental health and learn how Mental Health F.I.T. (Films, Ideas and Tips) — can support everyday well-being.

- **Surviving Autism - Suicide Awareness Screening and Panel Discussion, Brian Higgins/ 12:00pm-12:45pm**

This session combines a film screening with an open panel discussion on autism and suicide awareness. Strategies to recognize warning signs, support resilience, and foster hope within the autistic community.

- **Creative Communications - Brian Higgins/ 2:00pm -2:45pm**

Discover how expressive tools—like art, writing, and storytelling—can support mental health. This workshop shares strategies for communicating feelings, building resilience, and fostering self-expression.

- **Film Fest Screenings - Brian Higgins/ 3:00pm-3:45pm**

Experience short films that highlight real stories of resilience, awareness, and hope in mental health. Following the screenings, participants will engage in guided discussion and learn strategies to support personal well-being and community connection.

- **Sean's Oragami - Mental Healthy F.I.T. / 4:00pm-4:45pm**

Engaging in origami offers numerous mental health benefits, including stress reduction, improved mindfulness, enhanced creativity, and a sense of accomplishment. Explore the healing benefits through this workshop.



Established in 2015, NextWork empowers individuals with autism to build independence and improve quality of life. Through employment training, education, social skills, and life skills development, participants receive assessments, job training and placement, financial education, and ongoing support. Core components include an Employment Program that connects participants to career exploration and community jobs, the NextWork Academy for residential living and social skill building, and Supported Living to ease the transition to community independence. By adapting to individual needs, NextWork provides comprehensive support that fosters long-term success.



**Nextworkacademy.org
for more information**

FAMILIES IN FOCUS- Suites 201 & 202

- **Financial Planning - Tanner Withers/ 11:00am-11:45am**

Tools and resources for building a stable financial future for you and your family.

- **Utah Uniquely Abled Manufacturing Program/ 12:00pm-12:45pm**

Discover a specialized training pathway that prepares autistic adults and other neurodiverse individuals for rewarding careers in advanced manufacturing.

- **Navigating Healthcare and Medicaid - Aimee Klien/ 2:00pm-2:45pm**

Get practical tips for accessing healthcare, communicating with providers, and understanding Medicaid services to better advocate for your needs.

- **Eating Habits - Josh Olivas/ 3:00pm-3:45pm**

Learn how small changes in eating routines can support health and independence.

- **Parent Group/ 4:00pm-4:45pm**

Use this time to meet with the group and discuss topics, ask questions, and provide support for one another.

POWER AND PRESENCE - Dance Studio

- **YOGA and Mindfulness - Shauna Flash/ 12:00pm-12:45pm**

Experience gentle movement and breathing techniques designed to reduce stress, increase focus, and promote overall well-being. This accessible session welcomes all levels and abilities.

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- **Taekwondo - Stevie Kinnear and Mike Carpenter/ 3:00pm-3:45pm**

Learn the basics of Taekwondo in a supportive setting that builds confidence, discipline, and self-control. This interactive session introduces simple techniques while encouraging respect, focus, and fun for all abilities.

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