

**Title:** Stroke Support Group: An ASPIRE! Mentorship Project in a Rural Setting  
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### **Overview of Learning Outcomes**

- Explain the purpose of the ASPIRE! program at the University of Wyoming
- Emphasize the importance of the support group model in a rural setting
- Describe the Laramie Stroke Support Group

### **University of Wyoming ASPIRE! Program**

- Established for all Health Sciences Majors
- Mentorship program with faculty
  - Research
  - Community involvement
  - Education about Speech Pathology and Audiology as professions
- Eligibility
  - Full-time undergrad
  - Communication Disorders major
  - 3.0 GPA, ACT score of 23
- Personal Experience
  - Research on language in bilingual, Spanish/English speaking children with Dr. Douglas Petersen, 2013-2014
  - Community involvement via Laramie Stroke Support Group with Lynda Coyle, 2014-2016f
- Benefits
  - Builds professional and practical knowledge skills
  - Tailored to individual interests in the fields of slp/aud
  - \$500 scholarship annually for up to 3 years
  - 1 regional ntl conference funded by ComDis department/Dean of College of Health Sciences
  - NSSLHA national membership
  - Personal relationship with faculty and staff

### **Importance of Support Groups in Rural Areas**

- Living in rural Wyoming presents unique access challenges for support groups such as:
  - Accessible, knowledgeable professionals
  - Available resources
  - Proximity to others with the same experiences
- Rural Area
  - Population less than 50,000
- Support Groups: Why do people attend?
  - Bridge between formal healthcare and informal self-help
  - Social support, shared experiences

- Support for affected individual AND caregiver is important

### **Laramie Stroke Support Group**

- Serves academic community at UW for potential research
  - Therapy programs
- Activities and Special Speakers/Events
  - EMS/Fire Department recognition of stroke
  - Bowling
  - Music Therapist
  - Managing medications
  - Group activities (thanksgiving bingo)
  - Summer Barbeque
  - Artwork/art therapy
  - Permanent artwork in college of Health Sciences
- Mission
  - Provide support, safe environment for discussion, speakers, activities for survivors and caregivers
- Highlighted individuals
- “Pay it forward” through education of stroke and other neurological disorders

### **Main takeaway from the ASPIRE! program & community involvement**

- It is important to not only be an excellent professional, but also leader and visionary in the broader community.

### **Resources:**

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Oster, I., Hedestig O., Johansson, M., Klingstedt, N., & Lindh J. (2013). Sharing experiences in a support group: Men’s talk during radiotherapy period for prostate cancer. *Palliative and Supportive Care*. 11, 331-339  
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groups. *Aphasiology*, 29(8), 965-982 18p.  
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