

Chamber CHATTER



MECHANICSBURG
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
The Strength of One. The Power of Many.™

5.15.25

6 West Strawberry Avenue, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055 (717) 796-0811 www.mechanicsburgchamber.org

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News, Events & more!

Seeking HOSTS for 2025 EVENTS

- Business Women's Networking Luncheon
 - After Hours Mixer
 - Business Leaders Discussion Group

BE A HOST and showcase your business, service and more...

CHAMBER EVENTS

Watch for Weekly Updates!!

May

20 - After Hours Mixer - Penn Harris Hotel, 1150 Camp Hill Bypass, Camp Hill. 4:00 - 6:00pm.

29- Business Leaders Discussion Group -
Sponsored by PaySmart Payroll Services, 650 Wilson Ln, Ste. 100, Mechanicsburg. 7:45 - 9:00 am.
Members only event.

June

19 - Jubilee Day, downtown Mechanicsburg. 10:00 am - 9:00pm.

26- Business Leaders Discussion Group -
Sponsored by PaySmart Payroll Services, 650 Wilson Ln, Ste. 100, Mechanicsburg. 7:45 - 9:00 am.
Members only event.

RSVP to info@mechanicsburgchamber.org

For a full calendar of chamber and member events, visit www.mechanicsburgchamber.org/events

Thank You For Renewing Your Membership!

Mechanicsburg Chamber of Commerce presents:

After-Hours Mixer

FREE
EVENT!

Tuesday, May 20
4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

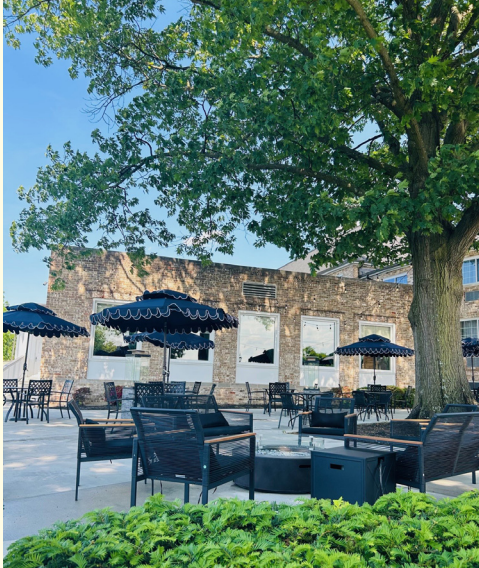
FREE
EVENT!

Penn Harris Hotel
1150 Camp Hill Bypass
Camp Hill, PA 17011



Mercato Mio
Ristorante Italiano

Join us for a Mechanicsburg Chamber of Commerce After-Hours Mixer at the Penn Harris Hotel. Come see and check out the newly restored hotel featuring its new restaurant - Mercato Mio - and freshly opened pool and patio area.



Music will be provided by the Noah Spangler Quartet (as seen/heard at Jubilee Day).

We invite you to come network with other businesses and get to know fellow professionals in the area. The Mixer is FREE.

RSVP to info@mechanicsburgchamber.org or call 717-796-0811.

Enjoy an evening of networking, refreshments and a chance to win a prize!

RSVPing is easy, simply email info@mechanicsburgchamber.org, RSVP online, or call 717-796-0811

Mechanicsburg Chamber of Commerce presents:

Business Leaders Discussion Group

Thursday, May 29

7:45 - 9:00 am

**Sponsored by
PaySmart Payroll Services
650 Wilson Ln, Suite 100
Mechanicsburg**



RSVP to info@mechanicsburgchamber.org or call 717-796-0811.
This members-only event is **free** to attend!

Bring your questions and business topics and hear what others have to say!

Seeking HOSTS for 2025 EVENTS

- Business Women's Networking Luncheon
 - After Hours Mixer
- Business Leaders Discussion Group

BE A HOST and showcase your business, service and more...

For more information - on **HOSTING AN EVENT**
contact the Chamber office at 717-796-0811 or email - info@mechanicsburgchamber.org.



Jubilee Day

Save the Date

On June 19, Jubilee Day returns to the streets of downtown Mechanicsburg. This year marks the 95th Annual edition!

Don't miss your chance to be exposed to nearly 70,000 attendees from across the midstate.

Booth space is available at a discounted rate for Chamber members.

Contact the chamber for an application. 717-796-0811 or
info@mechanicsburgchamber.org



Peace Officers Memorial Day

Thursday, May 15, marks Peace Officers Memorial Day.

First established by President John F. Kennedy in 1962, the day is designed to pay tribute to the brave local, state and federal peace officers who have died or been disabled in the line of duty. The day falls during National Police Week, which this year is marked from May 11-17.

We are blessed by the men and women who have taken an oath to serve and protect, and particularly by those who have sacrificed their lives to protect public safety.



Get Ready for REAL ID



The deadline for enforcement of the federal REAL ID Act has arrived.

As of May 7, federal law will require you to present a federally accepted form of identification to board a commercial domestic flight or visit a secure federal building that requires ID at the door. Federally accepted forms of identification include a Pennsylvania REAL ID driver's license or ID card, a U.S. passport or passport card, or a military ID.

While all Pennsylvanians must comply with the new law, obtaining a state-issued REAL ID is not mandatory. PennDOT will continue to offer standard-issue driver's licenses and photo IDs for those residents who do not want or need one. If you're not sure, [PennDOT is offering the REAL ID online wizard to help you decide.](#)

In light of growing reports of long lines and limited hours at the state's driver license centers, House Republican leaders have called on the Shapiro administration to expand evening and weekend hours to ensure those who choose to obtain a REAL ID are served more efficiently. PennDOT is currently offering a series of dedicated REAL ID Days on Mondays at many driver license facilities. [Check the schedule here.](#)

To learn more about REAL ID and how to obtain one, visit penndot.gov/REALID.

JAZZ ME BAND

KIRK WISE UPCOMING
SOLO, DUO & BAND
PUBLIC DATES

Fri. 5/16 – Jimmy Jaxx Shine Shack,
Dillsburg...Kirk & Beth 7-10

Sat. 5/17 – Williams Grove Chili Cook Off
...Kirk solo 8-Noon +

Sat 5/17 – Totem Pole Wine Farm/Ranch
Carlisle...Kirk solo 6:30-8:30

Sun. 5/18 – Freedom Biker Church.
Lemoyne...Service starts at 10:30

Sun. 5/18 – Captain Bob's Steamed Crabs,
Railroad/ Shrewsbury...Kirk solo 1-3

Wed. 5/21 – Masonic Homes Tavern,
Elizabethtown...Kirk & Dave Duo 5-7

Fri. 5/23 – Captain Bob's Steamed Crabs,
Railroad/ Shrewsbury...Kirk solo 6-8

Sat. 5/24 – Reid's Wine & Cider House,
Gettysburg...Kirk Duo 7-10

Sun. 5/25 – Allegro Wine, Stewartstown
...Kirk & Dave Duo 1-4

For complete up-to-date
schedule, information,
and photos go to
www.jazzmeband.com

Bookings: call Kirk at 717-979-0341 or
E-mail wisemotors@aol.com

Tour sponsors:
FARNHAM INSURANCE,
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CLASSIC DRY CLEANERS, STUDIO D &
LANDON WISE PHOTOGRAPHY



The Bridges Bent Creek Recognized by U.S. News & World Report

AS A BEST ASSISTED LIVING COMMUNITY WITH
MULTIPLE HONORS IN OTHER RATED CATEGORIES



We're thrilled to announce that The Bridges at Bent Creek has earned U.S. News & World Report honors this year, distinguished as a Best Assisted Living community and high-performance accolades for caregiving, activities and enrichment, feels like home, and food and dining.

Now in its fourth year, U.S. News and World Report evaluated over 3,800 communities and recognized top-performers based on over 450,000 consumer satisfaction surveys. The feedback, gathered directly from current residents and their families, evaluated satisfaction with safety, quality of care, management and staff effectiveness, services and amenities, and overall value. This year, U.S. News not only recognized the top communities with Best of Awards but also added high-performance accolades to communities for outstanding performance in key areas.

Our community's U.S. News & World Report recognition underscores our commitment to providing quality care, making us a valuable partner in serving your clients.

We invite you to connect with us today.

Call (717) 620-0350 to learn more.



Personal Care • Memory Care
2100 Bent Creek Blvd, Mechanicsburg, PA 17050 | (717) 620-0350





Join Cumberland County in Celebrating America250!

This year, Cumberland County proudly kicked off its 275th anniversary, and we're already gearing up for another milestone—the 250th anniversary of the United States in 2026! To ensure a memorable celebration, Cumberland County has formed an America250PA Committee with representatives from various organizations, including local historical societies, chambers of commerce, non-profits, school districts, higher education institutions, the Cumberland Valley Visitors Bureau, and Cumberland Area Economic Development Corporation.

We invite your business to join the excitement and contribute to making America250 truly special in Cumberland County! Here are the ways you can assist.

- Explore and share the microsite VisitCumberlandValley.com/America-250.
- Plan an America250PA-themed event and submit it for free to our online calendar.
- Take an active role and join one of our sub-committees:
 - Programming & Events
 - Marketing & PR
 - Education
- Consider sponsoring an America250PA-themed event.

If you'd like to participate or learn more, please contact Stacy Snyder at smsnyder@cumberlandcountypa.gov.

Aspire to Rise Scholarship

The Foundation for Enhancing Communities (TFEC) wants to help fuel your academic future, even if it has an unconventional timeline. The Aspire to Rise Scholarship provides financial assistance for non-traditional students who have experienced adversity in their lives but are looking to overcome those struggles through further education. The opportunity also supports students who plan to register or are scheduled to take the GED.

Rise at any time!
www.tfec.org



If you are 22 or older and ready to pursue further education despite life's challenges, the Aspire to Rise Scholarship from The Foundation for Enhancing Communities (TFEC) can help.

This TFEC scholarship supports those who have experienced setbacks such as caregiving responsibilities, financial hardship or other obstacles that delayed attending college, trade school or completing a GED.

"We want individuals to know that it's never too late to continue your education," said Wendy Ellenberger, program officer for educational opportunities at TFEC. "Whether you need to earn your GED, start a trade program or enroll in a four-year degree, this scholarship can help open doors you never thought possible."

Why Apply for the Aspire to Rise Scholarship

The Aspire to Rise Scholarship offers flexible pathways by supporting various educational goals, from preparing for a GED to attending two-year or four-year degree programs. Awards vary and can help cover tuition or other essential expenses, allowing recipients to focus on their coursework. Schedules are flexible to accommodate students attending part-time or full-time so they can balance school with work or family commitments.

Extra consideration is given to those who have not completed a post-secondary degree, creating second chances for individuals ready to pursue new opportunities.

Who Should Apply

The scholarship supports nontraditional students who are 22 or older and have faced circumstances such as homelessness, substance abuse recovery, health issues, criminal justice involvement or military service. Applicants must live in Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lebanon or Perry counties or in Dillsburg (York County), giving them access to local colleges, trade schools and certificate programs. It also covers related expenses for GED seekers who are preparing or planning to take the exam.

How to Apply

Visit tfec.org/scholarships/aspiretorise to review the criteria, gather the required documents and complete the application.

Submit your application, essay and supplemental files by Wednesday, December 31.

“We are excited to offer this scholarship to individuals who haven’t had an easy road,” said Caitlin Cluck, director of community investment at TFEC. “We believe everyone deserves the chance to invest in their future and positively impact our community.”

TFEC manages 195 scholarship funds and, in 2024 alone, awarded more than \$2 million to nearly 500 students, making higher education more attainable for aspiring learners in south central Pennsylvania. With opportunities spanning a wide range of academic paths, TFEC offers support for diverse interests and backgrounds. To explore all available scholarships, visit tfec.org/scholarships.

Would you like to support the TFEC Aspire to Rise Scholarship Fund? You can donate directly to this fund, helping it grow and continue providing essential educational resources to students in our community. Visit tfec.org to contribute or email info@tfec.org with any questions.



Recovery-Friendly Workplace Survey



Penn State's Center for Economic and Community Development is surveying Pennsylvania businesses and organizations about their needs for a recovery-friendly workplace training initiative.

Please click [HERE](#) or scan the QR code to participate!



All participants will receive a **\$10 Amazon gift card** as a token of appreciation for their time.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact us at cecd@psu.edu. Thank you!

The Center for Economic and Community Development at Penn State is conducting a survey to assess the needs and interests of businesses and organizations across Pennsylvania regarding a recovery-friendly workplace training initiative.

The survey gathers information on:

- Workforce needs
- Understanding of substance use disorder
- Current workplace practices in supporting recovery
- Interest in recovery-friendly workplace training

Responses will inform the development of a training initiative tailored to the needs of Pennsylvania employers. Survey responses will be anonymous. All participants will receive a \$10 Amazon gift card as a token of appreciation for their time.

If you are interested, please complete the survey at the link below. Also attached is a QR code to the survey.

https://pennstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5vB0M2dO1nmJWlw

If you have any questions, feel free to contact us at cecd@psu.edu. Thank you!

EV, hybrid vehicle owners now have to pay a ‘road-user’ charge in Pa.

By [Amy Worden](#) - aworden@pennlive.com

If you plug in you now have to pay up to drive in Pennsylvania.

Under a law that takes effect for registrations expiring on May 1, electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles will have to [pay a fee](#) each year to help with road maintenance.

Legislation signed by Gov. Josh Shapiro last year is aimed at “leveling the roadway” for drivers who use state highways since gas-powered vehicle drivers already pay a gas tax every time they fill up their vehicles at gas stations.

The annual fee is set at \$200 for 2025 for full electric vehicles and \$50 for plug-in hybrids. In 2026 that amount jumps to \$250 for EVs and \$63 for hybrids. After that, the annual fee would be reset based on the prior year’s consumer price index.

The fee is assessed with the annual vehicle registration. Starting in July 2026, motorists will have the option to pay the EV fee in monthly installments.

If the fee is not paid the registration will not be considered valid for law enforcement purposes.

At least 36 other states already have EV fees in place.

The fee is expected to generate \$16 million in 2025, which would be deposited in the state’s Motor License Fund that helps pay for construction, maintenance, repair and safety improvements on highways and bridges.

Roughly 65,000 electric vehicles are registered in Pennsylvania.

GFWC (General Federation of Women's Clubs) Mechanicsburg

May 20th, election day we will be having a bake sale at the Monroe Township Building. Stop by and see us!

Would you like to know more about how we serve the community while helping Veterans, libraries and schools? Come for a visit to find out.

For more information, contact Sue at 717.243.9872 visit our website at <http://gfwcmech.tripod.com/>



FRIDAY FOOD TRUCKS AT FIRST

MAY 16 JULY 18 SEPT. 19

**LIVE
MUSIC
ON THE
PATIO**

**4:30-
8 p.m.**

May 16: Summer Reading Kick off with Simpson Library
July 18: Inside Family Friendly movie
September 19: Fun and Fit Fair with Sadler Health

 **135 W. Simpson St.,
Mechanicsburg**
717-766-4611
fumchurch.com



MULTIPLE TRUCKS /// VARIETY OF FOOD



TIRE COLLECTION

May 16, 2025

Keep Cumberland County Beautiful!

Recycle your old tires at our Tire Collection Event!

May 16 Friday.....9am-3pm

Cumberland County E-Recycling Center

1001 Claremont Road, Carlisle



Registration:

www.signupgenius.com/go/70A044DA9AF23A7FE3-2023#/

Sponsors:

Cumberland County Recycling & Waste

Cumberland County Vector Control

Keep Cumberland County Beautiful

Collection fee: 15¢ per pound

- Limit of 50 tires per customer
- Payments: cash or card (2.3% card fee) No checks
- By appointment only (preregistration required)
- Cumberland County residents only
- ID required

Acceptable Items:

- Lawn & Garden Tires
- Car & Truck Tires
- Tractor Trailer Tires
- Agricultural Tires
- Racing Tires
- Tires on Rims
- Tubes

Unacceptable Items:

- Shredded Tires
- Tire Pieces
- Tires filled with mud/debris

More Information:

cumberlandcountypa.gov/5084/Tire-Collection-Events





RACE TO SHARE THE GOSPEL AROUND THE WORLD

2025 proceeds support The Tide ministry work in Cameroon!



Race Registration

Event Options

- 5K Race
- 1-Mile Fun Run/Walk

Registered racers receive

- Race t-shirt
- Race sticker

Top three 5K finishers in each category receive a medal!

Event Details

Saturday, May 17th
9 AM to 1 PM

Norlo Park
Pavilion 1 and 2
Fayetteville, PA

FREE
Family Fun Day
for everyone!

Open to the public!

Additional Fun

- Prizes
- Games
- Activities
- Inflatable
- Give Aways
- Picnic Lunch
- Sponsor Booths

See reverse side for Sponsorship
and Virtual Challenge information.

Chamber Chatter is published on-line every Thursday.

We encourage member businesses to send us information on sales, promotions, news and events. It is a great way to promote your business or organization.

Chamber Chatter advertisements will remain for up to 4 weeks, or as space permits.

If you have something to share, please submit it by Wednesday at noon to
info@mechanicsburgchamber.org.

****Chamber Chatter advertising is a FREE member benefit.****



**THE FOUNDATION
FOR ENHANCING
COMMUNITIES**

Emergent Needs Grant

In response to the recent federal funding freezes and disruptions, TFEC has seen and heard the needs of local nonprofits and is releasing an RFP for general operating expenses to ensure the continuation of essential community programming.

- Up to \$15,000 in grant support to help nonprofits sustain vital community programs.
- Rolling application process for flexible, timely funding
- Trust-based philanthropy ensures a streamlined process and empowers nonprofits to use grants where they are needed most.
- Focus on south central Pennsylvania, serving Cumberland, Lebanon, Perry and York Counties.
- Up to \$250,000 in total available grant funds.

Visit tfec.org to learn more

Nonprofits in south central Pennsylvania work tirelessly to address urgent community needs—from food insecurity to healthcare. When these organizations face sudden federal funding disruptions and uncertainty, vital services can suffer.

To help continue their essential work, The Foundation for Enhancing Communities (TFEC) announces its Emergent Needs grant, offering eligible nonprofits up to \$15,000 in support for programs that serve residents across the region.


“When unpredictable shifts in the funding occur, nonprofits often struggle to meet rising community needs,” said Caitlin Cluck, director of community investment at TFEC. “This grant program assists in bridging those gaps by providing critical financial support so organizations can maintain vital services for individuals and families who rely on them—even when funding support is uncertain.”

By embracing a trust-based philanthropic approach, TFEC aims to bolster nonprofits’ ability to address urgent community needs without the constraints of burdensome processes. By providing flexible, timely support, TFEC ensures that funds—dispersed on a rolling basis over the next three

months—can be used where they are needed most. This targeted effort helps safeguard social services and improve quality of life in Cumberland, Dauphin, Lebanon, Perry and York Counties.


“The Emergent Needs Grant is a reflection of our mission to protect and uplift the nonprofits that strengthen our communities,” said Jennifer Doyle, president and CEO at TFEC. “We want local organizations to know that when circumstances become uncertain, TFEC is here to help them stay resilient and impactful.”

Eligible nonprofits can find details on how to apply at www.tfec.org, where information on deadlines, application guidelines, and FAQs is readily available. Community members or potential partners seeking more information are encouraged to email TFEC’s Community Investment Team at ccluck@tfec.org.



eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca
carlisle & cumberland county

The
Persimmon
Awards
Honoring Women of Achievement



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Group, Inc.
100 YEARS




REESE
& CO *Design Group*
TOTAL LIFE AESTHETIC.

IN-KIND SPONSORS



The
Whimsical
Poppy



Speckled Hen
Florida

Please join us for the annual
Persimmon Awards Luncheon
as we honor the diverse achievements of
women in Cumberland County.

May 29, 2025
11:30 AM - 1:00 PM
Army Heritage and Education Center

2025 Persimmon Honorees

Colleen Friend Carlisle Area School District Superintendent	Sonya Browne Domestic Violence Services of Cumberland and Perry Counties Executive Director	YWCA George Award Jacqueline L. Powell Alliance Financial Certified Financial Planner™
Ashley Knight Carlisle Area School District Teacher	Jamie DiMartile Carlisle Police Department Corporal	

Register Here





788 Cherry Tree Ct.
Hanover, PA 17331

(717) 632-5552 x4100
trainings@penncares.org

www.penncares.org

PRESENTS

DEMENTIA

LIVE!

A 30-minute, immersive simulation of what it's like to live with dementia. Join us to gain a greater awareness and understanding of the constant struggles affecting persons with dementia as they go about their daily lives.

June 4th, 2025

30 minute time slots
from 9am to 1:30pm

at Silver Spring Personal Care Home

125 State Rd. Mechanicsburg, PA 17050

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS:

- Specialized Sensory Gear
- Facilitated Group Discussion
- Practical Take-Home Tools



Tickets only \$10! Click [here](#) to book your spot.



Silver Spring
PERSONAL CARE HOME



THE FOUNDATION
FOR ENHANCING
COMMUNITIES

This program is made possible through the Emerging Philanthropist Program Endowment fund, a fund of The Foundation for Enhancing Communities.



Cumberland Area
Economic Development
Corporation



ANNUAL SUMMER TOURISM MEETING

JUNE 5, 2025 FROM 1-4 PM

Join the Cumberland Valley Visitors Bureau for an afternoon of networking and learning. Hear how Cumberland County can collaborate with the PA Tourism Office, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and America 250 on their initiatives. Refreshments will be provided.



**CUMBERLAND COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

21 N PITT ST. CARLISLE, PA 17013

REGISTER HERE

CUMBERLAND VALLEY
PENNSYLVANIA

Cumberland Area
Economic Development
Corporation



Cumberland Area
Economic Development
Corporation

LOCAL SHARE ACCOUNT SEMINAR



June 12, 2025



10 AM - 12 PM

Register Here

Join CAEDC to learn more about the Local Share Account programs and discuss best practices to engage stakeholders.



**West Shore Theatre
317 Bridge St
New Cumberland, PA 17070**

CUMBERLAND VALLEY
PENNSYLVANIA

Cumberland Area
Economic Development
Corporation

Mechanicsburg Lions Club

5th Annual "We Serve" Golf Tournament



July 11, 2025 @



The Mechanicsburg Lions Club will host the 5th annual "We Serve" charity Golf Tournament on Friday, July 11, 2025 at Mayapple Golf Club in Carlisle. 8am shot gun start with lunch to follow at Fiddler's Bar & Grill at the golf course.

We hope you will join us again this year and help us support our many charitable organizations.

[Click here for registration forms](#)

Limited to the first 108 golfers that sign up and pay. We look forward to seeing you on the course. Thank you for your continued support.

UPMC

LIFE CHANGING MEDICINE

**Arthritis is an often-overlooked women's health issue,
but relief is possible**

Robert Richards, MD - UPMC Orthopaedic Care

May is both Arthritis and Women's Health Awareness Month.

In May, we raise awareness for both arthritis and women's health. Research indicates that women are more prone to osteoarthritis, a common form of arthritis that occurs when the cartilage

that cushions the joints breaks down, causing bones to rub together.

Women's susceptibility to arthritis may be related to changes in hormone levels during menstrual cycles and after menopause, differences in their musculoskeletal systems, and their increased risk for obesity, which is associated with chronic inflammation and stress on joints. It's critical that arthritis be included among the medical conditions advocates discuss when raising awareness about women's health issues.

Years of activity can wear on our bodies, especially our joints. While minor pain and aches are normal, long-lasting pain or pain that causes you to make lifestyle changes is something both

women and men should consider talking to their provider about because it may be arthritis. The main symptoms of arthritis are joint pain, swelling, and stiffness, which typically worsen with age.

Do I need joint replacement surgery?

Joint replacement surgery may be helpful for those with serious knee and hip pain. Yet, treatment of arthritis often starts without surgery. Less invasive treatment options may include braces or other supports, anti-inflammatory medications, heat and ice, injections, or physical therapy.

Some people suffer with pain, swelling, or stiffness for years before considering surgery, while others see a provider when mechanical symptoms – buckling, clicking, grinding, or limping – get worse. These symptoms can cause long-term damage to the joint as well as present safety issues such as falling. When pain is preventing you from living the life you want to live, surgery may be the answer.



What should I expect with surgery and recovery?

Hospital stays for joint replacement surgery average only a day or two. Some patients may even be able to go home on the same day as their hip or knee replacement.

Recovery times can vary. It's good to get moving as soon as possible, so physical therapy usually begins the day after surgery. You should expect to use crutches or a walker until your doctor decides you can walk unassisted. Even though the skin incision will heal in a few weeks, the process of continued healing can take up to a year.

Many people cite pain or time off work or other activities as a reason to delay or avoid joint replacement procedures. Talk with your provider about these concerns as there are ways to manage post-surgical pain and adjust your lifestyle to facilitate your recovery.

For many patients, joint replacement is the best option to return to an active, pain-free life. A new hip or knee can allow you to return to your favorite activities and put you on the path to living with joints that work for you.

Robert Richards, MD, is an orthopaedic surgeon specializing in total hip and knee replacements at UPMC in Central Pa., that sees patients in Shippensburg and surrounding areas. To schedule an appointment with Dr. Richards, call 717-532-0178. For more information on joint replacement surgery at UPMC, visit [UPMC.com/CentralPAOrtho](https://www.upmc.com/CentralPAOrtho).

Tips for better conversations at work

By **Michelle Peng** - Time

Workers spend almost four hours per day on average communicating through email, instant messaging, and video or phone calls, according to a 2023 [survey](#) from Zoom. [Alison Wood Brooks](#), author of *Talk: The Science of Conversation and the Art of Being Ourselves*, wants to help them have better conversations across all of these channels, in-person or online.

“Conversation is the pathway that we as humans use to pursue all of the things that we want to achieve,” explains Brooks, a professor at Harvard Business School. “As a manager, as a leader, as a group, as a department, as an organization, whatever goals you have, you are going to have to talk to people to achieve them.”

We reached out to Brooks to learn more about research-backed tactics to help workers and leaders communicate more effectively. Here are excerpts from our conversation, edited for length and clarity:

To help people approach conversations more intentionally, you lay out the four ‘TALK’ maxims. What are those?

‘T’ is for topics. So we have to choose good topics, but we also need to manage them well. Even if you start with a bad topic, good conversationalists can make any topic good if you learn how to pick up on your own cues and other people’s cues of interest and excitement and choosing and steering topics to get there.

‘A’ is for asking, so asking more questions and better questions. I start with the very simple advice to not leave a conversation having asked zero questions. It sounds ridiculous, but there are so many conversations where people walk away having asked nothing. Based on some cutting-edge research, some superhero question types emerge, like follow-up questions and open-ended questions, especially open-ended questions that start with the word, ‘what.’ For example, ‘What did you have for breakfast?’ instead of, ‘Why didn’t you eat fruit this morning?’ which feels very accusatory. And then there are some bad patterns of question asking that we should avoid. For example, if you’ve asked your partner a question, and they’ve disclosed almost anything to you, it’s important to follow up with them about it before you bring it right back to yourself. They call that boomer-asking, like a boomerang.

‘L’ is for levity. Most people tend to think of levity, especially in the workplace, as an afterthought or as this extra bonus that maybe sometimes happens. What we find is that humor and warmth and levity are a core determinant of how we view the status hierarchy among human beings. That one successful joke from that one guy in the meeting means we’re all going to like him better and probably want him to be the leader of that group. You don’t need to be funny to find levity. It’s about grabbing people’s engagement, making them feel accepted and safe and pulled in and engaged.

‘K’ is for kindness. In the book, we talk about what kindness looks like in people’s behavior, especially in conversation. We talk about respectful language and receptiveness to opposing viewpoints. It’s important to acknowledge and affirm what’s said, validate their feelings, be able to show them that you hear them and you care about them, even if you’re going to go on to disagree with them vehemently.

Finally, the glue that holds all of these things together is listening. A huge part of kindness is in

listening, not just showing it with your nonverbal cues, but saying it out loud that you heard somebody by repeating what they've said, by asking follow-up questions, by calling back to things they said earlier, by paraphrasing. If you're in a work meeting, you could say, 'It sounds like we're saying that sometimes we think this, but also there's this nuance that's making it hard to do that. Am I hearing that right?'

What about first-time managers or leaders who feel like these things don't come naturally to them? How can they practice flexing these muscles?

If you feel like you're not good at conversation and you are awkward, first of all, you're not alone. Again, this is a very complicated coordination game, and even the best communicators have tons of moments of awkwardness where things don't go perfectly. Accepting the messiness is a good first step, particularly if you're a manager or leader, particularly in group conversations.

As for concrete ways to be more charismatic, it all starts with listening. We often have these latent beliefs that people who are charismatic say funny things or tell good stories or have good ideas. But when you look at transcripts of conversations of people that get highly rated in terms of likability, competence, or charisma, they're often working very hard to listen to the people around them. They're asking questions to make sure that they understand or that they're really learning what's in other people's minds. Then they're using those verbal cues of good listening. They're calling back to stuff that happened earlier. They're reminiscing together like, 'Remember last month when you told me about your daughter doing that funny thing.' That makes people feel amazing, and that's what people are going to see as charismatic: You listen to them, you care about what they said, and you're smart enough to think about it and bring it up again.

It all goes back to these moments of levity to keep people engaged and then kindness to show that you actually want to know what's in people's minds.

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