

TIPS FOR ROOMMATES

Part of ensuring a great living experience is proactive communication and cooperation with your roommates. See below for some helpful tips on fostering positive relationships and navigating shared living spaces.

- 1. Get to know each other.** You're going to be spending a lot of time with your roommate(s). Take the time to ask and answer questions -- about family, hobbies, academic interests, etc. Who is this person? Some questions you can ask:
 - My birthday is...
 - The kinds of food I like to eat are...
 - The things I do for fun are...
 - What I like to do for exercise is...
 - Some things I spend my money on...
 - Some things about my family are...
 - My major is (or may be)...
 - Some things about my hometown/high school are...
 - The way I feel about dating is...
- 2. Communicate.** Open and honest communication is key in building a positive and successful relationship. Take some time and talk to each other and let your roommate(s) know what is important to you. Talk about how you would like for all of you to communicate with each other and how you talk to others when there is a problem or conflict. Living together can be stressful and knowing how the other person operates means that you can resolve conflicts before they grow too large. Healthy relationships take work. Some issues you may wish to discuss include:
 - The way I feel about loaning things is...
 - The way I would like to decorate our apartment is...
 - If something I do upsets you, you would...
 - When I am unhappy or mad, I...
- 3. Be open and friendly.** Remember that all of you may be anxious and concerned about living with new people. Your roommate(s) may be experiencing the same issues and concerns that you are and may be under the same pressures. Talk to each other about what is important to you and things that may affect your relationship as roommates.
- 4. Define "neat."** Whether you're a neat freak or more go with the flow, you have other people's feelings to consider. With a little give and take, you can each adjust accordingly and make your environment comfortable. You need to make sure that you all (1) agree to how you are going to keep the apartment, and (2) what you are going to do if one of you is not living up to your agreement.

5. **Discuss visitation hours.** Talk about when it's okay and when it's not okay to have visitors in the apartment. Also discuss how often you all plan to have people over. Do you want your apartment to be a social center or a refuge from the crowds? How about opposite gender guests? When are they allowed in the apartment? Do you think you might have overnight guests? What are the rules for them?
 - I would like to avoid having guests over at these times...
 - If I feel that a visitor(s) overstays his/her welcome, we would handle it by...
 - The way I feel about your friends using my things is...
 - The way I feel about having people in the apartment when I am trying to study is...
6. **Find an activity you can share.** There's nothing like having something in common to care and talk about. Do you both plan to go to the gym a lot? Maybe you can be workout partners. Perhaps you both enjoy a particular type of film, music, art, or hobby? Do you plan to join any clubs or student organizations? While you will not be spending all your time with your roommate(s), it doesn't mean you can't do some things together.
7. **What about study times and habits?** Talk about how you prepare for classes and tests. Do you study in the apartment or in another place like the library, a study room, the student center? If you plan on doing most of your work in your cottage, talk about scheduling times so that you all can have quiet time. Let your roommate(s) know when you have a big test or assignment coming up so that he or she can give you space and quiet time.
8. **Give each other space.** Togetherness is great, but too much of a good thing, sometimes that's not so great. You and your roommate(s) need time alone or with other friends. If that is not happening naturally, talk about it.
9. **Are you okay with sharing?** Just because you are sharing an apartment, doesn't mean you may want to share other things. Talk about what you want to share and what you want of your own. Can you share clothes, CDs, appliances, food, etc.? Setting these boundaries early can avoid later conflicts.
10. **Pet peeves & personal habits.** What is a big pet peeve for you? What is something that really bothers you? How do you deal with conflict? Do you yell, get quiet, nurse a grudge? You have the chance to talk in advance before you establish a relationship with these people – USE IT!
 - The way I feel about loaning things is...
 - The way I react when I am stressed out is...
 - When I'm depressed I...
 - Something that cheers me up when I am down is...
 - I become easily annoyed by...