

DIY

Do-It-Yourself Tools for Getting Along With Roommates

Awareness: Learning to share your living space with people outside your family is a new challenge for most college students. Good communication and conflict management can contribute to successful roommate relationships.

Prevention: Talk with your roommate(s) early, before conflict arises, to agree on some basic ground rules for your living space. If problems do arise, use an approach of *early intervention*.

Prevent Problems

Consider the following in a discussion with your roommates:

- How will you treat each other—mutual respect and courtesy foster a positive relationship.
- Schedules—class, work, study, and sleep schedule. Are there “quiet hours?” How often will you entertain guests? How many?
- Sharing things—how do you feel about sharing your personal possessions? Food?
- Cleaning shared spaces—who is going to do it? How often?

Communicate and Problem Solve

- Get to know each other. If you sense tension in the relationship, ask questions and try to understand what is going on.
- If you are feeling frustrated, talk to your roommate about your concerns as quickly as possible. State your concern respectfully, and be open to hearing feedback about yourself.
- Often the resolution is one that you create together. For example, if you need to study for a test and your roommate wants to have friends over to watch a game, create a solution that allows for both needs to be met.

Check out more tips at <http://www.sos.umn.edu/DIYroomates>

Early Intervention: If you aren't able to resolve the issues yourselves, reach out to others for advice and assistance. You and your roommate can work with a third party to help gain new perspectives and keep the conversation positive.

Reach Out

Some possible resources include:

- A trusted mutual friend
- The Student Conflict Resolution Center at www.sos.umn.edu or 612.624.7272
- Housing & Residential Life- Residence Directors for each building can be found here:
 - <http://www.housing.umn.edu/halls/index.html>

This resource is brought to you by the [Student Conflict Resolution Center](#).