



Life Skills: Living with Roommates

SELECTING A ROOMMATE

- Friends do not always make good roommates.
- If you are going to share a room, you need to consider a person's sleeping habits and cleaning habits.
- Are your work schedules compatible? Will one of you be sleeping while the other is up and about making noise in the apartment?
- Strongly consider cleaning habits. Both people may consider themselves messy. However, there is a difference between doing dishes every other day and doing dishes every other month.
- Does the person smoke, drink, or use drugs? If so, is it more or less than you can tolerate?
- Does the person have any hobbies? There is big difference between stamp collecting and playing the drums, especially if the person likes to do a hobby at 3 a.m.
- Does the person have pets?
- Does the person have a "significant other" that may become a third roommate?
- Does the person have friends that will spend a lot of time at your place?
- Has the person had financial problems?
- Do you have similar religious and political beliefs? If not, are both of you willing to keep your beliefs to yourself or enjoy a good friendly debate?
- Finally, is the person nice and considerate? When differences arise, a courteous person is more likely to be willing to change.

BEING A ROOMMATE

- Look at your own behavior. Are you infringing on the rights of others?
- Be honest. Being straightforward and direct can help resolve and prevent problems.
- Do not let things build up. Address problems as they happen. Use assertiveness training to help in making appropriate requests for behavior change from a roommate.
- If you have requested the roommate to change his/her behavior, give him/her a chance to change. Thank them for making attempts to change. This will be more effective than continually harping on them.
- Be flexible about your roommate's lifestyle. It may not be the same as yours, but as long as he is not hurting himself or others do not try to impose your will on the person. If it is something that is bothersome, talk about it and get the other person's point of view. If a person's lifestyle is still causing too much strife, it is probably time to go separate ways.
- Don't get taken advantage of. Be assertive when you think your roommate is making demands that are unreasonable. If you don't, you will build up resentment and the relationship will turn sour.
- Agree to disagree. Even the best relationships will hit bad times. When there are points of disagreement in the roommate relationship, sometimes you have to agree to disagree. If it is an item that is too personal or bothersome, you may need to look for a different place.

Source: Life Skills for vocational Success Chapter 1 Handouts 13, 14, 15—<http://www.workshopsinc.com/manual/>

