

Managing Conflict

Tips for Getting Along with Roommates

1. **Talk straight.** Talk to the person that you have a problem with directly. Level with each other. Use I statements (i.e. "When you do X in situation Y, I feel Z.").
2. **Validate other's positions.** Try to understand others' points of view even when they differ from your own.
3. **Negotiate.** Attack problems, not each other. Come to an agreement on what the conflict is and on what a solution might be. Make a plan of action that will help you to achieve the solution.
4. **State issues positively.** Instead of detailing why you can't do what someone asks of you, state what you are willing to do.
5. **Don't gossip.** Try not to involve your neighbors or mutual friends in your conflict.
6. **Call your RA or MA.** When an objective third party is needed, contacting the staff early can only help.

From the Counseling Center at the University of Virginia

What is Mediation?

Mediation is a confidential, voluntary and non-judicial, process that helps people resolve their own conflicts and design their own solutions.

Mediation begins with the disputing parties agreeing to meet with two neutral facilitators (called "mediators") who guide them step-by-step through a problem-solving process.

The mediators help the parties define the issues, identify common interests, clarify needs and generate relevant options. The disputing parties agree to share information, communicate in good faith, make decisions, and ultimately create a mutually acceptable agreement that resolves the dispute.

There are many great resources at GVSU to help you through a conflict. As mentioned above, contacting a staff member is one of the first ways that you can be proactive. Additionally, you can contact the Dean of Students Office at 331-3585. If mediation is appropriate, the Dean of Students Office will suggest the steps necessary for setting this up.

Roommate Lifestyle Agreement

Grand Valley State University



Roommate's Bill of Rights

This workbook was developed to assist roommates in addressing community living issues before they become a problem. Through the process of completing this workbook, you will have the opportunity to develop negotiation and conflict resolution skills that will help you now and in the future.

College is a time of growth and discovery. A lot of freedom comes with living on your own. Adjusting to that freedom and how you can be a true learning experience. As you develop and change, the ground rules that you negotiated with your roommate may need to change as well.

Many people feel that you have to like each other or be friends to be roommates. This helps, because people who like each other share common interests, communicate freely, and are tolerant of each other; however, people who live together do not have to be friends, or even like each other. Talking freely, sharing ideas and opinions, and negotiating ways to handle situations can be done even when friendship does not exist. This can be done through mutual respect and understanding.

- Do this now!
- Be honest about what you need.
- Recognize that you can use this as a guide for discussion.
- Revisit this with your roommate if you are having problems.
- Talk to your RA or MA. They really can help!



Each roommate should initial each statement as an acceptance of responsibility for living with a roommate.

Each roommate has:

- _____ The right to read and study without interference, unreasonable noise and other distractions;
- _____ The right to sleep without undue disturbances;
- _____ The right to have personal privacy in ones own room;
- _____ The right to live in a clean environment;
- _____ The right to host guests, with the understanding that the guests will honor the other resident's rights;
- _____ The right to have free access to one's room;
- _____ The right to be free from intimidation and physical and emotional harm;
- _____ The right to air grievances; the Housing and Residence Life staff (RA, MA, GA, Living Center Director or Apartment Director) may be helpful in assisting in settling conflicts;
- _____ The right to expect respect for one's personal belongings and property;
- _____ The right to expect that these privileges will be respected and accepts responsibility to respect these privileges for others.

So you have a roommate...
Maybe someone you have known for a long time, maybe not.
Chances are that at least one of you have had a room alone,
Maybe for several years...
And you haven't had to be concerned about someone else's needs or opinions.
If you are forming a new relationship, or rooming with someone you know,
you are likely to be on your best behavior,
most of us are
when we are building friendships.
But best behavior evaporates after awhile,
and sharing a room can be a great experience, or it can bring problems
or both!

Roommate & Suitemate Lifestyle Agreement

Use the following agreement as a guide to discuss the issues involved with living together. Feel free to add specific terms or use additional paper if necessary.

Use of Personal Property

Stereo		Clothes	
TV		Dishes	
CD's and DVD's		Food	
Computer		Toiletries	
Other:			

WP - With Permission
A - Anytime
DU - Don't Use

Neatness & Cleanliness D/W Who will clean?

Dirty Laundry		
Trash		
Vacuuming		
Dirty Dishes		
Bathroom (if applicable)		
Kitchen		
Other:		

D - Daily
W - Weekly

Study Times & Noise Level

Morning	
Afternoon	
Evening	
Late Night	

NN - No Noise
QT - Quiet Talking
NV - Normal Voices

Visitation: Consider same & opposite gender guests for weekdays & weekend hours & behavior.

Phone Usage: Talk about calling hours, privacy, taking messages & answering machines.

Communication: Come up with a plan for how you will communicate when there is a concern.

Social Behavior: Consider noise/music/TV volume and invited guests.

Roommate & Suitemate Lifestyle Agreement

Use the following agreement as a guide to discuss the issues involved with living together. Feel free to add specific terms or use additional paper if necessary.

Use of Personal Property

Stereo		Clothes	
TV		Dishes	
CD's and DVD's		Food	
Computer		Toiletries	
Other:			

WP - With Permission
A - Anytime
DU - Don't Use

Neatness & Cleanliness D/W Who will clean?

Dirty Laundry		
Trash		
Vacuuming		
Dirty Dishes		
Bathroom (if applicable)		
Kitchen		
Other:		

D - Daily
W - Weekly

Study Times & Noise Level

Morning	
Afternoon	
Evening	
Late Night	

NN - No Noise
QT - Quiet Talking
NV - Normal Voices

Visitation: Consider same & opposite gender guests for weekdays & weekend hours & behavior.

Phone Usage: Talk about calling hours, privacy, taking messages & answering machines.

Communication: Come up with a plan for how you will communicate when there is a concern.

Social Behavior: Consider noise/music/TV volume and invited guests.

We have openly discussed all issues and created guidelines for our room. We agree to follow these guidelines and re-negotiate specific times when necessary. We also take responsibility to approach one another about any guidelines that may need to be adjusted as the academic year progresses.

Signature & Date: _____

Signature & Date: _____

Signature & Date: _____

Signature & Date: _____

Signature & Date: _____

We have openly discussed all issues and created guidelines for our room. We agree to follow these guidelines and re-negotiate specific times when necessary. We also take responsibility to approach one another about any guidelines that may need to be adjusted as the academic year progresses.

Signature & Date: _____

Signature & Date: _____

Signature & Date: _____

Signature & Date: _____

Signature & Date: _____