



Managing Conflict in Shared Housing

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Transition to Trinity Officer

Living With People – The Basics!

- Clean up after yourself
- Don't eat other people's food without asking
- Keep the noise down - particularly at night
- Chip in for the essentials (toilet paper, cleaning products)
- Stay out of each other's rooms

Living With People – The Basics!

- Keep each other in the loop if you're having people over
- Make sure you have your key
- Share the horrible jobs (putting the bins out, cleaning the fridge)
- Create some house traditions & get to know each other a bit
- Look out for each other

7 Ways to Keep Your Relationship Healthy

- Communicate your needs to your roommates
- Establish your boundaries and respect theirs
- Ask for permission, not forgiveness
- Be mindful of the space you take up
- Don't force a relationship
- Don't say yes when you mean no
- Empathise with your roommate

Setting House Rules and Boundaries

Have an initial house meeting to figure out what is really important to each of you in the common spaces

- How will you organise cleaning of common spaces?
 - A rota is one of the easier ways to divide up tasks fairly
- Will you eat together or cook for yourselves?
- Are milk, bread, butter for everyone or do you buy your own?
- What about cleaning products and toilet paper?
 - If you're sharing these items, will you have a kitty or take turns?
- How much notice would you like for guests or parties?
- How much time do you expect to spend together?

Your House Contract

Now that you have discussed your boundaries and the house rules, write them down! Be realistic so all roommates can manage their expectations.

- Create a cleaning rota, and note what the house expects by 'clean'
- How long can you leave dishes after using them before washing up?
- Write down how much money you expect each housemate to contribute to a kitty for shared purchases and how you have decided to share the responsibility for purchasing items
- Write down your 'quiet hours'
- What is the policy on sharing food?
- What is the policy on sharing belongings?

This may seem very formal, but it means that when conflict inevitably arises, you have an agreement you all signed to base your discussion on.

Common Flatmate Problems

- Cleanliness
- Food sharing/taking
- Noise levels
- Sleeping patterns and study habits
- Lifestyle differences (smoking, alcohol, drugs)
- Use of shared space
- 3rd wheel syndrome
- Money

How to Approach a Problem With Your Flatmates

- Pick your battles
- Make sure that you are calm
- Be prepared to listen as well as talk
- Use 'I' statements – 'I feel', 'I think'
- Avoid accusing others – 'I feel that the bins are not being taken out as often as we agreed,' and 'I think we should talk about a different way of organising this' is better than 'You never take out the bin when it's your turn'
- Have your house contract and be ready to renegotiate it

What NOT To Do!

- Don't leave passive aggressive notes or send passive aggressive texts
- Don't ignore the problem and hope it goes away
- Don't have a 'me vs them' attitude
- Don't approach a conflict as a competition
- Don't ignore your own needs

Conflict Resolution Styles

Remember that everyone has different styles of conflict resolution:

- Collaborating
- Compromising
- Avoidance
- Accommodating
- Competing

Money Matters

- If you are staying in private accommodation, make sure to organise rent & bills
- Who will look after collecting the rent?
- Who will look after paying the bills, or will you each be responsible for one bill each?
- What are the payment dates?
- Cash or transfer?
- Write all of this into your house contract

Keeping a Sustainable House

Unplug

- Unplug appliances when not in use
- Plug them into power strips and turn off at the wall
- Unplug kitchen appliances too

Lights

- Turn off lights when not in use
- Open the blinds!
- Use fluorescent bulbs (you'll save some money too!)

Switch Off

- Turn off your laptop/iPads
- At least put them to sleep after 10 minutes

A young man and woman are standing outdoors, facing each other and talking. The man is on the left, wearing a dark jacket, and the woman is on the right, wearing a red jacket and holding a smartphone. The background shows a building with windows. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

Two Golden Rules for Flatmates:

RESPECT & COMMUNICATION