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 including some of the following:
- How 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/Students/Roommates.html.

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 give perspective 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.