



Tips and Strategies for Living with a Housemate in Shared Accommodation

Be proactive and plan ahead!

When sharing accommodation with a roommate or housemate, some simple steps can go a long way to preventing problems from arising over time. Here are some tips:

- Be positive
- Be respectful
- Communicate often
- Be clear about expectations, needs and wants
- Be appreciative - Say please and thank you
- Be flexible
- Ask questions when you are unsure of something
- Be realistic
- Listen well
- Remember to have fun

Resolving conflict

From time to time you may find that there is conflict and issues that arise in a shared living arrangement. These key steps are ones to consider in the event of a conflict:

1. Be calm and be respectful:

- Conflict can arise at any time.
- Conflict is a normal part of everyday life and having a process on how to deal with it can help turn potential disagreements into suitable solutions that both parties can live with.
- Be aware of your emotions and body language and how you may appear to others.

2. Be proactive:

- Being aware of concerns and addressing them early on can prevent problems from getting out of hand. If something is bothering you, it is important to address it in an assertive, respectful manner.





Tips and Strategies for Living with a Housemate in Shared Accommodation

3. Try to understand all sides of the issue:

- Ask questions.
- Allow the other person to talk and listen without interrupting.
- Focus on the issue and express feelings without blaming the other person.
- Don't jump to conclusions or make assumptions.

4. Be flexible:

- Be open to suggestions and ideas and accepting of differences of opinion.
- Focus on areas of agreement and common interests.
- Stay away from negativity and blaming.
- Look at all possible solutions and seek to come to an agreement you can both live with.

5. Reflect on the situation:

- What have you learned?
- What can you change in the future to prevent similar situations from happening?
- What were the positive aspects of this experience?

Getting help

A neutral third party can sometimes help you assess all of your options so you can decide the best way to manage your situation. If you are working with a professional helper, such as a support worker or case manager, tell him or her about your concerns as he or she may be able to help you problem solve different ways of approaching the situation. In Waterloo Region, consider contacting a Housing Advisor at Lutherwood Housing Support Services (519-749-2450 in Kitchener or 519-623-9380 in Cambridge), or a member of the team at the Housing Help Desk at the Working Centre in Kitchener (by phone at 519-743-1151 ext. 117 or email hd@theworkingcentre.org).