



Tennessee
TECH

OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING RESOURCES

The information in this packet is provided by the off-campus housing consultant for Tennessee Tech students seeking housing off-campus. The information in this packet is for informational purposes only and does not imply an endorsement for any one entity that is listed. In the event that on-campus housing is not available, Tech's University Housing and Residential Life will work with this new consultant to help each student find affordable housing off-campus but cannot guarantee the availability of units at rental agencies listed in this packet.

QUESTIONS

WHEN LOOKING FOR A ROOMMATE!

- HOW WILL YOU PAY FOR RENT?
- HAVE YOU EVER HAD ANY DIFFICULTY PAYING THE RENT ON TIME?
- CAN YOU PUT DOWN A DEPOSIT?
- DO YOU HAVE ANY PETS?
- DO YOU SMOKE?
- HOW LONG DO YOU PLAN TO STAY?
- DO YOU HAVE ANY REFERENCES?

- WHAT'S YOUR TYPICAL SCHEDULE?
- WHAT IS YOUR WORKDAY ROUTINE?
- DO YOU WORK FROM HOME?
- WHAT IS YOUR USUAL BEDTIME?
- HOW OFTEN DO YOU HAVE FRIENDS OVER?
- ARE YOU IN A ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP?
 - DO THEY SLEEP OVER?
- WHAT ARE YOUR PET PEEVES?
- WHAT ARE YOUR CLEANING HABITS?
- WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO ON THE WEEKENDS?
- DO YOU LIKE TO PARTY?
- HOW OFTEN DO YOU DRINK AT HOME?

- HOW OFTEN DO YOU COOK?
- WHAT INDOOR TEMPERATURE DO YOU LIKE BEST?
- WHAT ARE SOME CHALLENGES YOU'VE FACED IN PAST LIVING SITUATIONS?
- ARE YOU STILL FRIENDS WITH YOUR OLD ROOMMATES?
- WHAT DO YOU WANT IN A ROOMMATE?
- ANYTHING ELSE I SHOULD KNOW?

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR ROOMMATE

To be comfortable living with someone, it is important to get to know each other and have open communication. Spend some quality time together, especially within the first few days of living together. Invite your roommate to a movie or out to dinner and introduce each other to your friends. It is also important to discuss house rules up front and include them in your housing agreement to avoid future confusion. And don't forget, for every question you ask your roommate, be sure to share things about yourself as well!

WHAT NAME DO YOU LIKE TO GO BY?

WHEN IS YOUR BIRTHDAY?

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE THINGS TO DO?

WHY DID YOU COME TO TTU?

WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

WHAT GENRE OF BOOKS DO YOU ENJOY READING?

WHAT TV SHOWS OR MOVIES DO YOU LIKE TO WATCH?

HOW OLD ARE YOU?

WHAT ARE YOU INTERESTED IN MAJORING IN?

WHAT TV SHOWS OR MOVIES DO YOU LIKE TO WATCH?

WHAT SPORTS DO YOU PLAY?

WHERE ELSE HAVE YOU LIVED? (WHEN WAS THAT? DID YOU ENJOY THE EXPERIENCE?)

WHAT SPORTS DO YOU LIKE TO WATCH?

WHAT IS YOUR FAMILY LIKE?

DO YOU HAVE ANY SIBLINGS? (HOW MANY AND HOW OLD ARE THEY?)

WHAT KIND OF ACTIVITIES WERE YOU INVOLVED IN DURING HIGH SCHOOL?

WHAT TYPES OF HOBBIES OR ACTIVITIES DO YOU ENJOY?

WHAT TYPE OF MUSIC DO YOU LIKE LISTENING TO?

WHAT TYPE OF EXERCISE REGIMENT DO YOU FOLLOW?

WHAT KINDS OF ACTIVITIES DO YOU WANT TO BECOME INVOLVED IN ON CAMPUS?

WHAT, IF ANYTHING, DO YOU FIND INTERESTING ABOUT RELIGION OR SPIRITUAL BELIEFS?

WHAT ARE YOUR FRIENDS LIKE?

IS YOUR LIFESTYLE AFFECTED BY YOUR RELIGION OR SPIRITUAL BELIEFS?

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT LIVING AWAY FROM HOME?

WHAT JOBS HAVE YOU HELD AND WHERE HAVE YOU WORKED?

ARE YOU A MORNING PERSON OR PREFER TO SLEEP IN?

WHAT TIME DO YOU LIKE TO GO TO BED?

WHEN DO YOU PREFER TO BE AWAKE?

WHAT PET PEEVES DO YOU HAVE?

LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR THINGS TO BE NEAT AND CLEAN?

WHAT ARE YOUR FEELINGS ON SHARING THINGS (FOOD, TOILETRIES, ETC.)?

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT HAVING GUESTS OVER?

WHAT ARE YOUR STUDY HABITS?

HOW DO YOU PREFER TO HANDLE CONFLICT?

WHAT INDOOR TEMPERATURE DO YOU LIKE BEST?

ESTABLISHING GROUND RULES

This worksheet is designed to help you and your roommate(s) establish guidelines to follow while you are living together. Listed below are several issues that typically cause conflict between roommates. Discussing your preferences now will help you to avoid potential future conflict. Try to resolve any differences now, before conflicts arise, in a manner that is satisfactory to all roommates.

COMMUNITY/PERSONAL PROPERTY

- CAN YOU BORROW PERSONAL ITEMS (STEREO, TELEVISION, APPLIANCES SUCH AS A HAIRDRYER OR CURLING IRON, CLOTHING, COMPUTER, ETC.) OR NOT?
- DO YOU HAVE TO ASK BEFORE BORROWING?
- MAY ROOMMATES USE PERSONAL ITEMS WHEN THE OWNER IS NOT THERE?
- HOW WILL THE USE OF COMMUNITY ITEMS (REFRIGERATOR, SHARED FURNITURE OR APPLIANCES, ETC.) BE DIVIDED BETWEEN ROOMMATES?

GUESTS

- HOW MANY GUESTS SHOULD BE ALLOWED AT A TIME AND HOW OFTEN?
- AT WHAT TIMES ARE GUESTS ACCEPTABLE FOR STUDYING AND/OR SOCIAL PURPOSES?
 - IS IT DIFFERENT ON WEEKNIGHTS AND WEEKENDS?
- WILL YOU HAVE TO GIVE NOTICE IF YOU WILL BE HAVING GUESTS
- CAN GUESTS STAY OVERNIGHT?
- ARE THERE ANY RESTRICTIONS REGARDING GUESTS THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO YOU?

FOOD/SHOPPING/HOUSEHOLD SUPPLIES

- WILL YOU BUY YOUR OWN FOOD OR WILL ALL FOOD COSTS BE SHARED?
- WILL YOU BE EXPECTED TO COOK INDIVIDUALLY OR WILL YOU CREATE A ROTATING SCHEDULE OF WHO WILL COOK FOR EVERYONE?
- IS BORROWING FOOD ACCEPTABLE?
- HOW WILL THE COST OF HOUSEHOLD SUPPLIES (SUCH AS CLEANING SUPPLIES, TOILET PAPER, DISH DETERGENT, ETC. BE DIVIDED?

CLEANLINESS/CLEANING RESPONSIBILITIES

- WILL YOU CLEAN UP AFTER YOURSELF OR WILL YOU ROTATE CLEANING THE ENTIRE SPACE?
- WHO WILL CLEAN COMMON AREAS AND HOW OFTEN?
- WILL YOU CREATE A SCHEDULE DEFINING WHO CLEANS WHAT OR SPEND ONE DAY EACH WEEK CLEANING TOGETHER?

ESTABLISHING GROUND RULES CONT'D

STUDY HOURS/SLEEPING

- WHAT HOURS AND DAYS WILL BE SET ASIDE FOR STUDY TIME?
- CAN YOU PLAY LOW BACKGROUND MUSIC?
- WHAT TIME DO YOU EXPECT TO BE ABLE TO GO TO SLEEP ON WEEKNIGHTS AND WEEKENDS?
- WHAT TIME IS IT REASONABLE FOR THE LIVING SPACE TO BE QUIET DURING THE WEEK? ON THE WEEKEND?
- DO YOU EXPECT TO BE ABLE TO NAP?

PARTIES/ENTERTAINING

- DO YOU WANT TO BE NOTIFIED IN ADVANCE IF YOUR ROOMMATE IS HAVING A PARTY?
- IS THERE A MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PEOPLE ALLOWED?
- WHO WILL CLEAN UP AFTERWARDS?
- ARE THERE SPECIFIC TIMES OR DAYS WHEN PARTIES ARE NOT ALLOWED?

SMOKING/DRINKING/DRUG USE

- ARE SMOKING, DRINKING, AND/OR DRUG USE ALLOWED IN YOUR ROOM OR COMMON AREA?
- ARE THERE SPECIFIC DAYS OR TIMES WHEN THESE ARE ALLOWED?
- ARE ANY BANNED AT ALL TIMES?
- ARE CERTAIN SUBSTANCES ALLOWED ONLY IN SPECIFIC AREAS OF THE LIVING SPACE?

PETS

- DO YOU HAVE ALLERGIES THAT WOULD REQUIRE BANNING CERTAIN TYPES OF PETS?
- WILL PETS BE ALLOWED IN COMMON AREAS?
- WILL ALL OF YOU BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CARE OF THE PET?

IDENTIFYING COMMUNICATION STYLES

Communication Styles by Christopher L. Heffner, M.S.

	Passive	Assertive	Aggressive
Definition	Communication style in which you put the rights of others before your own, minimizing your own self worth	Communication style in which you stand up for your rights while maintaining respect for the rights of others	Communication style in which you stand up for your rights but you violate the rights of others
Implications to Others	my feelings are not important I don't matter I think I'm inferior	we are both important we both matter I think we are equal	your feelings are not important you don't matter I think I'm superior
Verbal Styles	apologetic overly soft or tentative voice	I statements firm voice	you statements loud voice
Non-Verbal Styles	looking down or away stooped posture, excessive head nodding	looking direct relaxed posture, smooth and relaxed movements	staring, narrow eyes tense, clenched fists, rigid posture, pointing fingers
Potential Consequences	lowered self esteem anger at self false feelings of inferiority disrespect from others pitied by others	higher self esteem self respect respect from others respect of others	guilt anger from others lowered self esteem disrespect from others feared by others

The most important aspect of any relationship, and especially for living with someone, is communication. It is important to begin your experience as roommates with a strong foundation of open communication. This will minimize initial problems while serving as a useful method for handling any issues that may arise. Knowledge of these fundamental aspects of communication can smooth the way to a happy and healthy living situation.

Communication includes both verbal and nonverbal messages. The different parts of the message you convey have different levels of effectiveness in terms of influencing the listener.

WORDS USED- 7%

TONE OF VOICE- 33%

NONVERBAL CUES- 55%

Although you should choose your words carefully, how you say them is even more important. Not only should you be able to make your feelings known to your roommate, but you must also be an active listener to create a healthy and open atmosphere for all parties.

UNDERSTAND YOUR OWN COMMUNICATION STYLE SO THAT YOU CAN ADAPT TO THE STYLES OF YOUR ROOMMATE.

DON'T LET YOURSELF DRIFT OFF WHILE LISTENING: YOU EXPECT YOUR ROOMMATE TO HEAR AND RESPECT WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY, SO YOU NEED TO SHOW THE SAME COURTESY.

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION IS JUST AS IMPORTANT WHEN YOU ARE AN ACTIVE LISTENER AS WHEN YOU ARE SPEAKING. YOUR ROOMMATE WILL NOTICE NONVERBAL CUES OF WHETHER OR NOT YOU ARE INTERESTED IN THE CONVERSATION AND PAYING ATTENTION.

NEGATIVE CUES MAY DISCOURAGE YOUR ROOMMATE AND BLOCK FURTHER ATTEMPTS AT COMMUNICATING.

GIVE FEEDBACK TO SHOW THAT YOU HAVE BEEN LISTENING ACTIVELY, BUT WAIT UNTIL YOUR ROOMMATE HAS FINISHED CONVEYING HIS/HER MESSAGE.

IF YOUR ROOMMATE ASKS YOU TO JUST LISTEN AND IS NOT LOOKING FOR A RESPONSE, YOU SHOULD RESPECT THOSE WISHES.

You can practice active listening and get to know your roommate at the same time. Sit down together and tell each other a story about yourself. These steps will give you an idea of your listening style, as well as show what improvements could be made.

1. Listen closely to the story without interrupting.
2. Once your roommate is finished, repeat the story back to him/her. This doesn't have to be word for word, but should include the main points of the story.
3. Have your roommate confirm if your rendition was accurate.
4. Ask expansive questions to learn more details.

As a good communicator you should be direct, courteous and calm. Spare others your unsolicited advice and acknowledge that what works for you may not work for others. Be sure to state your main points first and then offer details if necessary. Also listen for hidden feelings and take notice of any nonverbal cues from the other person.

TOP TEN TIPS FOR HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

10. HAVE REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS: NO ONE CAN BE EVERYTHING WE MIGHT WANT HIM OR HER TO BE. HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS MEAN ACCEPTING PEOPLE AS THEY ARE AND NOT TRYING TO CHANGE THEM!

9. IT'S A PROCESS: GETTING TO KNOW PEOPLE TAKES TIME, SO BE PATIENT BUT ALSO MAKE AN EFFORT; RELATIONSHIPS DON'T DEVELOP OUT OF THIN AIR.

8. COMMUNICATE: MAKE TIME BE AN ACTIVE AND GENUINE LISTENER ASK QUESTIONS SHARE INFORMATION

7. FIGHT FAIR: SAY YOU'RE SORRY WHEN YOU'RE WRONG DON'T CRITICIZE DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS BE PREPARED TO COMPROMISE AND DISAGREE DON'T HOLD GRUDGES

6. BE FLEXIBLE AND ALLOW GROWTH AND CHANGE.

5. BE DEPENDABLE: FOLLOW THROUGH ON YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AND PLANS TO BUILD AND MAINTAIN TRUST.

4. SHOW YOUR WARMTH: LET PEOPLE KNOW THAT YOU CARE.

3. KEEP YOUR LIFE BALANCED: DON'T OVERLOAD ON ACTIVITIES BUT GET OUT AND TRY NEW THINGS. MEET NEW PEOPLE SO YOU AREN'T DEPENDING ON A SINGLE PERSON.

2. TAKE CARE OF YOU: RELATIONSHIPS ARE MUTUAL; IF YOU AREN'T HAPPY IT WILL BE REFLECTED IN THE RELATIONSHIP.

1. BE YOURSELF: YOU'LL HAVE MORE FUN AND FIND IT EASIER TO CONNECT WITH PEOPLE IF YOU RELAX AND LET YOUR REAL SELF SHINE THROUGH.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION GUIDELINES

Having a roommate conflict? Don't worry if you find yourself in conflict with your roommmate(s). Remember that disagreements are inevitable, especially when people live together and interact everyday. Don't be afraid to confront your roommate(s) about what is bothering you.

By working through the situation in a productive way, you will be able to find a solution that meets everyone's needs.

Here are 10 Effective Ways to Handle Conflict:

1. Make sure you have enough time to effectively discuss the situation with your roommate(s). Instead of bringing up a problem as your roommate is walking out the door, it is best to find a time when you can both sit down and talk about the conflict.
2. Remember that you and your roommate(s) are entitled to the same right to be heard in the discussion. It may help to pick a neutral location to meet to discuss the conflict.
3. Enter into the discussion without the desire to "win". Resolving a roommate conflict requires that everyone make a compromise. By finding a solution that satisfies everyone, you and your roommate(s) will all "win".
4. Try to take a step back and view the situation from the perspective of your roommate(s), and ask them to do the same. Understanding the problem from each other's perspectives will help find an agreeable solution.
5. Talk about actions that a person can change rather than aspects of your roommate's personality. Personal attacks make it harder to effectively communicate with your roommate(s) about the issues at hand.
6. If you have more than one roommate, make sure you do not team up with one roommate against the other. All of you should work together to solve the problem, and teaming up on one roommate will only make it harder to find a compromise.
7. Take into account any cultural differences that could be adding to the problem. If your roommate comes from a very different background, you may find that you have different customs and values that can affect your living situation and the way you handle conflict. It is important to keep the lines of communication open so that you and your roommate(s) feel comfortable discussing these differences.
8. Make the decision to remain calm and patient while working out a solution. If the discussion escalates into an argument, it may be best to stop and cool off so that you can talk about the problem rationally later on.
9. If your roommate(s) begin fighting unfairly, it is up to you to get the conversation back on the right track. It is best to set a positive tone from the start and maintain it throughout the conversation.
10. It may be helpful to give your roommate(s) time to think about the situation (at least overnight). Your roommate(s) will be able to better discuss his/her perception of the conflict, which will lead to a more satisfactory solution.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES DURING CONFLICT

When we are in a conflict with another, it is an emotionally charged situation. Very few of us are lucky enough to have someone to teach us how to communicate our needs effectively in a way that is easy for others to hear. Yet, conflict is an inevitable feature in most of our relationships. By learning to communicate clearly, we can express our needs and feelings in a way that helps resolve the situation instead of making it worse. When you are in conflict with your roommate, think of it as an opportunity to practice effective communication. Here are some helpful tools to assist you with the gift of clear expression

OBSERVATIONS VS. EVALUATIONS

We are always going to have a predisposition of seeing things from our particular worldview and have our own way of organizing our experiences or making meaning of our external environment. It's sort of like that quote that says, "We tend to see the world as we are, not as it is."

Observations are observable facts whereas evaluations are how you feel about those facts. Words such as always, never, ever, and whenever are sometimes used to express an evaluation of a situation. For example: "You never listen to me." Carefully distinguishing the observable facts and how you feel about those facts will help you more clearly communicate your feelings and needs.

GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS

To make your messages more clear, use "I" language instead of "you" language. "I" language can help in the following ways:

- Takes "blame" out of the statement and will help prevent the receiver from becoming defensive
- Allows the sender to express their feelings and thoughts
- Allows the sender to get to the root of the problem for them
- Are more thoughtful statements and helps senders to weigh their remarks more cautiously

WHEN YOU'D SAY	TRY THIS INSTEAD
I CAN'T	I CAN
YOU ARE WRONG	MY UNDERSTANDING
I DON'T	I DO
YOU HAVE TO	IT WOULD HELP IF YOU
I NEVER	TODAY...
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND	LET ME CLARIFY
YOU CAN'T	YOU CAN
I DON'T KNOW	I'LL FIND OUT
I HAVE NO IDEA	I KNOW WHO CAN HELP

BEWARE OF DEMANDS

Have you ever felt like you would be blamed or punished if you did not do what was being asked of you? If so, then you know how it feels to have someone demand something from you. Demands also tend to come with criticisms and judgment.

PEOPLE SHUT DOWN WHEN THEY HEAR THINGS LIKE:

- YOU SHOULD KNOW BETTER
- THE HOUSE IS SUPPOSED TO BE CLEAN AT ALL TIMES
- I DESERVE TO HAVE MY BOYFRIEND/GIRLFRIEND OVER ANYTIME I WANT
- I HAVE THE RIGHT TO DO WHATEVER I WANT

FIND OUT WHAT THEY NEED BY ASKING:

- CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT...
- WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT...
- WHAT IS YOUR OPINION ON...
- WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT...

You can steer clear of making this mistake yourself by empathizing when your request is turned down. When we use demanding language, people will either submit or rebel. Either way, the chance of working together to meet everyone’s needs is diminished.

IDENTIFY YOUR NEEDS

Making requests in clear, positive, concrete action language reveals what we really want. The clearer you are about what you want back, the more likely it is that you’ll get it back. Be careful though, that you are making a request and not a demand. Here are some ways to begin:

- Would you be willing... • Are you willing... • I would love it if you...

WORDS THAT ARE INTERPRETATIONS OF OTHERS:

- ABANDONED
- ATTACKED
- BETRAYED
- CHEATED
- IGNORED
- MANIPULATED
- MISUNDERSTOOD
- NEGLECTED
- PRESSURED
- PUT DOWN
- REJECTED
- TAKEN FOR GRANTED
- UNAPPRECIATED
- UNSUPPORTED
- USED

WORDS THAT EXPRESS FEELINGS WHEN WE ARE UPSET:

- AGGRAVATED
- ANGRY
- ANNOYED
- CONCERNED
- CONFUSED
- DISAPPOINTED
- DISCOURAGED
- FRUSTRATED
- HESITANT
- HURT
- IRRITATED
- PUZZLED
- RESENTFUL
- SAD
- SCARED

WORDS THAT EXPRESS FEELINGS WHEN WE ARE CONTENT:

- ALIVE
- AMUSED
- APPRECIATIVE
- CAREFREE
- COMFORTABLE
- ENCOURAGED
- ECSTATIC
- GLAD
- INSPIRED
- INTERESTED
- PLEASED
- RELIEVED
- THRILLED
- TRUSTING
- WONDERFUL

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

To make your needs, feelings, and requests more clear, try using this formula:

- I feel** (specific feeling—be sure to express feeling below anger)
- when** (specific behavior—do not use “you,” focus on just one behavior)
- because** (the effect of the behavior or why does it make you feel that way).

6 STEPS FOR SOLVING CONFLICTS

STEP 1

PICK A TIME WHEN EVERYONE INVOLVED IN THE CONFLICT CAN COME TOGETHER AND DISCUSS THE SITUATION.

2

STEP

GIVE EACH ROOMMATE A CHANCE TO EXPLAIN (1) HIS/ HER PERCEPTION OF THE PROBLEM; (2) HOW HE/SHE FEELS AS A RESULT OF THE SITUATION; AND (3) THE BEST OUTCOME.

STEP

3

WORK TOGETHER TO DETERMINE THE BEST WAY TO RESOLVE THE CONFLICT. AFTER DEBATING POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS, COME TO AN AGREEMENT THAT WILL BEST SATISFY EVERYONE'S NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS.

STEP

4

MAKE AN ACTION PLAN EXPLAINING THE CHANGES EACH ROOMMATE WILL MAKE TO ACHIEVE THE DESIRED RESOLUTION. BE SURE TO BE SPECIFIC AND TO GIVE A TIME FRAME FOR MAKING THE CHANGES.

STEP

5

SET A FUTURE DATE TO REEVALUATE THE SITUATION. DEPENDING ON IF THE CONFLICT IS RESOLVED OR NOT RESOLVED HERE ARE FUTURE STEPS TO FOLLOW IN THOSE INSTANCES.

STEP

6

IF THE CONFLICT IS RESOLVED:

Make sure you maintain the behavioral changes put in place as a result of this process. Resolving roommate conflicts is a process, so do not give up if it does not work perfectly the first time!

IF THE CONFLICT IS NOT RESOLVED:

Initial attempts at resolving a roommate conflict may not be successful, but try not to get frustrated. It may take several conversations before the situation is completely resolved. Continue working with your roommate(s) to resolve the situation!