

Encourage your student to think in advance about their needs in a living situation. The most crucial issue in a successful roommate relationship is honest, open communication. Encourage discussion prior to and when your student and their roommate first move into the room. This information can be shared and guidelines may be established for how your student and their roommate will live together successfully.

"Remember there are two sides to every story."

Janet Heeter-Bass,  
Vice President of  
Student Affairs and  
Dean of Students

"Residence Life staff can be a valuable tool in working out roommate issues. Encourage your student to utilize their Resident Assistants."

Kerry Nelson, Director  
of Residence Life

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# Roommate ISSUES

For Parents

A Residence Life Guide  
to resolving conflicts &  
being an ideal roommate



Residential Life  
Muskingum University

## What should I do when a problem arises??

- 1 As much as you want to help, try to let your son/daughter handle this. Listen to and support your son/daughter. Encourage him or her to take the steps they need to take in order to resolve the conflict. By taking this approach, you will help your son/daughter develop valuable life skills.
- 2 If your son/daughter is having roommate problems, ask them whether they have brought the problem to the attention of their roommate. Many times the answer will be “no.” It is sometimes hard to change your behavior if you do not know that it is bothering someone.
- 3 Encourage your son/daughter to share concerns with their roommate and work towards a resolution. Also, suggest using Residence Life staff to aid them in solving the problem. After all, they are trained to help mediate roommate conflict.

“As a parent who has gone through roommate issues with both of my college-age children, I would like to tell other parents to encourage your child to learn to communicate their feelings. Let your child know it is OK to speak up if something bothers him/her about their roommate. Tell your child to encourage their roommate to address issues that bother him/her, as well. Open dialogue is very important. Also, be aware that mid-terms are especially stressful the first semester. After about 6 weeks, the ‘newness’ of campus life has worn off and suddenly the importance of their first exam is pending. It is easy for pent up frustrations to cause tempers to flare between roommates at this time.”

Penny Selock, Assistant  
to the Dean of Students



*Don't make assumptions about your son/daughter's roommate before you get to know them. Go into a roommate situation with an open mind and positive hopes.*

### **As a parent, you should know...**

Resolving a negative roommate situation is very challenging. There are two perspectives in a roommate conflict, and as a parent you are only getting the perspective of one student. Because roommate conflicts usually involve emotion and passion, they are very difficult to sort through and resolve. Some conflicts cannot be resolved overnight. Please keep this in mind when you talk to the Residence Life staff.

Please give your son/daughter a chance to work through their problems on their own before you work them out for them. The challenges they are faced with will make them a stronger individual.