

- How I feel about my possessions--like what things it's okay for you to borrow or use; what things I prefer not to have others touch...
- The grades I hope to earn, and how important that is to me...
- How important it is to me to have my room clean and neat...
- How much sleep I need and when I like to get it...
- How I feel about drugs...and drinking...
- What I hope to do about dating this term...
- How I feel about having guys/girls in the room...
- How hard or easy it is going to be for me to make friends...
- The kind of music I like...

SOME THINGS ABOUT MY EMOTIONAL STYLE...

You may have to think about these topics of conversation before you respond because you may not have given much consideration to such matters before. How you experience and express your feelings have much to do with how easy you are to get along with. If you can share the information requested here, it may make understanding and responding to each other easier over the next few months.

- What I am like when I'm down or upset about something...
- How hard it is for me to let people know what I'm feeling or what I need...
- Something that will cheer me up when I'm upset...
- How I am when things are going really well...

- Times when I would prefer to be left alone...
- How I usually let people know I am angry...
- What my mood is most of the time...
- Something that can make me tense or uptight...
- What I'm like when I feel pressured...
- Something that is likely to annoy me...

REACTIONS...

Being yourself here can set the stage for later frank conversations about how your relationship is changing as the weeks and months go by.

- The thing I'm most aware of about you as a result of this conversation is...
- It seems to me that an important similarity between us may be...
- I think an important difference between us is...
- I think we might have to compromise on...
- One thing I believe I can learn from living with you is...
- I think something I came to realize more clearly about myself from this discussion is...
- The way I feel about this conversation is...

If, while you are living together, your values, habits, likes and dislikes begin to change, remember the Roommate Starter Kit. Try talking out the issues while using the communication skills that you have practiced. Be open and honest, listen closely and be specific. These are the important skills for you to use now and later in any relationship.

You are welcome to stop by or call to make an appointment:

131 Van Housen Hall
315-267-2330
8:30-4:30 pm



THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Potsdam

MEETING YOUR ROOMMATE

College Counseling Center
 State University of New York at Potsdam
 131 Van Housen Hall
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Well, It's your first day in your new dorm. You walk into your room and find black lights flickering and psychedelic posters glow-in-the-dark posters all over the room. "Good grief!" you think to yourself as you search for a light switch. What kind of garbage is in this room? Flick. A voice comes from the corner. "Hey man! How 'bout turning off those artificial cancer-causing-type lights? I only believe in natural black light and sunlight." What do you do NOW? There is definitely a conflict of interest between you two. And yet, both of you will be living together. The key to the solution is communication. An honest up front conversation is needed to discuss the ways of compromise with your roommate. In this way, both you and your roommate will be satisfied with your living arrangements. However, you must also be somewhat considerate with your roommate and his/her personal belongings. You don't have to be best friends with your roommate, but you will want to try to get along. Your attitude towards your roommate as well as your floormates will play an important role in your adjustment to dorm living. If problems between you and your roommate do develop, talk about them and try to work out a solution amongst yourselves first. However, should you require the intervention of a third party, seek out your R.A.

The Roommate Starter Kit

New Roommates Need To Talk To Each Other...

You and your new roommate are sharing a small place. You may never, in the rest of your life, have to learn to get along with another

person with so few square feet between you.

It's also possible that this is the only time in your life with someone who has been "assigned" to you. Later living partners-- apartment mates, fellow fraternity or sorority members, or your future spouse-- will be persons you deliberately choose after a period of getting acquainted gradually. Even if your new roommate is an old friend from back home, both of you are new to this campus and college life, so the relationships between the two of you may be very different than it used to be.

Becoming acquainted with each other in the necessary ways need not take a long period of time. A conversation about many of these issues right now can accomplish much of this. All that is required is a guideline on what to discuss, plus a willingness to be self-disclosing, and an attempt to listen to each other.

The Roommate Starter Kit provides this guideline for conversation. You must provide the reasonably honest sharing of yourself, and the patience and open-mindedness required to listen as your new roommate does the same. Give it a try...

Take turns responding to each item before going on to the next one. If you are not exactly sure what your roommate is saying to you, ask for clarification, or try to state your understanding of what was said in order to check out the accuracy of your listening.

ABOUT MY BACKGROUND

Right here, try to share more than the bare facts. Attempt to express your feelings, your perceptions of your life up to this time. A sample of this kind of talking is provided for the first item.

- What can I say about my family...
- What seems important to tell about my high school...
- How I describe the people I spent a lot of time with at home...
- The way I characterize the area I grew up in, my neighborhood, my town and the people who live there...
- What I was most involved in before coming to college...

Here's an example of how one student responded to this topic:

"I'd say my family is fairly close. I have an older brother, Louis, and a younger sister, Nancy. Basically we like each other. My Dad changed jobs several times and we moved around. Those moves were hard on me especially the new schools. My parents tried hard to help us adjust. My Mother's been sick a lot with a bad back, but she's healthy recently. We had to do the housework and cook during the bad times when she was having trouble. Overall, I have good feelings about my family."

SOME OF MY PERSONAL PREFERENCES, HABITS, AND CHARACTERISTICS...

Through completing this portion of The Starter Kit, you will gain a better idea of how much alike you and your new roommate are going to be, and how much you have in common. You may also notice some of the differences between you, or areas where some adjustments, accommodation, or compromise are necessary.

Again, take turns responding to each item before moving on to the next.