

Approaching Your Roommate

We talked about this?!

So communication has broken down and now you need to approach your roommate with an issue. If this happens, it's helpful to have some idea how you are going to go about it. Make it a rule to talk about the things that concern you when they become problems. When something is a problem, say something to the other before whatever it is becomes a habit or gets out of control. (Don't talk behind your roommate's back! If you really need to talk about it with someone else, talk to your RA.)

How to address an issue:

- Approach your roommate in private.
- Confirm that this is a good time for both of you to talk. If one of you feels rushed or blindsided they will be less able to communicate effectively.
- Be direct. Be clear about what is bothering you. If you don't actually say that there is a problem, your roommate won't be able to do anything about it!
- Discuss the issue with regard to behavior rather than personality traits. This tactic is less likely to put your roommate on the defensive.
- Be patient. Listen to your roommate and remember that there are two sides to every story.
- Each person should be given a chance to present what they feel the problem really is.
- Revisit your roommate contract! If one was made, you should have it posted in the room. Which of your guidelines are working and which of them needs to be reconsidered?
- Remember that a solution will probably involve each person giving something and getting something. The solution may not be your ideal scenario, but it should be an improvement on the current state of things.