

#### Other useful websites:

The Royal College of Psychiatrists  
[www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/atozindex.aspx](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/atozindex.aspx)

Advice from Mind:

[www.mind.org.uk/information-support/mental-health-a-z/](http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/mental-health-a-z/)

Useful leaflets:

[www.ntw.nhs.uk/pic/selfhelp/](http://www.ntw.nhs.uk/pic/selfhelp/)

Health A-Z at:

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

Free meditation exercises:

<http://franticworld.com/free-meditations-from-mindfulness/>

#### Your University at your side

Mental Health and Wellbeing at the University of  
Wolverhampton:

- provide free and confidential individual counselling
- offer non-judgemental support and understanding
- are professionally trained
- are experienced in dealing with a wide range of problems

#### Counselling can:

- help you to develop your strengths
- offer you the chance to focus on and understand your difficulties
- enable you to make positive decisions and changes
- help you to develop the skills and resources to cope
- help prevent small problems from becoming bigger

#### Get in touch

You can make an appointment to see a counsellor by filling out the Contact Us form at [www.wlv.ac.uk/SSW](http://www.wlv.ac.uk/SSW), alternatively, you can come along to one of our drop-in services. For more information go to the web address above and click on the Mental Health and Wellbeing option. From here you will find a wealth of useful information and self-help tools as well as our Drop-ins and Group activities.

# Successful house sharing



## Successful house sharing

How to get along with your housemates



## Introduction

Given that we spend our entire lives in different kinds of relationships with people, it's not surprising that most of us will experience problems with relationships at some point. Getting along with housemates, for example, can be stressful and difficult at times.

**What causes difficulties with housemates?** We are each unique individuals with differing ideas and interests. We have come from different backgrounds with different ideas as to how to do things and live together. Problems can arise when a person believes their ideas to be the only right ones or shows insufficient consideration for the needs of others. Misunderstandings may further complicate matters.

### How can difficulties be prevented?

Avoid difficulties by discussing and agreeing some guidelines together at the outset, for example, the division of household chores and bills and what are appropriate noise levels late at night or early in the morning. This will require compromises on everyone's part and some acceptance of and respect for difference.

Establishing a shared understanding of how you will be together, provides a reference point to return to in the event of people moving away from what has been agreed.

This can help in developing a greater acceptance of one another. You may not end up liking each other but can still respect one another and live together.

**What to do when difficulties are present?** Many of us avoid conflict hoping that it will go away. If we don't acknowledge and express our feelings, however, there's a cost to ourselves and also to the quality of the relationship.

## Successfully resolve conflict by:

- dealing with issues quickly - it's easier to resolve minor, rather than major, concerns
- being specific – instead of generalising: "You always leave the kitchen in a mess", give details about what you felt was untidy and when using a
- non-blaming approach - "When you...I felt..." can be a helpful way of talking about concerns. For example, "When you and your friends were making a noise at 3.30 this morning I felt angry and upset because I had to be up at 6 o'clock to go to placement"
- listening – when you've had your say, allow the other person time to reply. Consider whether you contribute to the difficulties in any way
- finding a satisfactory solution - seek to work together on the problem so that everyone is satisfied. For instance, you may agree to your housemate inviting his or her friends back when you don't have to get up early for work the next morning and are better able to tolerate some extra noise.

## Conclusion

While recognizing that it's sometimes not easy to live with others in a shared house or halls, it can be a rewarding experience, and create friendships and relationships that last a lifetime.

Counselling can help you to:

- develop new ways of relating. We all develop styles of relating with other people based upon our past experiences of relationships. It may be that, no longer finding these ways helpful, you now wish to change them.
- grow in confidence, and develop more assertive ways of dealing with problems.
- manage stress better.
- accept and respect other people and yourself.
- maintain better relationships.

## You might like to look at:

[www.getselfhelp.co.uk/esteem.htm](http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/esteem.htm)

Other leaflets in this series: Confidence and Self-esteem; Working in Groups

## People you might want to contact:

- Your Residential Services Assistant (RA) or Residential Services, tel: City Campus **01902 321268**, Walsall **01902 518 961** Telford Campus **01902 323 900**
- The Students' Union Advice and Support Centre on tel: **01902 322038**
- Your doctor
- NHS 111 – tel: **111**
- The Samaritans – tel: **08457 90 90 90** or visit: [www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk)
- Hidden Hurt: domestic abuse information – visit: [www.hiddenhurt.co.uk](http://www.hiddenhurt.co.uk)
- Women's Aid – 24 hour Domestic Violence Helpline – tel: **0808 2000 247** or visit: [www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)
- Refuge: provides aid and refuge to women and children – tel: **0808 2000 247** or visit: [www.refuge.org.uk](http://www.refuge.org.uk)
- Survivors UK: help for men who have been sexually abused or raped – tel: **0845 122 1201** or visit: [www.survivorsuk.org](http://www.survivorsuk.org)
- Men's Advice Line: help for men in abusive relationships – tel: **0808 801 0327** or visit: [www.mensadvice.org.uk](http://www.mensadvice.org.uk)

