

ROOMMATE CONFLICT SCENARIOS

SHARING FOOD:

When it comes to food necessities, you and your roommate have decided to take turns buying common items, such as milk and bread. But lately, you've noticed she has been snagging some of your personal items. What do you do?

Possible Solution

Communicate at the start of the school year whether you would like to share food or if you'd prefer to only share certain items. Before automatically agreeing to share food, talk through specifics with your roommates. There might be items you don't mind sharing, like popcorn or milk. If you decide not to share certain items, put labels on your food or separate them by shelf. You can also create a shelf in your living room that is specifically for nonperishables you don't mind sharing.

Even if you don't feel like a conversation about sharing food is necessary, have that conversation. Finally, don't assume that your roommate is consciously eating your food. Give them the benefit of the doubt. Most often, it is a simple miscommunication issue and not one that should negatively impact your relationship.

HAVING VISITORS:

Your suitemate's girlfriend is visiting your suite/apartment — for the fifth time this week. You would like some space to work on projects for classes. What do you do?

Possible Solution

Although GCU has designated visiting hours, it is a good idea to set specific guidelines for your suite. Boundaries need to be communicated at the beginning of the semester. You and your roommates may have different preferences and they won't know yours unless you communicate.

Consider discussing a schedule of when your suite agrees to have visitors and ensure all roommates and suitemates are included in the conversation. Once everyone is on the same page, edit your roommate agreement as needed.

KEEPING YOUR SPACE CLEAN:

After two years as roommates in the residence halls, you and your roommate move into an on-campus apartment but the extra kitchen and living space have brought out the slob in them. What do you do?

Possible Solution

Take time to reflect on the last two years and what worked for you as roommates and what did not work. With the extra space, address the situation in a calm manner, ready to present solutions. Discuss your perspectives of cleanliness and whether a chore chart is needed.

If you have not communicated your preferences for cleanliness to your roommates, they will not know. Passive aggression such as sticky notes with messages like "Take out the trash" are not the same as healthy communication. These conversations should happen face to face.

BORROWING PERSONAL ITEMS:

You're living in a triple occupancy and the small closet is an eye-opener that you and your roommates each have a lot of clothing. One of your roommates has started wearing your clothing without asking. Sometimes she washes it and hangs it back up, but other times you find your clothing in the corner of the bathroom on the floor. What do you do?

Possible Solution

When it comes to sharing things with roommates, it's important to communicate expectations. Each person in your room has come from a completely different background. For some, sharing things may have been completely normal and even expected, whereas others could be an only child who has never had to think about sharing clothing or other personal belongings. There isn't a right or a wrong in this scenario, but it will take some self-discovery on your part to recognize preferences that you have and then maturity to kindly communicate those things to your roommates.

If you are fine sharing clothes, it's okay to communicate that but you also need to communicate expectations on how you would like your roommate to return them (i.e. — Should she wash them first? Should they ask you first?). If clothing gets ruined with stains or rips what would you like your roommate to do about that? Consider each of these details and then communicate clearly with your roommates.

It is also 100% fine to tell your roommates you don't want to share your things. Just ensure you have clearly communicated that expectation.

VIOLATING COMMUNITY STANDARDS:

Midway through the semester, you realize that your roommate has been using vape pens in your room. Sometimes they even bring alcohol and marijuana into the room. You feel like these may be violations of the community standards (which they are) and they make you uncomfortable. What do you do?

Possible Solution

It's important to know the community standards and rules at GCU. Since GCU is a dry campus (no alcohol) with no tolerance for drugs, including marijuana and other drug paraphernalia, it would be important to communicate with your roommate. We know it can be a touchy subject, but if you communicate your feelings about illegal substances or breaking GCU standards, your roommate will be less likely to bring those behaviors into your room.

It is very important to remember that not every person is going to hold the same moral beliefs as you. If your roommate doesn't share your beliefs, address the situation with an attitude of understanding. Your roommate will be much more likely to work with you if they see you are willing to keep communication open and respectful in these situations.

The University Policy Handbook also has clear responsibilities for roommates in this situation which is to call Public Safety and let them know if there are vape supplies, drugs, alcohol or illegal substances in your room.