“JUST LIVING WITH A ROOMMATE”

Tips from a Fellow Student:

You are entering a year where you will encounter all sorts of people: people who sleep till noon or wake up with the sun. People who color coordinate EVERYTHING, or people who see laundry as something that is done once every other month. You will be living with these people. Yes, living, breathing, and sharing the same space. Following are helpful tips for “just living” with roommates in a community.

**Tips to Get to Know Your Roommate(s): Just Ask!**

- Tell me about your family and where you are from?
- What are some important things to know about your background that you can share with me?
- Are you religious/spiritual?
- Why Saint Mary’s College?
- What is your area of study?
- How much time do you expect to spend studying?
- Where do you like to study?
- How would you describe your friends?
- What kind of music do you like?
- What are your hobbies or interests?
- What are your pet peeves?
- Do you have a nickname?
- When is your birthday?
- Do you have any favorite foods?
- How often do you exercise?
- What do you do on weekends?

I have the best roommate ever!
The Business of Living: Just Sort It Out!

There are a few things to sort out at the beginning to prevent future misunderstandings:

- Access to computer, stereo, microwave, TV?
- Borrow one another’s stuff? On what conditions?
- How late is it okay for friends/family to call?
- Hosting guests?
- Is there enough “alone time” in the room?
- Security in the room?
- Study times or habits?
- Boyfriend/ Girlfriend?
- How are you dividing the cleaning of the room?
- Sleeping habits?
- Substance free?
- Clothes & laundry?
- Music levels?
- Food?
- Lighting situation?

Communication: Just Be Willing!

Avoid Gossip: Gossip is not small talk. Go to the source: Complaining behind your roommate’s back still leaves your roommate in the dark. Don’t beat around the bush: Be direct and to the point to avoid confusing your roommate. Steer Clear of Assumptions: Example: He didn’t pick up his clothes for three weeks, he must be lazy. Eye Contact: assertiveness and confidence in your message. Expect Success: an increased desire to see the problem resolved. Use “I” Statements: The word “I” lets you take ownership of your feelings and removes the blaming tone. This will probably decrease your roommate’s defensiveness. There is a difference between being assertive and being aggressive. Consider all differences. Listen. Listen. Listen. Be flexible. Make every situation a win/win. Compromise is key. Be sensitive to each other’s moods. It is all about tone. Stay calm. Be genuine. Say what is going wrong and what is going well.

Challenges: Just Talk!

When people live together in community, challenges can arise. It is essential to approach your roommate before the situation is out of control. When doing so, remember the following:

- Time. Place. Manner.
- Eliminate distractions. (Ex. Turn off the TV/ music)
- Don’t tell them, ask them.
- Be clear in what you’re asking.
- Don’t assume the problem can never be fixed.
- Be direct & summarize.

RA/RD Involvement

If talking with your roommate isn’t solving the problem, then you can always turn to your Resident Advisor & Resident Director for assistance.

They will assist by providing support and advice and conducting roommate mediation where both sides are clearly heard. This is an efficient way to work out roommate issues.