

Lesson 1 of 5: “Transitioning to the Dorm Life”

ABSTRACT

Living in a dorm can be fun-filled, but issues will arise. Resident Advisors (RAs) play an important role in improving the resident life experience. They educate the students on co-existing in a dorm to ensure a peaceful atmosphere. Whether you are an RA managing a floor-full of bright-eyed freshmen or a high school counselor preparing his/her students for the transition to college living, here are few tips you can suggest.

Set ground rules for living together.

Roommates come from different backgrounds. Setting rules from the inception can help avert and avoid conflicts. Once rules are discussed and laid out, there should be little excuse for disrespectful behavior between roommates.

RA Is a Friend Indeed

A Resident Advisor plays different roles. She/he can be a conflict mediator and sort out issues between roommates. She/he can be an event coordinator planning fun activities for residents. As authoritative figures they must ensure order is maintained at all times by enforcing codes of conduct levied by the university. As a caretaker, they ensure students feel warm; helping with the transition from home to dormitory living.

Resident assistants are student leaders who can change students’ lives. Although there may be perks to being an RA, more often than not, RAs decide on this position to help. Those intending to be a role model for others with a heart of compassion acquire this role. For this reason, students must respect RAs.

Character Qualities Needed

Even if a student manages to find the perfect roommate challenges are inevitable. Maintaining a warm, friendly relationship is important to ensure a cordial living situation. Here are key quality characteristics that will help foster this type of atmosphere:

Communication: In order to maintain a good relationship, students must communicate openly with their roommates and sort out issues without delay. When students have a “room-sharing” concern and keep it to themselves, misunderstanding will increase due to mounting frustration. Guidelines such as shared common space, visitor time and space, hours of silence, housekeeping duties and shared items should be discussed and agreed upon. Lack of communication is an incubator for resentment and fights.

Consideration: Consideration is another quality lacking in the current generation. When students treat peers the way they want to be treated, there will be no room for misunderstanding. For example, if a student is sick and could not perform their room chores, what treatment would they expect to receive from their roommate? That should be the treatment to give the roommate as well.

Flexibility: Sometimes, there may be a need to change the guidelines or adjust the rules. It is important to do what make sense and works for all involved. This way, students can help each other and the relationship will grow stronger.

Respect: Giving respect goes hand in hand with consideration. When a person can’t respect their peers, refuses to understand them or treat them properly it will be problematic. Degrading roommates for being

different is a definite no no. Every student will have different personal issues as well. This should be respected. Students can use differences as way to grow in loving others different from themselves.

Summary

Yes, there will be disagreements in the roommate relationship, but they do not have to turn into full blown clashes. With effort, and the help of the RA, the relationship can be cherished. When striking the right cord, roommates can become good friends even lifelong friends who lend a hand or shoulder when needed.