

HOUSEMATE RESOURCES

LIVING WELL WITH OTHERS

A Harmony Book for Housemates



HOUSEMATE RESOURCES

This booklet is designed to help you:

- develop ways to talk about housemate issues
- set house rules and conditions
- form deeper relationships with your housemates
- organize living expenses and individual responsibilities
- create a personal wellness plan

Included Tools

1. Shared Living Preferences
2. Housemate Agreement
3. Conflict Resolution Tips
4. Personal Wellness Plan

LIVING WELL WITH OTHERS

Cultivate household harmony with joyful and creative communication.



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You can also download and print these tools from the SHI website:
<https://www.sharedhousinginstitute.com>



**Shared Housing
Institute**

Cost Comparison With and Without a Housemate

Based on your current income:

	Without a Housemate	With a Housemate/s (estimate)
1. Your Income		
a. Take-Home Pay - Monthly		
b. Additional Income (Food stamps, etc.) - Monthly		

2. Your Expenses – Monthly Estimates

a. Housing		
b. Transportation (Bus pass, gas, insurance, tolls, etc.)		
c. Utilities (Heat, electricity, etc.)		
d. Entertainment (Cable, internet, etc.)		
e. Groceries		
f. Eating out		
g. Alcohol/Tobacco		
h. Medical (Co-pays, prescriptions, etc.)		
i. Emergency fund (\$20/week = \$1,040 a year)		
j. Debt payments (Credit cards, student loans, etc.)		
k. Phone		
l. Other expenses (i.e. storage, hobbies, personal care)		
Total Expenses		

3. Your Bottom Line

Income Minus Expenses		
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If shared living allowed for additional income, how would you spend it?

Shared Living Preferences

(discuss with housemates in any order)

What are some of your favorite meals?	What is your favorite type of music?	Do you like loud music?
What was your best/worst housemate experience?	Are you an early bird or a night owl?	Are you a messy person, neat freak or in-between?
Do you clean up after yourself after cooking and eating?	Do you clean the bathroom/shower after use?	What is your least favorite chore?
Do you have any allergies? Food restrictions?	How do you feel about visitors? Overnight guests?	Do you have a significant other?
What can we do if we don't like each other's visitors?	What do you like to do for fun? What are your hobbies?	Do you watch television shows? Sports?
Are you a light or heavy sleeper?	Would you prefer your home to be free of alcohol and drugs?	Would you mind having a pet in the house? A visiting pet?
Do you recharge your energy with quiet time, social time, or both?	What qualities do you hope to find in a good housemate?	What do you do for work, or volunteer?
Are you vaccinated for COVID?	Do you have any medical conditions your housemates should know about?	Do you have any controversial political or personal views?
Add your own questions:		

You can address concerns and accommodations in the following **Housemate Agreement**

Housemate Agreement

This agreement is made by and among the housemates:

_____, _____,
_____, and _____,

who have signed a lease with landlord for a shared dwelling unit at this location: _____.

Execution of this housemate agreement does not alter the joint liability of the tenants under the rental contract with the landlord. However, it may be used if a dispute among housemates arises.

Utilities (skip or delete if not relevant)

Ideally utilities are included in the rent, but if not, housemates should review bills and payments monthly, based on a set schedule, ensuring no one person is stuck with the bill.

Housemates are responsible for following utilities (check all that apply)

Electric Natural Gas Oil Other (i.e., Water, Wi-fi)

Note: Wi-Fi can be free with SNAPs

List utilities and how each utility will be divided evenly:

Utility	Provider	Account #	Name

Housemates will divide each utility bill evenly as follows:

Guests

Each housemate is responsible for the behavior of his or her guests. Guests shall not unreasonably disturb other housemates. Does anyone have a friend or partner that will be around often? Define who is a guest for your household:

_____, _____,
_____, _____,
_____, _____.

What spaces are off limits?

_____, _____,
_____, _____,
_____, _____.

When/how should you notify the other housemates if someone is coming over? All guest-related policies that housemates have agreed upon are stated below:

Quiet Hours

Housemates agree when to observe quiet hours for sleep, study, and other purposes on the days and times listed here. Be mindful of each other’s needs and responsibilities.

Weekdays

From _____ to _____

From _____ to _____

Weekends

From _____ to _____

From _____ to _____

Additional Notes:

Housekeeping

Housemates agree to keep outside doors locked at specified times as noted:

From _____ to _____

From _____ to _____

Housemates agree to clean up after themselves and their guests everytime common spaces are used (i.e., kitchen, bathroom, living room). Household chores can be divided as follows:

- Each housemate does a deep clean in all shared living areas including the bathroom, kitchen, and dining/living rooms/hallways (frequency?)
- Housemates split up who does the dusting/vacuuming/trash each week.
- Housemates always clean up after themselves in any shared living space (dishes, food, clothes, hair, etc.)

Specific chore agreements:

Kitchen Tips: Have a household discussion regarding types of foods to be cooked to understand and respect cultural differences. Note that food smells and/or products can be a challenge for others in the house. Discuss how to respect each person's preferences. Specify kitchen agreements:

Additional Notes:

Food/Groceries

Food will be purchased by each individual housemate. If a housemate did not purchase it, they will not eat it or offer it to a guest without permission, except for community items. Food is labeled and each owner eats only their own food.

Identify food allergies housemates may have and what is needed for health and safety.

Community items will be purchased so that all housemates can use them, and cost shared equally.

Community Food Items:

_____, _____,
_____, _____,
_____, _____.

Household Cleaning Supplies:

_____, _____,
_____, _____.

Additional Notes:

General Courtesies

A housemate’s room is their private domain. The room’s occupant has complete control over what goes on in the room unless they are doing something that could potentially harm or endanger another.

Anything that affects all housemates shall be decided upon by all housemates.

If any housemate moves out of the unit for any reason, that housemate is responsible for giving at least 30 days’ notice to other housemates if possible and paying their fair share of the rent and utilities until the termination of the lease.

Schedule Your Own Housemate Meetings

Set-up a regular time to check-in with housemates, once-a-week, or once-a-month. Ask each other what is going well.

If a conflict arises, consult the Housemate Agreement to identify previously agreed upon house rules or add to agreement.

Stating the Issue: If you have an issue with a housemate, do not hold it inside. Address the problem as it arises.



When bringing up the issue with your housemate, do not confront them with hostility. Instead, simply state you would like to have a conversation, ask when they are ready to talk. **The goal is to negotiate for mutual gain** (De-escalation Tips below).

- Build trust by actively listening
- Move away from hard line positions, support dialogue
- Use the following questions to help reframe the issue



What is important to you.....?

What are your basic concerns.....?

What do you fear might happen if.....?

What do you hope will happen if.....?

Brainstorm solutions and put new, mutually agreed upon decisions into the Housemate Agreement.

Additional Agreements/Deal-breakers

List below additional agreements and deal breakers housemates agree to prioritize:

How do we respond if a housemate breaks the household agreement regarding drug and/or alcohol use?

Other Agreements:

By signing my name, I understand and agree to all terms in the contract and will abide by these terms.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

This Housemate Agreement is a living document. To discuss updates on this housemate agreement and other household matters, housemate meetings will be held (check one)

bi-weekly

monthly

annually

The Housemate Agreement is designed to be pulled out from this booklet for housemate discussions.

Shared Housing Conflict Resolution Tips



No one can read your mind.

When you have an issue with a housemate, do not hold it inside. Instead, address problems as they arise, talk it out, after having found your own inner calm.

Quick tips to help resolve conflict

- You can both be heard if you are both willing to listen.
- Communicate your needs and sensitivities (what upsets you).
- Hear your housemate's needs and commit to respect them.
- Compromise is necessary most times; be willing to bend.
- Review Conflict Management guide in the 'Living Well With Other's' Book.

How to Be a Good Housemate

Do not expect perfection

Be accountable for your own responsibilities

Be considerate

Know you do not have to be best friends to live together peacefully.

Shared Housing Anger De-escalation Tips



Take deep breaths to calm down.

This allows the body's parasympathetic system to re-establish a sense of quiet, increasing your ability to assess the situation. Repeat for five minutes if not calmed with three breaths.

Try the Navy Seal box breathing technique: If a conflict arises, consult the Housemate Agreement to identify previously agreed upon house rules or add to agreement.



Talk a walk - at least 15 minutes to calm down. Fresh air may allow you to see the situation in new light. Practice taking deep breaths in and out while walking.



Explore what may have triggered your anger. Step back early to be able to regain own stability. Only take next steps for discussion once you feel balanced and have regained your own equilibrium.

Personal Wellness Plan (reevaluate in 4 months)

Emotional, physical, social and occupational wellness are all essential components for good health and stable housing.

Are you supporting your Emotional Wellness?

Check the best response for each question	No	Sort-of/ Sometimes	Yes
I can name two people I can call for help or support.			
I can name two people I have helped in the last 30 days.			
I speak to a friend at least once per day (via phone or in-person).			

Are you supporting your Physical Wellness?

Check the best response for each question	No	Sort-of/ Sometimes	Yes
I know how to reach my doctor if I have any health concerns.			
I regularly purchase fruits and vegetables and actively monitor my diet.			
I exercise or takes walks with myself, a group, or a friend regularly.			

Are you supporting your Social Wellness?

Check the best response for each question	No	Sort-of/ Sometimes	Yes
I am regularly in touch with my family and/or friends.			
I try to help my family and friends in different ways.			
I am involved in at least one community organization, social program, and/or attend community events.			

Are you supporting your Occupational Wellness?

Check the best response for each question	No	Sort-of/ Sometimes	Yes
I attend a full-time job or have a volunteering commitment.			
I can name two things I participate in outside of my home that give me fulfillment.			
I am committed to learning a new skill - exploring my purpose.			

My recent achievements in attaining wellness:

-
-
-
-

My new goals and action steps (set hope-to-achieve dates):

-
-
-
-

Key challenges to achieving my goals:

-
-
-
-

Resources to help me achieve my goals (community or faith-based centers, self-help groups, library programs, parks, wellness care, mental health care, etc.):

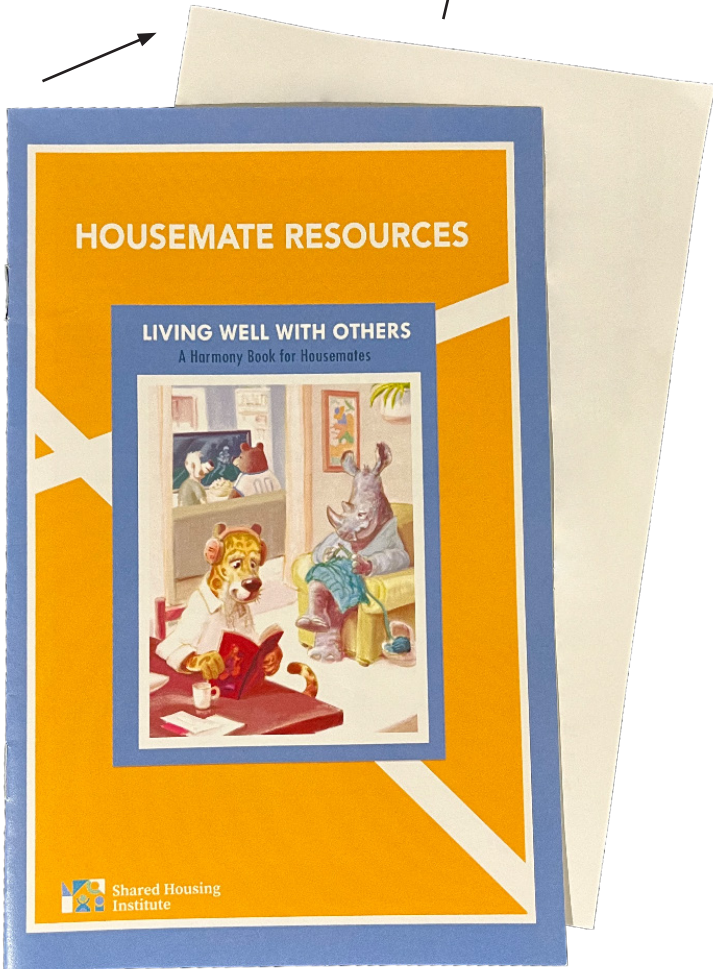
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Celebrate your success!

**Reminder to pull out the Housemate Agreement
from this booklet for housemate discussions.**

Pages 5-12

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SHARED HOUSING

Building community creates stable,
safe, and harmonious housing.



<https://www.sharedhousinginstitute.com>