

Living in Sync: Dorms, Roommates and Rudeness

00:00:00 Ahyeong

I'm an exchange student for the first time in this semester, and I'm sharing a double room in East campus with an American roommate. However, the roommate [picked up the phone interruptedly] in the room.

I asked her if she could [pick up] the phone in the lounge. However, she said it was a challenge, so we decided to hang up the phone in the room until 9 o'clock.

Also, bringing a friend to sleep in the dorm is a penalty in my country, but it is common here and I was stressed out because she enjoys it.

Finally, we have established rules now, but in this process, we talked about these issues with our RA.

But I got into trouble with setting the number of days I could bring my friends and sleep over.

I originally didn't like bringing friends over for a day and putting them in the dorm.

00:00:58 Ahyeong

But I gave away and said three, but my roommate insisted on five, and when I said no, our RA said four. So, I said OK, but my roommate laughed at me there. In that moment I was annoyed and tears burst.

In the end, it ended well by agreeing with each other, but it was an experience that culminated in the sadness and difficulty of living faraway.

00:01:29 Erica

What is up, you guys? And welcome to living and saying our names are Erica.

00:01:34 Desirae

Desirae.

00:01:35 Ahyeong

Ahyeong.

00:01:36 Erica

And we're, we also have our friend Jovi who's going to be joining and chiming in a little bit. So, as you heard already in this episode, we're going to be talking about roommate issues. Finding a good roommate and restoring a broken roommate relationship. So Ahyeong just to be just to kind of clarify so, you wanted to bring your friend over for.

00:01:56 Ahyeong

Oh no, she wanted to bring her friend over.

00:01:59 Erica

For five days? That's a lot of days and you wanted to, you told her to do it for three days and then, you know, the RA kind of helped you guys settle it for four days. OK, cool. So now we're going to have our friend Jovi chime in with some expert information and fact. And then we can go from there.

00:02:00 Ahyeong

Yeah.

00:02:19 Jovi

Hi, my name is Jovi Jovanovic. I'm a senior here at UConn and have lived on campus all four years. A study done at George Mason University found that 5.6% of undergraduates reported having roommate difficulties and that those conflicts and difficulties hindered their academic performance. In a study of 416 students living in residence halls, they found that conflict with one's roommate was a significant predictor of overall stress levels.

Forty-one percent of Americans aged 18 to 24 are currently enrolled in undergraduate programs across the country. Of the ones living on campus, 50.1% of women and 44.1% of men reported having frequent and occasional conflict with their roommates or housemates.

00:03:06 Jovi

Drawing boundaries and finding the words to discuss your conflicts with roommates can be difficult and can definitely take getting used to if you've never lived with people outside of your family before.

Another study found in the Journal of Science of the Total Environment from the February 2020 volume found that 68.49% of students experienced sleep deprivation and their total deep, or REM sleep time, decreases.

00:03:33 Jovi

Indoor noise is the most influential factor affecting sleep among college students. This indoor noise can be a roommate staying up late to do homework. A roommate talking on the phone, watching TV while you're trying to sleep. Even just waking up earlier than you and cooking breakfast. All of these things can affect your sleep, which in the end affects your studying habits, your mood.

00:03:57 Desirae

Thanks, Jovi, for all those statistics. Now we're going to move on to our advice for freshmen since a bunch of us are mostly almost done with our college experiences. I'm a senior right now, Erica. You're a...

00:04:09 Erica

A senior as well.

00:04:11 Ahyeong

I'm a junior.

00:04:12 Desirae

You're almost there Ahyeong. So, we'll start off with what is some-, what is something you want your freshman self to know?

00:04:18 Ahyeong

I think they should have known that we can write down the Husky agreement in the dorm it makes... to you know, communicate with each other with, with roommate, and make some rules, yeah.

00:04:36 Erica

So, my experience is a little bit different because I went to university, my freshman and sophomore year, a different university and I always had a single, but we definitely still had to share like a kitchen and a bathroom and stuff.

00:04:49 Erica

And so, I think just going off of just sharing any space in general, definitely open communication. However, when I moved to when I transferred to UConn, actually I did have a roommate living in an off-campus apartment and she's actually a... she, she was a lot older than I am.

So, I assume that our roommate partnership would be a little bit easier because of the age difference because she was in her upper 20s. Like, she's like, past her PhD and I'm still

like, I was a junior at that time. And so, I'm thinking, OK, it's going to be really easy to work with her.

00:05:21 Erica

But it wasn't as easy as I thought, and so I, wish we actually sat down and, like, talked about like roommate agreements and stuff. And so, I'd say like, no matter what, you know, when you first come together with your roommate having, like, a good conversation and having, like, a group, a roommate agreement about something and, you know, just clarifying something.

00:05:41 Erica

And so, I took that experience. When I moved to my current off-campus housing for my final year, I was the one that took the initiative and wrote a whole agreement. Like, I wrote a whole contract for all my two roommates. We sat down, we talked about it. We actually have a roommate meeting tonight, having everyone talk about how they feel so far because it's been a month living.

00:06:00 Erica

And together and just kind of like talking about, you know, their experiences and what we want to do better moving forward, just so we don't step on one another's toes and stuff. So yeah, definitely open communication having a meeting, having some form of agreement like Ian said. And yeah, over to you Desirae.

00:06:16 Desirae

So, I guess the main thing that we kind of all agree on is that we need to set boundaries way ahead of time before any issues can come up. For my freshman year, I was lucky. My roommate was an angel. Her name was Evelyn. I still think about her to this day.

00:06:30 Erica

Are you guys friends?

00:06:31

No, I don't talk to her. No, but you know why I loved her? Cause she never spoke to me.

00:06:35 Desirae

Evelyn was an angel because we were like, you ever seen like those funny memes where a capybara is by a giant crocodile. And the crocodile's not eating it or anything? That was me and her. We were two beings that existed in the same space, and we just let each other be.

This was freshman year, so, we did do the Husky roommate agreement and we're both- what hit off first was that we're both introverts.

00:07:00 Desirae

We didn't really need to talk about stuff because we didn't have any issues and with the Husky roommate agreement, there's a section where it's like, any specific rules you want to set down. It's like you write it out, and me and her look at each other and we're sitting there for 10 minutes, I was like, oh, I got one! No drugs. And she's like, great. That's great.

00:07:19 Desirae

It was the most basic one. We agreed on it and for the rest of the semester, we would hardly ever talk to each other. She was also hardly ever there. And yeah, it's just like it's also about a thing about personalities clashing a lot.

00:07:30 Desirae

Because someone could be a good friend, but not necessarily a good roommate. I've learned this over the years.

00:07:34 Erica

Yes, yes.

00:07:36 Desirae

PSA for any female listeners.

00:07:38 Desirae

If you are shedding your hair, it happens to all of us. If your hair is on the ground, please clean it up. I walked into a friend's dorm one time and it was like I thought it was carpet.

00:07:43 Ahyeong

Yeah.

00:07:49 Erica

Ohh my gosh. Hair carpet. Galore.

00:07:50 Desirae

Yeah, it was. You have to set boundaries with bathrooms. What other parts about the UConn dorm life exactly, stood out to you or kind of makes you wish you knew more about beforehand?

00:08:03 Erica

So, for me, my perspective is always going to be different because again, I did my first two years in Upstate New York and then when I moved to UConn, I have lived. UConn never gave me housing, so I've always lived off campus junior year and I'm living off campus again senior year.

00:08:19 Erica

But I think yeah to that question. I think one thing I've learned and realized is that personalities definitely do matter, because for me, I'm definitely extremely extroverted. Like, I love to talk to people. I love meeting people from all walks of life and the roommate situation that I had last year was like she was also extroverted, but she wanted a roommate that she can like talk to every day. And as an extrovert, I have my times when it's like when I get home at 9:00 PM.

00:08:45 Erica

I'm not mad at you, girl. I have nothing to say to you. I just want to go to my room, get my dinner and just go, you know. Hey. Hi. How you doing? Cool. But she was like, she wants to have a full-blown conversation and talk about our life and days. And I'm just not that type of person. Like, because I'm so extroverted. Like I definitely do have moments where my social battery runs out and I just want to be by myself.

And so, I feel like as a college student, like just realizing that, you know, times are going to get busy and just because I'm not speaking to you for 5 minutes every day does not mean I'm mad at you or that we have a problem. But she had a problem with that because she wanted someone she can talk to every day. And so that also kind of like brought a wedge because she'd be talking, I wouldn't really give her energy. And so, it would seem like I was being rude, even though I wasn't.

So, I think even just communication is important, but in specifying like communication, and understanding, and letting your roommate know your exact personality. Like, hey, yes, I'm an extrovert, but there might be times when I'm going to come in and all I'm going to say to you is hi, hello. And it doesn't mean I'm annoyed. It doesn't mean I'm mad. It doesn't mean I'm being rude. It just means that. Hi. Hello. I just want to be alone and don't take offense to that. You know, so yeah. So maybe Ahyeong you can kind of add the perspective about the UConn roommate situation.

00:09:54 Ahyeong

In my opinion, I also agree with that, like. Communication with me and my roommate, just simple is the best because I think, when I go my dorm, I just want to take a rest and just leave. And, also my roommate is always just, spends her time on her bed, so we just check our condition with each other.

00:10:18 Ahyeong

And just, hey, how are you? Like dead? Just. Yeah, I think it is just normal to talk about only the simple things every day.

00:10:31 Desirae

The thing about adjusting to UConn is that a lot of kids in their freshman year. This is their first time, like away from home, especially living on their own, and they're surrounded by a bunch of other similar-aged people. It gets very chaotic very quickly and I think that, something that, we immediately learn when you start living on campus is that not everybody's home trained.

00:10:52 Erica

Yeah, that's so true.

00:10:55 Desirae

And by home training, I mean like they don't clean up after themselves properly, which isn't usually a problem unless you're living in an area that might have a kitchen, a bathroom or if you're sharing a space with somebody that doesn't seem to be on the same wavelength as you, you know.

00:11:08 Erica

I agree. Yeah. I think college made me realize how different our lives are because there isn't. Like for me, for example, I'm African. So, I was raised a little bit differently. Where it's like by the time you're a teenager, you know how to cook the basic, the basic meals and clean up after yourself, shower yourself, wash. My household. there is no way you eat and leave dishes in the sink, but you go to college and it's like, their dishes have been in the same for a week. Flies are going around there.

00:11:36 Erica

It's just gross and it makes you question and wonder like how some people's home training, because a lot of them you realize that like they have never lived on their own and had to do stuff for themselves, to do laundry and take care of themselves until they got to college and Mom is not here anymore to do all of that stuff for you.

But for us, who grew up a little bit differently, it's stressful because we're like, how do you not know how to do this? And they're like?

00:11:56 Erica

So, it's kind of like weird because at the same time, you can't exactly blame them, because that's just how they're raised. But in your eyes, you're like, there's just no way because you're also raised differently. So maybe you guys know so chiming on how like your cultures and your different cultures and ethnicities kind of affected your college life.

00:12:11 Ahyeong

In my, for example, I just lived in my Korean dorm. But this is my first dorm life in the U.S., so in comparison to different cities like, I guess in Korea, we just respect our spaces more and we just talked on the phone or just... I think we just keep- our keep, keep it down in the dorm because we don't want to make a loud noise in our room.

But in my case, if I'm studying, my roommate just keeps talking on the phone and she doesn't care about why what I'm doing. So, it is kind of different culture and different, you know, personalities it is, yeah.

00:12:59 Desirae

Are you part of any of like the cultural clubs on campus when, like, talking with other foreign exchange students, where they're also surprised at how American, specifically, American college culture is with that?

00:13:09 Ahyeong

Yeah, many exchange students also have some difficulties with their roommates, like the roommate, is naked in the room, in the bed.

00:13:20 Erica

On my god.

00:13:22 Ahyeong

Or just yeah, put lotion like that. And also, my friend said that her roommates bring her boyfriend in the room and they f*cked up in the room, even if she's in the bed. Yeah. So, I was so surprised of that, like, in Korea that is a really, really bad thing. And if that happened, if that thing happened, that person have to go out of the college. So I'm just shocked.

00:13:52 Erica

Yeah. I have also heard of a situation where a friend told me that she also had a roommate who was just not the best because, she would do things exactly like that where she would have her boyfriend over and would be having sex like while she's there. And for me I'm just like, how do you focus? And even like, I guess enjoy the act?

00:14:06 Ahyeong

Oh.

00:14:12 Erica

Knowing that someone is there watching, listening, your every maneuver.

00:14:15 Desirae

Some people are into it sometimes that's the thing. So, moving on, we're going to go on to some studies that have happened. This study. "[College roommates have a modest but significant influence on each other's political ideology.](#)" From Logan Strother, Spencer Piston, Ezra Goldenstein- Golberstein Sarah Gollust and Daniel Eisenberg.

So pretty much — from what I understand through the abstract — is that they try to test whether or not the idea that college makes you more liberal was actually true, because that's kind of a common thing. I'm not sure about in all colleges, but in American colleges there definitely is like, that political ideology ingrained in college life where we've seen student protests all the time. We've seen it for like Vietnam right now, we're seeing it for Palestine and Israel.

00:15:03 Desirae

So, they kind of looked at this. I think this was back in 20... 2020, so it wasn't even with Palestine and Israel yet. And what they found was that "while we did find little evidence that college students as a whole become more liberal over time, we do find strong evidence of peer effects in which students political views become more in line with the views of their roommates over time, and this effect is strongest for conservative students."

So, they argue that this is kind of an aspect of why maybe we have a higher level of political polarization right now, but I want your thoughts on like, are you seeing this kind of phenomenon happening too right now?

00:15:40 Erica

So first off where's this? Where is the study from again?

00:15:43 Desirae

National Center for Biotechnology Information. It's hard to see exactly which college did this, but Daniel Eisenberg, I believe his name pops up in another study, which is done at the University of Michigan from [The New York Times](#) back in 2010

00:15:56 Erica

OK, so your question is if we feel like basing our experiences if being a college student and living with roommates makes you more liberal?

00:16:06 Desirae

Liberal or the other way around, it seems where it's just not necessarily college itself that makes you more polarized, but it's the people you surround yourself with, which I can understand.

00:16:16 Erica

I think it depends on the experience, because for someone can say yeah, I absolutely think college made me more liberal. Living with her made me more liberal because it allowed me to voice out my opinions and express things.

00:16:29 Erica

Maybe like for example, if someone from high school you know in high school, they were pretty like, timid and they didn't feel comfortable speaking in class and things like that.

00:16:38 Erica

However they go to, they go to college and they have to sleep with the roommates and they have to, you know, talk to people, have group projects and all these different things. So, they have no choice but to voice out their opinions. They have no choice but to interact with people. They have no choice but to express themselves.

And so in that sense, they, I guess, gain a bit of like, self like freedom in the inside, where they feel like, OK, I feel liberal because being in college as a student, having roommates has allowed me to do all these things that I was so scared to do, like in high school and stuff. And so I guess in that case, like that person could say, yeah, college has allowed me to be liberal because it has allowed me to come out of my shell in many ways. Does that make sense?

00:17:17 Desirae

For sure, I think the main thing is that your roommate who is going to be spending most time with you in college, definitely going to have impact on you as a person, yeah.

00:17:25 Erica

Yeah. Any thoughts Ahyeong?

00:17:28 Ahyeong

In my case, we just talked about the U.S. election, well, she said about why she doesn't like both candidates.

00:17:38 Desirae

She doesn't like both candidates?

00:17:39 Ahyeong

Yeah. So, I'm just curious about the U.S. people, how they think about the U.S. election. But she said like I don't have many interest in that election and she will, she said she will not go to the vote. So yeah, your conversation was the end at that point.

00:18:02 Erica

I guess we can end off by talking about tips to, for finding a good roommate, or, you know, we kind of talked about divides. We focus a lot on communication so we can talk and like, finding a good roommate or how to like, find a good roommate situation, but also restoring a broken relationship. For example, if you guys had a fight before.

00:18:21 Desirae

So, there's mainly two types of roommates that you start off with, one, is one you find ahead of time. Hopefully it's a friend from high school maybe, or a friend that you've known so that you're more comfortable living with them. And then the other option would be randoms, which aren't always bad at all. Like, I love my random. I love you, Evelyn.

00:18:39 Desirae

But either way, I think for both of these situations it applies where you need to set boundaries way ahead of time. You need to make things clear and you, it does take time to understand how other people are living, to understand exactly what kind of person they are. But for sure you need to communicate clearly. Any tips Ahyeong for living?

00:18:58 Ahyeong

I think... it is kind of a good way to... I think it is kind of a good way to ask help from the RA because he can make some conversation with each other. I don't know, how can I say but RA can make some space that we, me and roommate can talk.

00:19:22 Ahyeong

And we can make some rules and our Husky agreement or something, and he care about us. Yeah. So I think talking with RA is kind of a good choice.

00:19:35 Desirae

I think you're thinking of the word like “moderator” that's what the RA does?

00:19:37 Ahyeong

Mm-hmm. Yeah, moderator.

00:19:40 Erica

All right, you guys, so that is the end of the episode once again, you're listening to “Living in Sync.” Once again, my name is Erika.

00:19:46 Desirae

Desirae.

00:19:47 Ahyeong

Ahyeong.

00:19:48 Erica

And you also heard from our other chat cast host Jovi, and we hope you guys enjoyed this episode. Let us know what some of your crazy roommate stories that you guys have experienced, or you've heard from friends and loved ones. And without further ado, we hope you guys enjoyed this episode once again. We'll see you guys later. Bye!