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## HOW CAN A PARENT HELP WITH THEIR STUDENT'S ROOMMATE CONFLICT?

There are things that are weighing on your student's mind and your mind, too. This fall is going to have some stressors for students, especially first-year students. Many students have conflicts with their roommates that they find difficult to navigate. This is the first time they are sharing space with others and suddenly they are sharing a bedroom with another person.

This may mean some panicked conversations with you. You are a very important part of your student's support system. Knowing how to help them through the roommate conflict at RMU is essential.

How can you help? There are three easy steps. Listen to your student. Let them talk through the situation, describing the problems they are facing and allow them to vent their frustrations. Ask them if they have talked to their roommate about these things that are bothering them.

If the answer is no, suggest that they use “I statements” to talk about the situation. For example: “I feel frustrated when the lights are left on after midnight because it is hard for me to fall asleep...”

If the answer is yes, suggest that they talk with their community advisor. The Office of Residence Life has highly trained student staff members and professional staff members who are ready and willing to assist in mediating conversations or navigating a conversation for changing the roommate agreement (this is a contract that your student and their roommates should have completed together and turned into their Community Advisor (CA)). Their CA will listen and take account of the issues at hand, will most likely talk to your student’s roommate to gain their side of the story and then sit with them both to mediate the conflict between them. Once the disagreement is mediated, your student should give it some time to work. It may take having secondary conversations with their roommate to solidify these changes discussed during the mediation conversation.

If this does not have positive results, the next thing we suggest to do is to have your student talk with their Building Supervisor in the Office of Residence Life in Washington Hall. Building Supervisors will listen to their concerns and consult with the CA as to what steps have been taken.

If the Building Supervisor feels that the mediation process has been exhausted, they will assist in facilitating a room change. This usually means that the student who is addressing the issues will be the one to make the move. The Building Supervisor will provide a list of open spaces for your student to assess. It would be the student’s job to meet these prospective new roommates and inform the Building Supervisor of their decision on the room change.

It is great to be involved in your student’s lives. We are happy to talk with you about issues they are having however, we are unable to discuss confidential information about the student and their specific circumstances. We will suggest that you have your student come meet with us so that we can talk with them directly. We also understand that there are circumstances where a change needs to be made but you do not want us to tell your student that you called us about it.

Unfortunately, we are put in a bind if you tell us that you do not want your student to know that you talked to us about their situation. Our options become extremely limited because of that, so it is better that you tell your student that we talked and will be reaching out to them to help solve their roommate dilemma.

Our goal is to make this a great and successful year for your student. We are here to help in any way that we can.