



## How to Have a Mediation

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In difficult discussions, such as roommate conflicts, it is very helpful to have an unbiased third party to help mediate the discussion. Our Resident Assistants are trained mediators, with good experience helping roommates come up with solutions to their conflicts. If you find that you and your roommate are having difficulty resolving your conflict, you should definitely approach your RA to arrange mediation.

We believe that roommate mediation is paramount to the learning process and the development of conflict management skills. As such, we require all students involved in a roommate conflict to participate in mediation before changing rooms.

### How Mediation Works:

- Contact your RA to explain the situation and to request mediation. If you haven't tried talking to your roommate on your own first, your RA will request that you do that and return to them once that is completed.
- Your RA will contact all roommates to find a time that works best for everyone. Most mediation meetings can be completed in less than one hour. At times, a second meeting may need to be scheduled to work through issues thoroughly.
- The RA will begin the conversation. The RA will explain the ground rules; discuss confidentiality and the mediation process.
- In the **Issues Phase** of mediation, the roommates will each be given an opportunity to present the issues as they see them in the roommate relationship.
- In the **Understanding Phase** of mediation, the roommates will talk with each other about the issues presented in the previous phase. Each will have the opportunity to respond to the other's perception, share how they feel about what the other said, and share their own understanding of the situation as presented by the roommate.
- In the **Agreement Phase** of mediation, the roommates will offer possible solutions that will address the issues presented earlier. Solutions will involve compromise and negotiation. The mediators will guide this process, but will not suggest agreement items to the roommates. It is critical that the students involved in conflict own and fully agree with solution(s) presented.
- The mediators will work to assist in recording information discussed in the mediation.
- If, after the mediation, things still aren't going well in the room, be sure to follow up with your RA. They will assist you in navigating the next steps of the process.

Remember, although the RA is a trained mediator, they are not magicians. Some roommate conflicts require a number of mediations before a workable solution can be found. In other cases, the roommate relationship may not be mended even after an honest attempt at mediation has been made. In those cases, and only in those cases, a room change may be the best answer.