

HOME SHARING

FOR SINGLE PARENTS



www.shareabode.com.au



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01

INTRODUCTION



What is ShareAbode

ShareAbode is a connection platform that connects single parents with one another. Members of ShareAbode sign up and are encouraged to create a profile as a HOME-SEEKER or a HOME-SHARER.

A HOME-SEEKER is a member who is seeking a home that's available to rent (that's listed in the HOME-SHARER category) or meet with another HOME-SEEKER they like the sound of and create a relationship that can be a platform for future home-sharing and renting a home they both like together.

A HOME-SHARER is a member that has a home that they want to open up for a HOME-SEEKER.

Why It Was Created

ShareAbode works on the principle that two single parents raising children together, sharing resources, rent and living expenses together can achieve more than one going it alone. If rent and expenses are half the cost, then savings will be doubled and financial obligations for a single parent would be less stressful. Single parents living together can afford a better house or apartment within a safer neighbourhood because it is shared and therefore a bit more than the single parent budget can be afforded. The resource of having another single parent living under the same roof benefits also the burden being lightened of chores such as cooking, cleaning, garden maintenance, sometimes laundry and even some child care aspects such as homework or carpooling.



Children can also benefit, especially if they are only children and the sharing parents have kids of similar ages, it's like having an "unofficial" sibling and can establish a relationship which is not just dependant on the one parent but the other parent and their child or children. Sure, you may lose some "me" time but the advantages far outweigh. Doing this for a few years can save money for a deposit on your own place, create a solid and lifelong friendship for you and your children with the other family.

Single parents who have no rental history can benefit as it is not through a real estate agent, but another single parent. Single parents trying to pay the mortgage on a family home can benefit so they can reduce the rent and hold onto this home and single parents struggling to make ends meet benefit because of the cost cutting.

This service gives single parents a profound amount of stress relief which alleviates fatigue and depression, allowing healthier interaction with themselves (self-confidence), with their children and with life in general. By offering single parents this platform to connect with one another for house sharing ShareAbode hopes to make a significant difference in the social and economic lives of single parent families from all backgrounds.

02

WHAT IS HOME SHARING?



How It Works

Home-sharing is when two people decide to rent a home together or when someone has a home they decided to open to another to rent from them. It's about sharing rent and expenses so they are more manageable. And it's about getting support in other areas such as household duties, cooking, cleaning and maybe even garden maintenance.

As a single parent it's also about the emotional support, friendship and cure for loneliness that is so difficult for us. Obviously, the agreement that is between two people offers different sharing responsibilities and it's as shared or not shared as suits the individuals.

It's a blending of two families for common goals and benefits that help their bank accounts, hearts, minds and children.

What Are The Advantages?

Home-sharing has the obvious benefits, but some hidden ones that you might not be aware of. It's a long list ...

1. Reduction in rent and expenses
2. Less bond required
3. Reduced stress because of the reduced financial obligations
4. Savings able to be accumulated because less outgoings (newer car, a holiday, new stuff for the kids - whatever you have put off because of no savings)
5. Debts can be paid because of less outgoings (long terms reducing debt means more savings as the debts go down and slowly get paid off)
6. More independence and less reliance on friends, family, ex or Government
7. Support emotionally/shoulder to cry on and ear to run things by. Stop the overthinking of it cause you have no one to talk things through with
8. Support with isolation and loneliness. Kids go to the other parents and you can hear a pin drop, or those nights you wish you could chat about nothing but no one is there ... Another single parent under the same roof, alleviates this
9. Support logistically. An uninterrupted long shower, having someone be able to pick up bread and milk, not having to take both kids to a doctor or a sports occasion because they can stay home and play with the other kid who lives under the same roof. Not having to take the kids with you for grocery shopping. Etc etc
10. Limited resources means you can share the other persons, a fridge or washing machine and the big ticket items
11. Be able to be there emotionally, logistically and physically for someone else is a beautiful thing too and it releases happy endorphins which is good for your health.
12. Less stress, is less fatigue, less emotional burnout and a more balanced and emotionally capable human being and this is not just good for you but for your kids



13. A lifetime friendship for you and your kids (as long as you work on continuing to develop the foundations of a good friendship)
14. Sharing the daily responsibilities from cooking, cleaning, laundry and garden maintenance.
15. Having another parent to help out when your just at your wits end with the kid/s
16. Another play mate for your kid/s
17. An amazing learning tool for your children. How relationships can work and be a beautiful thing, how family is what we choose not just blood, learning to depend on another adult and not just you, acceptance of differences and peoples beliefs
18. Ability to have a home which is bigger, in a better neighbourhood or just with a backyard so time spent at home is fun, enjoyable and ample space enough for not stepping one each other's toes, or building a garden and having more outside time
19. Not having to have all the serviceability when going for a rental because it is shared
20. Being able to compete with other renters with dual incomes
21. Reduction in your carbon footprint. Resources are shared, energy is less, water is less and the building materials used for the construction is less. It helps generations to come

What Are The Disadvantages?

I am all for listing pros and cons when making a decision and this is not a one sided argument for anybody to get into home-sharing. You need to go in with your eyes wide open. So here are some of the disadvantages to home-sharing. Keeping in mind most of it comes down to ground rules, boundaries, house rules and communication channels not been properly established for the long term.

1. Unknowingly sharing food with others that are not you or your children
2. You have to socialise sometimes even when you're not feeling it
3. Children fighting over belongings
4. Kid tantrums that are not yours (yet you still have hear them)
5. If you don't have a tv for your bedroom, the one in the lounge room is the only one
6. Showering roster, not just because you feel like a hot shower (more people, means less hot water)
7. Shared communal space
8. Less cleaning because it's shared but then when you do clean there might be more to clean up, because of more people



Types Of Home Shares

ShareAbode is a connection platform that connects single parents with one another. Members, yourself, of ShareAbode sign up and are encouraged to create a profile as a HOME-SEEKER out a HOME-SHARER.

A HOME-SEEKER is a member who is seeking a home that's available to rent (that's listed in the HOME-SHARER category or meet with another HOME-SEEKER they like the sound off and create a relationship that can be a platform for future home-sharing and renting a home they both like together.

A HOME-SHARER is a member that has a home that they want to open up for a HOME-SEEKER.

The whole thing about profiles is that without one, you don't appear in any searches that other members do because signing up has no information in the platform, it just shows me you have signed up and are a member.

We also have a growing following of senior women. This all started when I got an email from a senior woman who had a large house, whose husband died a while ago and all her kids had grown up and moved out and created their own families and she was isolated, lonely and struggling to keep her home on the pension. It seemed ideal to have as a home available to a single parent who felt this would work and it did, she now has a lovely single mum and her little girl living with her, all happy and in an easier journey, at different spectrums of their lives. This is also highly beneficial for members who still want the same benefits as other members but homes are smaller and just can't have another two people, but they might have one. Senior women offer different experienced, education and every in a household and these days they are a lot more healthy, mobile and life-giving. So, this is another OPTION that helps the members and over time that demographic will be nurtured.



03

HOW TO USE SHAREABODE



ShareAbo**d**e Profile Listings

Having a profile is one of the most important aspects of the home-sharing journey because without one, you won't come up in any search results. Not coming up in search results reduces your chances of potentially connecting with someone who would be a really great fit. If they can't see you, how will they connect with you? Quite possibly, never, because they don't know you exist.

For some of you hesitant on having a visible profile because:

- a) You're not ready to jump right in, right now
- b) You want to remain private for various reasons

That's absolutely fine and I want to let you know:

- a) Being unsure is natural and having uncertainties and worries also. But, if you let those things stop you from moving ahead with things in your life, your situation won't ever change. You don't even know right now if it is or isn't right because you haven't taken the first step to find out. Your making decisions and assumptions based on fear and this fear is producing reasons for you to not take a step and keep you in your comfort zone. Your comfort zone is not where growth happens and without growth there is no change.

Just doing the simple act of creating a profile makes a big difference to your ability to grow beyond your fears. A profile doesn't lock you into anything, it just allows others to view it and reach out to you if they resonate with what you have written. Many, many single parents have made friendships from simply just creating a profile and putting themselves out there. And we can all use great friendships as a single parent!

You were made aware of ShareAbo**d**e for a reason, whatever that reason may be; You deserve to give yourself the full opportunity to find out what it is.



- b) You do not need to put anything in your profile that you don't want too. What people read on your profile is totally your choice. The private contact information is for us only and our security is top notch. We will not share any of your private contact details to anyone. You even get to choose what image you want to put up. You don't need to put up a photo of you or your kids, you can use any image you want. Hopefully, this makes it feel a little more safe!

Interestingly, the number of profiles we have listed does not equal the number of users we have registered. We have thousands of users active, searching, enquiring on a daily basis from all over!! So, don't think that the only people looking are the ones with profiles ...

ShareAbo**d**e was created initially for single parents with dependent children, but has over time created space for other walks of life, which you may see from time to time on the platform. The reason why is because of the WHY these people have for wanting to be part of ShareAbo**d**e which is an underlying want to help single parents struggle a little less. And, it isn't always another single parent with kids that you might need right now for a home-share ... So, offering a bit of variety might be exactly what suits your situation better right now.

Here are some of the different profiles we have had over time:

- a) Older single mum whose kids have all grown up and moved out, started families of their own, know the struggle and want to ease that
- b) Gay couples which were a single child growing up so they know the challenges and want to help another single parent
- c) Private home owner that would prefer to have their investment property rented to single parents to home-share because they want to give back a bit
- d) Social workers on behalf of single mothers that have escaped DV and are trying to set them up with an affordable property and the benefits of sharing are ideal for them
- e) Senior women that now widowed with grown kids or even no kids and like the idea of sharing resources and the company of another family
- f) Single parents looking to share a communal property that's large and want to build more of a community and rural lifestyle with like-minded other single parents

As always, everything with ShareAbode is a choice: the choice to put a profile up, the choice of what to put in it, the choice of the best person and arrangement to suit your situation and even the choice to take your profile down. You are never tied into anything with ShareAbode – it is just an option for you to consider that will create some ease in you and your children's lives.

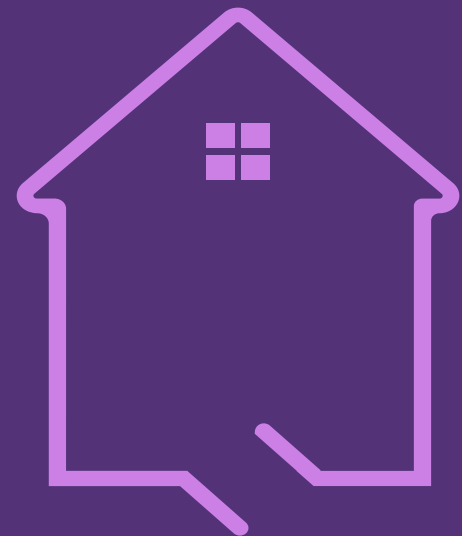
Difference Between HomeSeeker and HomeSharer Profiles

These two can get mixed up so to make sure you're on the right track:

HomeSeeker profile is a single parent who is looking for a home to share with another single parent. The two ways they can search for someone else is to browse the other HomeSeeker profiles for the purpose of connecting with someone to actively go and search for a rental with combined efforts and rent together. The second way is to search in the HomeSharer profiles for a single parent that happens to resonate with them and be located where they want so essentially they move into the other person's home and rent from them.

A HomeSharer profile is a single parent that has a home or a rental that they wish to rent a room out in or a section of the place to another single parent HomeSeeker.

Make sure you're in the right category when you create your profile so you show up in the right search results.



Creating A Stand Out Profile

Convincing strangers within the space of 10 minutes that they'll want to live with you for a year is surprisingly hard! So, you have to make an impact straight away and this can be done with a photo, interesting heading and good intro paragraph.

The Photo

The photo is the first thing that grabs people's attention. In a sea of words, images stand out a thousand times more. I have had many single parents tell me they are hesitant to contact people that don't have photos on their profiles, and I have had single parents that don't want to put a photo of them and their kids up because they don't know who else is on the system. So, my recommendation is, put a photo up of yourself without your kids or take a photo of a favourite quote or get someone to do a side on photo of you. Whatever, you need to do to get a photo on, will see your profile reach and interest way more people than having no image at all.

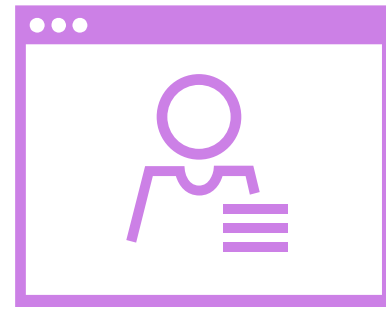
The Header

The header is the Title of your profile. It's a few words and it describes you or what your trying to get across in enough detail that captures someone's attention, after they have seen your photo.

Here are some examples which DO NOT DRAW SOMEONES ATTENTION:

House Available
Single Mum
Dad & Kids

But with some creativity you can DRAW ATTENTION:



4 Bedrooms, 2 Bathrooms, Leafy Garden Home Available
Nature Loving Single Mum & 2 Delightful Kids
Single Dad with 100% Care of 1 Awesome Son

See the difference? Descriptive, Inviting and Informative.

Intro Paragraph

The introduction paragraph displays in search results. Photo first, then header and then the intro and it displays one line and then "read more" is available to click so the impact is short-lived if it doesn't grab attention straight away. The best tip with this is don't repeat the header information in the intro paragraph. Write something new which is almost a lead on from the header so it flows.

For example:

4 Bedroom, 2 Bathroom, Leafy Garden Home Available (that's the header). With a single mum and her 2 kids, aged 3 and 6. (that's the intro paragraph that will be seen) and then the Read More would be a lead on from that.

OR

Nature Loving Single Mum & 2 Delightful Kids (that's the header). Seeking another single mum with 1 kid to share the load with (that's the intro paragraph that will be seen) and then the Read More would be a lead on from that.

From here the remainder of the profile tips are:

- Be specific and authentic - not generic in your descriptions and write from the heart. It's super easy to see who is authentic and wanting to go down the home-sharing path and who is just dabbling with the idea, without much thought.
- Answer every question in full, mandatory or not because this shows the reader a full picture of you, your kids and wants PLUS it shows you care enough to take the time to work on your profile which leads to the assumption you will take the time to make the home-sharing work too.
- Try not to be so specific about what you are and are not negotiable on here because you might miss a lovely opportunity to meet someone that could work out because they feel from reading your profile you are not someone who can negotiate and are too rigid.

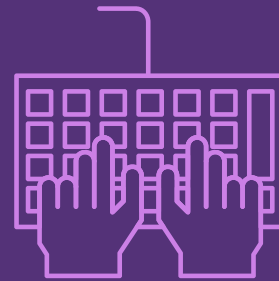
For those which are really hesitant to add information because they are not sure who is reading, and feel it is too personal. You just do what you feel is OK for you, keeping in mind that you don't need to use your kids real names or be so descriptive someone will know who you are. You don't need to put your street address, just a suburb and the photo as mentioned above doesn't need to be a full face photo, just something that draws attention.

Writing A Great First Enquiry

Writing an enquiry that makes an impact enough for the person to respond is one of the keys to successful home-sharing. Because if they don't respond then, there is no going forward.

Don't Be Generic

Likes and dislikes are a simple way to get across your personality, but approach them as you would your dating profile. That is, don't merely list interests that everyone everywhere has. Cooking, yoga, music and running may be part of your "personality", but they are also part of a million other people's personalities. If your raison d'être reason for living happens to be hanging out after the kids are in bed and enjoying a glass of wine, you won't even make it to first-round interviews. People are looking for people who are on the same page, that are flexible and have taken time to write specific to them enquiries they make note of the things that they read on their profile that click with them.



"I noticed you like to experiment in the kitchen, I've always wanted to perfect cauliflower rice. Have you done that before?"

Avoid Clichés

Continuing on from the first point, avoid those clichés that instantly make you invisible. Descriptors such as "fun-loving", "laid-back", "respectful", "considerate" and "down-to-earth" have been overused to the point of meaninglessness.

List The Boring Details

Things like your age, occupation and work schedule are logical and necessary points to mention. But after a few hundred messages, the same introductory paragraph (“Hi! I’m [INSERT NAME] and am [INSERT AGE] years old and work in [INSERT PROPER JOB]”) starts to blur into one. After a cracker of an opening sentence, bullet point the boring coma-inducing bits.

Be Specific

Like job applications, the person on the other end can tell if you’ve “Command-V’ed” a slab of text. They’ll appreciate you referencing specifics in the ad – the graphic art on the wall, the cool shoes their son is wearing, a specific sentence in their profile, the courtyard you’d like to share a pot of tea in, et cetera, et cetera.

Close With Your Full Name

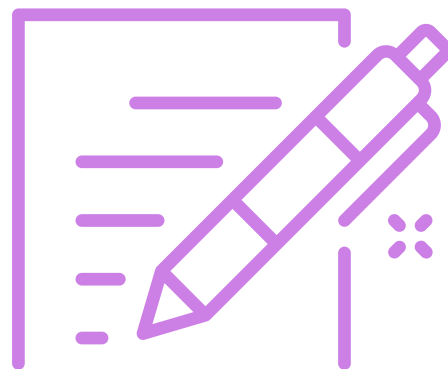
Why? Because then your potential new housemates can cyberstalk you on Facebook and LinkedIn and discover that you are somewhat normal. And when it comes to sharing your life and your kids you want to make sure the other person is as normal as possible!! Just as you wouldn’t respond to an ad without seeing photos of the bathroom first, they won’t grant you a viewing without seeing a photo of a person who looks to shower at least once a day.

Add Your Profile Listing Link

This shows them you can be “stalked” back too, that you have taken time to write a profile as they have, that you both in it for the long term and commitment of making a good go of the home-sharing. This means before they reply, they can see your profile and ask questions and make links to craft their response to you.

It’s important for you to know that no matter how great your enquiry is, sometimes people just don’t respond. There are many reasons why; it could have gone to their spam/junk and they have no idea, they could already have a home-sharing happening and don’t want to make you feel bad by saying they are not interested, they are just not interested and don’t have the confront to reply (which is a blessing in disguise because you WANT someone who can communicate right!?) or lastly, they loved the idea and jumped at it and created a profile and then things changed in their life or mind and they decided against it and have yet to delete the profile.

Whatever the reason, it’s important to know that it is a numbers game, the more active you are on it with searching for yourself and sending enquiries the more chances you have to get a response and make forward steps towards something tangible. Stay active, positive and don’t give up.



Initial Contact

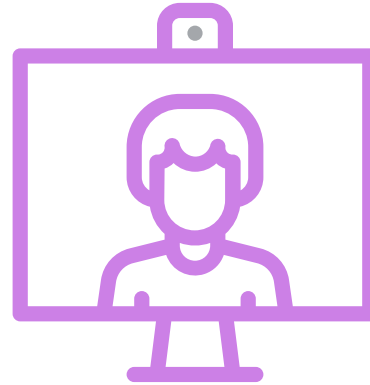
Before even meeting in person, there is the electronic correspondence and this can sometimes be a make or break. This is the first time you get to put yourself forward and say “Hey, I’m here and I might be great” so instead of just seeing a profile you like on ShareAbode, clicking make enquiry and writing, Hey, is your place still available or Call me, I like your place.

Stop, and think for a moment, what did you like about the persons profile that made them stand out because you are up against others, and you want to stand out and make an impression because your initial goal is to get a response. Take time to craft something that’s unique to you, offers something about you that isn’t in your profile. Offers a link to your profile and makes a reference to something in their profile which you both click on.

Let’s reverse, this, think about it this way. When you get enquiries, are you more inclined to reply to someone who offers their profile for you to view, has made comment on yours as it shows they took the time to read about you and what matters or someone who has just written, hey, call me, is your place available???

ShareAbode is email driven

At the moment ShareAbode is email driven. This means the enquiries you sent to people off the website go directly to their email address. They receive this and either email you directly back or phone you. How they decide to do this really depends on the information you put in your first enquiry. You can ask them to email you back or phone you back. So, your first conversation is going to be over email, in most cases, many don’t initially give out their phone number.



Virtual Connection

I often suggest that prior to meeting in person and after you have exchanged a few emails back and forth to take it to the next step which is having a phone conversation and in this phone conversation the main goal is to make a time to chat virtually through Facetime or Zoom. This is breaking down walls slowly and without kids involved as much as possible, until your certain there is a good foundation to build on.

Meeting In Person

Meeting in person the first time is best without kids in tow. For a few reasons. Firstly, you can focus without distraction. Secondly, you can be you, not mum or dad, and this is so important. And lastly, there is no need for the kids to be involved until you’re in the “Yes, they are the one I want to live with” phase.

04

DOING YOUR DUE-DILIGENCE



First Steps In The Home-Sharing Journey



Designed to cover everything from initial communication, to face-face, when to introduce the kids and the best ways to get to know the other person.

First Things First

Home is sanctuary. It's where we let our hair down, hang out in comfy clothes, and get to be ourselves. Your home-mate(s) should be part of your comfort. They should be as comfortable as the comfy clothes you choose.

So, what does it take to choose well? Many things. But it all starts with getting clear on who you are. What are your needs? What are your not OKs? What sort of home do you want your children and yourself to experience?

If you're not clear on these things, I would encourage you to sit down and get clear by writing out: What you see in your everyday life living in a home with another single parent and their children. Write a story about it and how you would like to feel, how you would want your children to feel ... a script as such and this will tell you about yourself and what you want/need, as well as they type of other single parent you want to attract.



First Face To Face

Your first face to face meeting has a lot to do with how long you have gone back and forth over email or chatted on the phone. The more frequent and for a longer time, the more you know each other before this initial face-to-face. With, that being said below are some of the most successful steps to get to know the potential person you might be moving in with:

1. Meet in a public place, like a coffee shop WITHOUT your kids and ensure they too will NOT be bringing their kids. The reason for this is that your trying to get to know one another as individuals, not just as parents. Kids can be quite distracting which means the focus is not on the communication between you and them but on the kids instead. Plus, if it doesn't go well, then your kids are not involved in that process. You need time to get the relationship right and when we have our kids in our space it makes that a challenge, initially.
2. Ask questions that dig deep into them, not just the general back story of their life. It's not friends catching up, this is almost an interview stage so come prepared with questions and share them with the other person. You can both ask each other the same questions. There is a comprehensive list of questions available within this e-book. This is your time to sit down and have an honest talk about your routines, lifestyles and way you parent.
3. I always recommend that you do your due diligence. Ask them if they have anyone you can talk to, like their boss at work or a co-worker or a family or friend. Offer them someone to talk to about you. It's like checking references. It's not invasive, it's good research to establishing a good foundation. And if they don't want to offer this, then maybe that's a red flag. Nothing to hide, there shouldn't be an issue.
4. Assuming, all of the above is going well and checks out to your satisfaction then make a time for you to get together and each bring the kids. Make it informal, somewhere the kids can mingle together and play amongst themselves and see how they get along. It's also a time to see how the other person reacts with their children when things happen. If they have a mannerism with their children you like or don't like. Maybe what they feed their kids or how they treat your kids. It's little bits of interaction that show you what sharing a home with them would be like. Now, remember, kids will be kids too. You will NEVER have a home that's harmonious all the time because they will fight like siblings and that's OK. It's about using those moments to create a stronger foundation for them all and for you and the other parent. This is more about how you each interact with your kids and if the "energy" is right.



Home-Sharers

If one of you has a home and is opening it for the other person, it's really important for a visit to the home to occur. This gives some awareness of the space and as much as it might seem important to see the place before meeting each other's kids, it's less important. The reason why is because it's not a physical space that makes a home but the people within it that create the home. Going to someone's house or you opening your home to another single parent is a way to see what lifestyle they or you live. Messy, clean, organised, common space, foods they eat - these are the make and breaks for some. You can't have someone who places a lot of importance on cleanliness and tidiness with someone who doesn't place any importance on it. This will not work, no matter how friendly you both are. It will eat you both up over time.

Home-Seekers

If you are both actively looking for a home together, it's important that if one can't be there that photos or video is taken so the other person can see the place. That questions are asked by both of you. This has positives that you can make the space much more designed to fit the blending of two families but I would recommend you still spend some time in one another's homes, a coffee or playdate here and there because seeing how the other person lives is a great way to see what your future living with them will be.

It is the hope that these steps and these questions you can ask will help you make steps towards discovering your ideal house-share mate.

Other Relationships

You and your potential roommate should discuss how your relatives (like Grammy and Aunt Celia), friends (like the other soccer mums and school friends) and your children's friends may impact your house-sharing lifestyle. Hopefully, they will add to the harmony you are working so diligently to form. But also, be certain to discuss the impact that all your other significant relationships may have on your shared household and set any necessary boundaries (and perhaps rules) in order to protect each family member, friend and one another.

Other people may include, but are not limited to:

- Ex - spouses, children's fathers and mother's
- Boyfriends, Girlfriends, dates
- Relatives, friends who have a tendency to take more than give
- Kids friends
- New neighbours



Extensive Interview Questionnaire



This is an extensive multiple choice questionnaire which can be used in part, in full or as a back and forth get to know each other little game for your first face to face contact with your potential housemate.

This questionnaire is a great tool for you because it helps you organise the information you should want to know in order to make good decisions about your future house-sharing partner. It may also make some important discussion points for meeting with potential house mates. You can use this in part, in whole or not at all.



Daily Routine

Do you work outside of the home?

- No, I work from home.
- I work outside the home a few days a week.
- I work outside the home 5 days a week

What time do you get ready for work in the morning?

- I have to get ready for work at 6 or earlier every morning.
- I have to get ready for work at 7 every morning.
- I have to get ready for work at 8 every morning.
- I work different times during the week.
- I do not work in the mornings.

How much are you at home?

- I am at home most of the time.
- I am at home during the evenings but not usually during the day.
- I am not at home very much. I like to go out a lot.

What is your childcare routine?

- I am a full-time parent. I look after my child all the time.
- My child is either at day care or school during the day and then I look after them in the evenings.
- My child is either at day care or school during the day and a few evenings a week they go to child-minders or a family member.
- My child is either at day care or school during the day and at a child minders or family members most evenings.

What are the bedtimes of your children?

- I like my children to be in bed by 7pm
- I like my children to be in bed by 8pm
- I like my children to be in bed by 9pm
- I like my children to be in bed by 10pm
- My children do not have a set bedtime

How would you describe your views on cooking?

- I really enjoy cooking. I like to make a home cooked meal every day.
- I enjoy cooking. I like to make a home cooked meal most days. However sometimes I like to go out to eat or get fast food.
- I don't like cooking very much and I don't always have the time for it. I try to make a home cooked meal a few times a week and rely on ready meals or fast food the other days.
- I really don't like cooking and I don't have the time for it. I rarely make a home cooked meal and I rely on ready meals or fast food most days.

Personal

How would you describe your views on meeting new people?

- I love meeting new people. I am happiest when I am in a big group of people.
- I like meeting new people but I prefer to be with people I already know. I am happiest when I am spending time with a large group of friends.
- I don't particularly like meeting new people. I am happiest when I am spending time with a few friends who I know very well.
- I don't like meeting new people. I am happiest being on my own.

How would you describe your disposition?

- I like things to be done a certain way and I am not happy when they are done differently. My way is usually best.
- I like things to be done a certain way but I don't mind too much when they are done differently. I am open to new ideas and suggestions. I don't have a certain way I like things to be done. As long as they get done I am happy.
- I would consider myself an optimist. I generally have a positive outlook on life.
- I would consider myself a pessimist. I generally have a negative outlook on life.
- I can be both an optimist and a pessimist.
- I can be quite irritable. Certain things that people do can really annoy me.
- Sometimes I can be irritable. Occasionally certain things that people do can annoy me. I'm rarely irritable. It takes a lot for someone to annoy me.

How would you describe your sense of humour?

- I love to laugh. I find most things funny and can easily laugh at myself.
- I have a specific sense of humour. I only find certain things funny.
- I don't find many things funny.

How would you describe your anger levels?

- I can be a very angry person. When I have a problem with someone or something I find it very hard to communicate and I can easily lose my temper and start shouting.
- I can sometimes be an angry person. When I have a problem with someone or something I don't always find it easy to communicate. But most of the time I can talk about it without losing my temper.
- I am not an angry person at all. If I have a problem with someone or something I find it very easy to communicate and solve the problem.

How would you describe your views on being healthy?

- Being healthy is very important to me. I like to eat healthy food and take regular exercise. There are certain foods I will not eat like fast food or I like to exercise at least once or twice a week.
- Being healthy is important to me. I like to eat healthy food most of the time, I will occasionally eat junk food. I like to exercise at least once every two weeks.
- Being healthy is not very important to me. I rarely eat healthy food and I do not exercise very often.
- Being healthy is not important to me. I never eat healthy food and I never exercise.

How would you describe your political views?

- I am very interested in politics and I judge others on their political views.
- I have an interest in politics but other people's political views do not affect my opinion of them.
- I have no interest in politics.

How would you describe your political views?

- I am very interested in politics and I judge others on their political views.
- I have an interest in politics but other people's political views do not affect my opinion of them.
- I have no interest in politics.

How would you describe your religious views?

- I am a religious person and would rather be around people of the same religion.
- I am a religious person but I have no problem with people from different religions.
- I am not a religious person but I have no problem with people who are religious.
- I am not a religious person and would rather be around people who are not religious.

Children

Does your child/children have any special needs?

- Yes

What special needs does your child have?

- No

Does your child have any allergies?

- Yes



What allergies and what are the reactions?

- No

How would you describe your child?

- Outgoing, loud, confident, social.
- Shy, quiet, self-conscious, prefers to be alone.
- My child is a combination of the above answers.

How would you describe your relationship with your child?

- Very easy.
- Easy most of the time.
- Can be difficult.
- Very difficult.

How does your child express anger?

- Talk about it.
- Sulk.
- Cry.
- Scream and shout.
- Hit people or throw objects around.

How would you describe your views on child discipline?

- I believe that disciplining my child is very important. I set a lot of rules and boundaries that need to be adhered to and if they are not I discipline my child fully.
- I believe that disciplining my child is important. I have rules and boundaries but I believe that children need some freedom to make mistakes and learn from them.
- I do not believe in disciplining my child. I believe that disciplining children doesn't stop them from behaving badly it makes them try to avoid getting caught.

Which methods do you use to discipline your child?

- Explaining & discussion. If my child is behaving badly I explain why the behaviour is wrong and then we discuss the issue.

- Ignoring. If my child is behaving badly I tell them I will not speak to them until they have stopped the bad behaviour.
- Confiscations. If my child is behaving badly I confiscate toys or take away television privileges.
- Timeouts. If my child is behaving badly I make him/her go to the time out location until they have calmed down.
- Spanking. If my child is behaving very badly I will spank them.

If you have more than one child, is there any sibling rivalry?

- There is a lot of sibling rivalry. They tend to argue and fight over most things.
- There is some sibling rivalry but for the most part they get along well.
- There is no sibling rivalry. They are very close and supportive of each other.

Shared Living

What is your current living situation?

- Living alone.
- Living with a partner.
- Living with roommates.
- Living with family.

What is your ideal living situation?

- Living on my own.
- Living with someone that is out of the house most of the time and we do things separately.
- Living with some one that is out of the house during the day but usually at home in the evenings and we can share tasks such as cooking and cleaning.
- Living with someone that is at home quite a lot of the time and we can help each other with all the household jobs and childcare etc.

Have you ever had roommates before?

- Yes

What were your experiences of living with a roommate?

- Excellent.
- Good.
- Average.
- Poor.
- Very Poor.
- No

How would you describe your views on decorating?

- I have a very particular decorating style and I am not happy living somewhere that doesn't reflect my style.
- I like a certain style of decorating and would prefer to live somewhere that reflects my style but I would be ok living somewhere that didn't.
- I am not interested in decorating. I am happy to live with any style of decorating.

Do you have any bad habits?

- I have quite a lot of bad habits.
- I have a few bad habits.
- I don't have any bad habits.

How would you describe views on neatness?

- I am an incredibly neat person. I like to vacuum and clean every day. I do the dishes immediately and like everything to be put back in its place. I cannot live in a house that is not immaculate.
- I am a neat person. I like to vacuum and clean at least once or twice a week. I sometimes leave dishes in the sink but will usually do them that day. I like to live in a clean and tidy house.
- I am not a very neat person. I vacuum and clean when I notice that things have started to get dirty. I sometimes leave the dishes for days. I am not particularly concerned about the cleanliness of the house I live in, however when it gets too dirty or messy I do clean up.

- I am a messy person. I rarely vacuum or clean and will only do dishes when I run out of clean ones. I can happily live in a dirty and untidy house.

How would you describe your views on sharing within the house?

- I am happy to share everything; food, toiletries, cleaning supplies etc.
- I am happy to share most things. But I would rather not share food.
- There are some things that I like to share and some things that I do not. I would rather not share food or toiletries.
- There are few things that I like to share; cleaning supplies and household items.
- I would rather everyone used their own things.

Visitors

How often do you have visitors?

- I often have visitors. They visit for the day and also stay overnight.
- I often have visitors. They usually visit for the day.
- I sometimes have visitors. They visit for the day and stay overnight.
- I sometimes have visitors. They usually visit for the day.
- I rarely have visitors.

Are you currently involved with anyone who will be a regular overnight guest?

- Yes
- No

How do you feel about visitors coming to the house?

- I am happy to have visitors over at any time, whether I already know them or not.

- I would like to be informed of any visitors that are coming over and I would prefer it if I knew them already.
- I do not like visitors and would prefer that there weren't many.

Are you happy having the opposite gender in the home?

- Yes
- No

How often does your child's other parent see them?

- More than once a week.
- Once a week.
- Once every 2 weeks.
- Once a month.
- A few times a year.
- Never.

What is your relationship with the other parent?

- Excellent.
- Good.
- Average.
- Poor.
- Very poor.

How often do your children have sleepovers or play dates in the home?

- More than once a week.
- Once a week.
- Once every two weeks.
- Once a month.
- Rarely.
- Never.

Interests

What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

- Watching TV.
- Reading.
- Listening to music.
- Surfing the internet or playing computer games.
- Socialising.
- Playing/watching sport.
- Hobbies.

How much TV do you watch?

- I watch a lot of TV. I am very particular about what I watch and do not like watching something I don't enjoy.
- I watch a lot of TV. I am happy to watch pretty much anything.
- I watch a moderate amount of TV. I have certain shows that I watch each week and that is it.
- I do not watch much TV. I would prefer if it wasn't on.

How much TV do you allow your child to watch?

- My child is allowed to watch TV as often as they like for as long as they like.
- My child is allowed to watch TV whenever they want but as long as it is for a reasonable amount of time. If it has been too long I will tell them to stop.
- My child is only allowed to watch TV for a certain number of hours a day.
- My child isn't allowed to watch TV except on rare occasions.

What type of music do you like to listen to?

- I do not like listening to music. I would prefer silence.
- I only like certain types of music and will not listen to it if I don't like it.

- I have favourite types of music that I would prefer to listen to but I am open to other types of music.
- I like all types of music and am happy to listen to anything.

How often is your child allowed to go on the computer and internet?

- My child is allowed to go on the computer and internet whenever they like, for as long as they like and do whatever they like.
- If it is not for homework my child has set time limits they can be on the computer and internet for. I like to know what games they are playing or what websites they are visiting.
- My child is allowed on the computer and internet only to do homework and school related tasks.

Where do you like to socialise?

- I like going to bars or clubs with friends.
- I like going to the movies or out to eat with friends.
- I like to have friends round for dinner parties.
- I like to have friends round for drinks.

How often do you drink alcohol?

- Everyday.
- A few times a week.
- Once a week.
- Once every 2 weeks.
- Once a month.
- Rarely.
- Never

Great Email Questions

A list of some great pre face-to-face email questions. They are not the 'normal' questions so the person getting them will need to think about the answers, which is what you want. You don't need to ask them all, I would recommend a few select ones here and there over a few emails.

These questions are a great way to get to know someone over email prior to meeting them.

1. What sort of lifestyle do you lead? (Quiet, Busy, Healthy, Home Body)
2. How do you make your money? (Parenting payments? Job? Own business?)
3. What sort of eating habits do you and your children have?
4. What routine/activities do your children do regularly?
5. Are you a people person or do you need more of your own space?
6. How do you solve a conflict between your kids or with their friends?
7. How do you personally handle confrontation and conflict?
8. What is your preferred parenting style?
9. What do you feel are the 3 most important aspects your house-sharer should have?
10. Are there any issues you are not negotiable on in terms of living with someone?
11. Is there anything in relation to your children you're not negotiable on? (bed time, food, routines?)
12. What's important to you which may not be on your profile listing?
13. What's the main thing that draws you to wanting to co-live?

You can ask all of the questions, some of them or over a few different emails.

05

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED & RECOMMENDED



Documents For Home-Sharing



Here you will find all of the documents we recommend for home-sharing. The majority of them should be done BEFORE you move in together. This is a great first step towards creating that foundation of effective communication, effective listening and respect between one another, which is needed for a harmonious homeshare.

The Three Most Important Documents

The three most important documents to be drawn up and what they should cover.

The house-mate agreement:

Should cover some of the following:

- > Guests and entertaining (setting limitations of length of stay and details so no one steps on any boundaries or nap times of young ones)
- > When you need quiet time (for example, coming off night shift)
- > When your children need quiet time (for example, before bed when books are being read)
- > Bills, Bills, Bills (example, when and where money is paid and how much)
- > Household chores (for example, dishes, rubbish, weekly cleans, bathrooms – a checklist works and specific too so each person, including the children, are accountable)
- > Violations of the agreement (what happens when it's not equal share and the above is always being ignored – how do you handle this?)

The children's guidelines agreement:

Should cover some of the following:

- > Boundaries of each parent on the other parent's children (no babysitting, some, how much responsibility does the other parent have?)
- > Routine (what are the routines of the children? Bedtime? Bath time? Dinner time?)
- > What are the absolute NO's (for example, certain TV shows, certain foods or drinks or games)
- > Discipline (how do you see this happening? Is it same goes for everyone or each child is different? This would also cross the Boundary topic too)

The tenancy agreement:

Should cover some of the following:

- > Legal names of whom it is between
- > The date of effect and ending
- > The amount of rent and other bills
- > Frequency of payment and where
- > Is the shopping done separately for yourself or do you bulk shop for everyone in the house
- > What rooms are off limits/how is the house divided?

Discussing all of these issues up front and committing to them on paper helps you to build a great living situation. It is best to communicate clearly with one another. This means being specific about what matters to you, listening to what matters to your house-mate, and possessing a flexible, compromising attitude.

Remember, this adventure will stretch your creativity at times, which is a valuable virtue that single parents need. You may have to ask some hard questions and also be asked some hard ones too. Terms of a new share-house should be realistic, however, and not impose on either party, otherwise the relationship may become strained.

Both you and the other single parent should keep a copy of the written agreements. When any sort of conflict arises, you may find the resolution requires deferring back to your original pact.

The Children's Guidelines Agreement

The children's guidelines agreement is a GUIDELINE. Kids are kids and flexibility needs to be agreed on, especially when the kids visit the other parent because it is known that more often than not, when kids come back from the other parents' place, it can take some time for them to adjust.

The agreement should focus more on:

- The boundaries of each parents when it comes to parenting the other parents' children
- The children's routines (sleep, homework, bath time) that should be respected
- The absolute non-negotiable things of each parent (food, tv, certain words, toys)
- Discipline (how should it work? what do you see as a workable solution?)

The suggested method is:

- Sit down with a piece of paper and each write down your children's routines, your non-negotiable, how you see the home coming together, how you discipline your kids, what your boundaries and non-negotiable
- Each take a turn to read what you have written out loud. This is an exercise in sharing, honesty and transparency
- Then discuss what each of you have written, and see how any differences can be met in the middle. This should be a fun exercise of developing an agreement that is a win/win for everyone and can form a foundation that

is really workable. And just know that as the home-share happens, kids and life changes so be open to changing it, if it doesn't work. You won't really know how it will work, until your actually living together

- Once that is done, write it down as follows: Children's Agreement and list the agreements. Sign, date, file and make sure both of you have a copy.

The following guides provide a brief summary and introduction of the laws, regulations and recommendations affecting share accommodation. They do not cover all cases in all legal jurisdictions and might not apply in your specific share accommodation situation. It is important that you use this information as a guide only and seek independent Legal Advice or consult the Relevant Acts. We do not accept any liability that may arise from the use of this information.



HOUSEMATE AGREEMENT VERSION 1

This agreement, made this _____ day of _____, 20 ____, is made by and between: _____

The parties above have signed a lease for the following address:

Street Address:

City, State, Post Code: _____

on _____, _____, for a term lasting from _____
to _____

A security or damage deposit in the amount of \$ _____ was paid to : _____

(Company or individual name, City & State)

The parties wish to share the responsibilities of living together, with their respective children, at this address.

THEREFORE, IT IS AGREED THAT: Each of the parties agree to follow the rules and conditions set forth on the attached agreement.

Each of the parties agree to pay one _____ (1/____) of the following expenses incurred in relation to the leased premises:

Monthly Expense Type:

Water _____

Gas _____

Food _____

Electricity _____

Internet _____

Pay TV _____

Rent _____

Property Maintenance _____

Chores _____

If any of the parties pays more than one _____ (1/____) share, the other party/parties agree(s) to reimburse the first party within _____ days from the date of payment.

Each party agrees that one _____ (1/____) of the damage/security deposit is the property of each of the parties. Each housemate agrees to remain a resident of the premises during the term of the lease, or to continue to pay her share of the rent during the term, unless:

- A) The exiting party, at her own expense, locates a tenant to sublet her share, the new tenant being acceptable to the other party/ parties in this agreement, and
 - B) Written consent to sublet is obtained from the owner or manager of the premises
- Repairs or improvements to the premises, the cost of which are to be shared by the parties, in excess of \$ _____, shall be approved by all in advance.

If pets are permitted under this lease, each pet owner shall be solely responsible for all pet care (including food, veterinarian costs) and damages caused by their pet. This includes, but is not limited to, damages to furniture, carpeting, walls, doors, vehicles, and lawn/ garden.

Each roommate demonstrates that they have read, understood, and comply herein by their signature below.

Signature & Date:

Signature & Date:

HOUSEMATE AGREEMENT VERSION 2

This agreement made on _____ 20_____ is a contract between:

Name _____, _____

Name _____, _____

in _____

(City, County, State, Postcode) I understand that I am entering into a legally binding agreement with my housemate (s). I also understand that we, together, and I, as an individual, are responsible to our landlord, to all companies that service our residence, and to each other.

TERM OR PERIOD OF AGREEMENT

This agreement is to begin on _____ for a term lasting until (month, day, year) _____ . I fully understand and accept the rules and responsibilities of this agreement.

SECURITY DEPOSIT

This security deposit for the dwelling is \$_____. My share amounts to \$_____. I understand that this amount will be returned to me less the amount deducted by the landlord for unpaid rent, and/or damages. I accept responsibility for damages that I, my pet, my children or my visitors cause, and I will reimburse my housemate (s) for the part of their security deposit withheld for those damages.

RENT

The total rent for the dwelling, according to the terms of the lease agreement with our landlord, is \$_____ per month. I agree to pay 1/_____ of the monthly rent. This amounts to \$_____. The total amounts my housemate (s) and I are liable for over the period of the lease is \$_____, of which my share is \$_____. I understand that we, together, and I, as an individual, are responsible to our landlord for the total rent for the term of the agreement.

UTILITIES

I agree to pay 1/_____ of the deposits and/or hook - up charges for all utilities. I agree to pay 1/_____ of the monthly utility bills except telephone. I agree to pay 1/_____ of the monthly telephone service charges, plus all long-distance calls which I make including taxes and surcharges. I agree to pay as follows for any additional utilities: _____

MOVING OUT

If, for whatever reason, I move out of the dwelling, I realise it is primarily my responsibility to find a replacement. I agree to look for a replacement housemate that is acceptable to my other housemate. If one of my housemates moves out, I will also attempt to find a replacement housemate. I understand the need to be reasonable in accepting a replacement housemate. If I move out of the dwelling and a replacement housemate has not been found, I realise that I am still legally responsible to my housemate for paying my share of the rent and utility bills. I understand that I, as an individual, can be held responsible by my landlord and/or the utility companies for up to the entire rent or utility account balance due if my housemate fails to fulfil their part of this agreement.

OTHER TERMS

Re: Food/Shopping _____

Re: Cleanliness/cleaning responsibilities

Re: Privacy

Re: Sharing personal items

Re: Noise, quiet/ homework times/bedtimes

Re: Smoking, drinking, drug use

Re: Parties, entertaining on the premises

Re: Overnight guests

Re: Pets

Re: Chores/Maintenance of the Home

ADDITIONAL REMARKS:

Attach additional sheets if necessary to address other issues such as security measures, purchasing or renting furniture, appliances, etc.

As a party of this agreement, I realise that I, as well as each of my housemates and the irrespective children, have equal rights to use the space (residence) and facilities (community pool, outside play equipment, playground – list whatever is applicable) with the exception of the areas we have designated as each one’s private space. This agreement is intended to promote harmony between roommates by clarifying the expectations and responsibilities of each roommate to the others bound by this contract.

All obligations under this contract are to be governed in accordance to the laws of _____

City State Postcode Country

To be effective, it is not necessary to witness or notarise this agreement. Each housemate should sign below and receive an original copy. The parties have executed this agreement on _____, 20____. _____

(month, day)

Roommate signature & date_____

Roommate signature & date_____

Tenancy Agreement

Having a written agreement can help prevent disputes which may occur in share accommodation. An agreement eliminates misunderstandings caused by terms not being discussed or that maybe forgotten over time.

Tenants and landlords entering share accommodation should also sign a tenancy agreement. Most states have a standard form tenancy agreement provided by the state government and we provide links to download these agreements for free on our state and territory guides linked below.

There is no increased legal flexibility by not signing an agreement because residential property law cannot be opted out of and covers oral agreements as well so its in your best interest to read and understand the agreement.

For the laws on residential tenancies to apply to your agreement, the tenant must be paying rent in return for the right to use the premises. If the premises are provided for free, then the laws on residential tenancies will not apply.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER IN SHARE ACCOMMODATION TENANCY AGREEMENTS?

If the tenant is renting a room in a share house, it is very important that the agreement detail which parts of the premises the tenant has exclusive possession of, and which parts the tenant has shared use of.

A common situation is for the tenant to have exclusive possession of their own bedroom and shared use of kitchen, bathroom and laundry facilities. By describing in the agreement which parts of the property the tenant does and does not have exclusive possession over, the rights and obligations of all parties are guaranteed.

Download a free agreement for your state (copy and paste into your browser)

NSW Tenancy Agreement:

<https://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/.../Residential...>

VIC Tenancy Agreement:

<https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/.../lease-agreements-or...>

QLD Tenancy Agreement:

<https://www.rta.qld.gov.au/.../General-tenancy-agreement...>

WA Tenancy Agreement:

<https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/.../rent-agreement-form-1aa>

SA Tenancy Agreement:

<https://www.sa.gov.au/.../forms-and-fact-sheets-for...>

ACT Tenancy Agreement:

<https://www.tenantsact.org.au/.../standard-lease.../>

TAS Tenancy Agreement:

<https://www.cbos.tas.gov.au/.../beginning-tenancy/leases>

NT Tenancy Agreement:

All residential tenancies in NT are covered by standard terms which cannot be altered. It's advisable to use a written agreement and it's the Landlords obligation to provide a copy to the tenant.

Northern Territory Consumer Affairs does not provide or offer free tenancy agreements. The agreement must be purchased from the Real estate Institute of the Northern Territory.

In the Northern Territory, a Residential Tenancy Agreement is used for agreements between:

- Landlord and a tenant,
- Landlord and co-tenants,
- Head-tenant and sub-tenants, and
- Boarding houses with 3 or more residents.

06

FOUNDATIONS FOR A HARMONIOUS HOME SHARE



A Good Place To Start

Every relationship needs to be maintained, refined and adjusted over time. People are dynamic; they change because of inner work, outer situations and experiences. Checking in with one another and the kids is not only a good thing to do, it is probably one of the things which make or break the home-sharing journey.

The suggests below are gathered from my own years of home-sharing as well as feedback from other single parents who have also done home-sharing.

Socialise

Have a family dinner or Sunday lunch once a week to connect with one another. Make it a really fun and combined effort for everyone. Choosing the food, cooking together, setting the table together. Traditions like “Taco Tuesdays”, “Sunday Snack Time”, “Monday Movie Night” or whatever your own spin on it is, will go a long way to bond everyone, create memories and deepen the foundations of a harmonious home-share.

Keep it clean

This may seem like a blindingly obvious piece of advice but trust me, cleaning up after yourself seems to be a skill many fully-grown adults simply don't have. Nothing gets on your housemates' nerves quite like a pile of dirty dishes in the sink, a clump of hair clogging the shower drain or a general mess all around the house. Do your bit to keep common areas (kitchens, bathrooms, living areas etc) clean and if you ever make a mess, clean it up. This includes your kids mess too. Remember this simple piece of advice and you'll go a very long way to becoming a good housemate.

Keep it down

You might love nothing better than blasting the collected works of Michael Bolton from your stereo but this will probably get your housemate offside pretty quickly. So the next time you're about to crank the stereo up to 11, take a minute to think of your housemate. Noise travels a long way and can be extremely annoying if your share house has thin walls, so keep it to a minimum.

Say it to their face

Got a problem with them or their kids? Don't go behind their back and complain to your friends. Also, don't leave passive-aggressive Post-it notes lying around. Instead, approach the problem like an adult and speak to the person face to face. Don't be overly confrontational or nasty, but make sure you're firm and that your grievances are heard. Have a big dispute? Check out the Dispute Resolution page in this e-book.

Communicate

Communication is crucial in any relationship, no matter whether we're talking about your significant other or your housemate. Don't expect your housemates to be able to read your mind and pick up on the subtle changes in your mood: talk to them and let them know how you're feeling. If you're not in the mood to sit and chat and just want some time to yourself, tell them, don't just sit there and be resentful of sitting there. If you've got a concern with their failure to contribute to household cleaning, with the children, with the cooking, raise it with them as soon as you can. Letting things fester is only going to make things worse.

Respect

R-E-S-P-E-C-T, find out what it means to me, and to your other housemate and their children. You'll need to respect you housemate and their children, so pay attention to these areas:

- Privacy: Don't go bursting in on anyone in the shower. Don't let your kids do this either.
- Teach the kids boundaries also so they don't cause issues with you both
- Belongings: Stop "borrowing" things. Kids things, adults things - People are polite and won't say no but really wish they didn't have to be asked.
- Space: Remember that another person's room is off limits unless you're invited in.

A little respect goes a long way and will help ensure a happy household for the adults and a wonderful learning experience for the kids.

Money

It makes the world go round and it can turn even the most peaceful and harmonious share house into a battleground. Paying rent on time is the biggie, so make sure you always have enough funds set aside when it's due. Then there are those shared bills for things like electricity, water, gas, Internet and subscription TV services. Taking an ad-hoc approach to these costs may seem like an easy option but can get very messy very quickly, so your best bet is to ensure you have done a housemate agreement on the share everyone pays and the finer details.

Pick your battles

When you're living with someone who occasionally drives you up the wall, or has kids which do the same, those little everyday annoyances can start to seem like a very, very big deal. But before deciding that a mistimed fart should be the catalyst for World War 3, take a deep breath and think about the best approach. If you're constantly blowing up at your housemate or fuming about their kids about every little thing, it'll be extremely

stressful and your blood pressure will be through the roof. Even worse, it may also be time to consider whether you might actually be the person who's difficult to live with. Sometimes it's a good idea to let those smaller grievances just slip by, rather than letting them fill you with rage. Then, when the time comes and your housemate really oversteps the line, try to stay calm and take a rational approach to sorting out the problem. The best MANTRA is am I treating them the way I want to be treated.

Relax

Share-house living creates some of the fondest memories of your life and of your children, so try to stop and smell the roses every now and then. Sure, there can be downsides to living with another single parent, but there can also be wonderful camaraderie, kids parties and friendships that you'll one day look back on with nostalgia. If you embrace the different experiences and people that share-house living brings into your life, you'll be a much better person for it.



The Daily Reality of Home- Sharing

Part of the reason for home-sharing is a desire to want to have support doing those logistical things everyday which weigh us down. How much easier would it be to have two adults sharing the daily chores of cleaning, gardening, rubbish, fixing things than just one. Getting a whole house clean and sparkly on a Sunday morning in less than 2 hours, doing together is a huge win!!

Let me break down how best to tackle those pesky daily chores.

Cleaning & Jobs Roster

As I have mentioned before, one of THE BEST ways to tackle the cleaning and rules of a home-share is clean up after yourself. This should be the common rule for every adult and child within the house. If the child is too young or needs help then the parent of the child needs to do this. Coming home after a big day at work to cook for your kids to a kitchen which you left tidy in the morning but is a mess with unwashed dishes and scattered things everywhere is not going to put anyone in a good mood.

Common Space Vs Personal Space

Personal space is the physical space immediately surrounding someone, and if any infringement feels uncomfortable, that's invading someone's personal space. It is also space designated for the use of an individual within a larger communal area. Be it in the garage of the bathroom, each member should be able to respect the home itself in addition to one another's personal space.

This requires clear communication about what in the house

- (1) Everyone can use
- (2) The children may access, and
- (3) Is just for the adults.

There may be some idea now about it, such as the en-suite off an adult's bedroom is only theirs and their children's and the other main bathroom is the other parents and their children and guests or when one of the parents is on their laptop that's their work time and they need space, even if it is in the common area such as the living room.

Some things might take a while to figure out and this will happen when you move in and work out the kinks. At the end of the day, like any housemate situation its always good to make sure you have a TV in your own adult bedroom for you and your kids to retreat too if you all really need some time out or even signs on the doors saying do not disturb if it is adult and kid time reading books or playing.

Don't be uncomfortable to make these rules – they will give much needed space and save arguments, especially between children and having signs for doorknobs the children can decorate is a great and fun way to do it.

Conflict Resolution Strategies

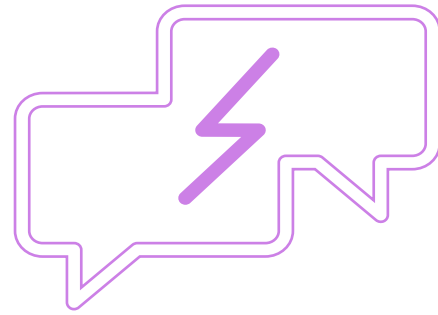
When money, kids, space and different personalities clash are when communication early on when things are small has been left unsaid. It's built-up resentment, inner conversations and then come out in a bigger way than it would have otherwise, had things been cleared earlier on. Many simple and effective things can be put into place to prevent this sort of build-up.

Making a point to have a family dinner once a week, with the kids, to stop and just chat about random daily things that happened builds up simple conversation, which builds up trust and solidifying relationships. Connecting in with one another's lives outside of the share-house is a really good way to get to know someone and have some sort of understanding about what they like, dislike, who did what to whom at school and where everyone is at.

Setting aside time for pure adult catch up, without kids. So, so needed. Stop, take 30 mins and have a wine or coffee after the kids go to bed or when there is the rare kid free moment they are at the other parents house or friends houses. Talking as adults, as single parents on the same journey without all the kid stuff makes for not just a deeper connection but a deeper understanding of one another.

Conversation and connection don't have to be hard; it really is a muscle to be strengthened and a home-share is a wonderful way to build that muscle. Those skills don't just help you in a home-share, they help you in so many ways, all throughout life.

Conflict is a sign that the connection in the relationship is missing. That the primary reason for coming together has been lost. It doesn't mean you shouldn't be sharing a home together; it simply means you've not been connecting honestly with one another for a while, and it is time to start doing that again. The sole purpose to come together is because of the want and need to save money and to have the support which you wouldn't otherwise



have, so remember this and think back initially on all the reasons why it is beneficial.

A lot of conflict is over smaller things which have been left to manifest, the lesson is to always handle the small stuff. Getting caught up in the moment of the conflict will never solve the conflict because it is emotion based, reaction based and not usually formed with logic. The best thing to do when conflict arises is to focus on yourself, not the other person. We can only control ourselves and change ourselves.

Ask yourself:

Put in the bullet points on top of page 38 here.

Change point number two to be: How would you know if your home-share family is communicating at the level you envision?

It might be time to be empowered with new ways of relating to one another so that communication can improve, and therefore, the quality of life for all in the shared home.

If conflict is riddling your house-sharing experience, it is a sign that you and the other person are not connecting in your relationship. Remember that your primary key to good relationship is good communication. It is likely, therefore, that the relationship you have with the other parent suffers from a lack of good communication.

To fix this and change it moving forward so this can be a fruitful home-sharing experience start by asking looking inward, instead of blaming outside. Ask yourself the following questions:

- What would better communication look like?
- How would you know that your share-house family is communicating at the level you envision?
- What would be different than it is now?
- How would life in your home change?
- Do you hear yourself nagging a member of the house about the same thing over again?
- Do you spend a lot of time and energy focusing on being upset about what someone else in the family is or is not doing?

The cause of our anguish and pain is not necessarily the other person's action. The root of our negative emotions stems from our attachment to particular outcomes – typically the outcome 'we' like to see but that has not manifested. When we are attached to the idea that something needs to be different than what it is, we cause ourselves suffering. So how do you let it go so you can pave the way to a better share relationship?

A common type of dysfunctional attachment is desiring the other person to change, and then feeling righteously indignant or frustrated when they do not conform to our demands. Let's pretend that your carpool friend is always late, and you get angry every time they are. Can you control what your friend does or does not do? No. What's angering you is that your friend does not value being on time as you do, and you feel powerless to control having to pay the consequences for being late.

But did you stop to consider that if your friend is constantly late, and you have to endure the evil eye from your boss, or a docked pay check, that you should explore other methods of getting to work? Is there someone else who can pick you up? Perhaps there is a bus route to take. You may want to upgrade your savings plan for a car. Contemplate whether you put up with your friend's tardiness because you don't want to do a little extra work. Would you have to get up an hour earlier to catch the bus?

When you let go of your attachment, you are free to make better choices. Change happens when you are able to use your frustration with another person as a reminder to focus on your own attitudes, responses, and accountability.

Here's some advice from me to you: Do you have a friend, child or colleague that is repeatedly makes plans with you but then changing them at the last minute? Stop making plans with them. Start making plans for yourself. Allow them to discover that if they choose to treat you this way, you will be less available for activities. You will have your own plans (for a bubble bath, a massage, coffee with someone else, gym time, reading a book). They will learn to value you and your time because you began valuing you and your time.

When you feel disappointed with your children, roommate, or even yourself, journal the answers to the following:

1. What do I want that is not happening?
2. What do I wish were different?
3. What is right about the situation?
4. What is within my control to do differently?
5. What do I need to change in order to be happy?
6. Is it in my control to change the previous answer? Yes, No If yes, how? If no, what can I change about myself instead?

You and your housemate can take advantage of conflict and process through it. Ask for one another's perspectives about the facts of the situation, emerging behavioural patterns in one another's response to it, or any other observations. Remember to use your active listening skills.

Confronting Conflict Tips

It can be difficult for some of us to get up the courage to confront a relationship issue so it's important for us to remember that the home-share relationship, is one of choice, unlike family relationships that are relationships by blood or law. For most of us, this implies an expectation of some level of reciprocity in the relationship and when you feel like you are being consistently short-changed, remind yourself that it's okay to share your feelings with your house-mate.

When you decide that it is time to address the relationship some basic rules of communication and conflict mediation should be in place:

- Let your house-mate know that you would like to have a discussion about the sharing relationship. No one likes having this kind of conversation “sprung on them,” so give some advance notice.
- Tell them you want to discuss some challenges you're having and ask them to think and write about any challenges they are having with the home-sharing also. No-one likes your issues on the table without theirs being considered too, it is after all about you AND them
- Choose a time that is agreeable for both of you when the kids are not around or are all asleep. I also suggest a public place, like a park or restaurant or coffee shop, without kids because, it's much less likely to result in strong emotional responses, whether it would be raised voices or tearful outbursts.
- Make your list of everything that's not going well
- Make sure you have pens and paper with you to create a new agreement, boundaries, rules etc.
- Be open, lead by example and start with your opening that you feel like it's time to re-address the boundaries, rules and guidelines so they are working for both of you and start by taking turns of what's not working on each point for each person (what was written down)
- Always use “I statements.” It's important that you focus on how you are feeling or what you are thinking in response to the other person's behaviour.

An important reminder: Throughout the course of a friendship, including the home-sharing relationship, always own your feelings. If something is not OK, don't spend months seething inside while telling the other person, “It's okay, I understand”. If you save up all your frustration over time, it's likely to get the best of you once you finally get the courage to share your feelings!

- Listen to what the other person has to say once you've opened up your own concerns. They may not have realised the effect they were having on the relationship.
- Work towards a compromise. Unfortunately, some people believe that a compromise means a “Lose/Lose Situation” because each person has to concede something. While this is true, every healthy relationship usually involves compromise and adjusting to others' needs or wants. The housemate relationship is no different. For a relationship to thrive, it takes two to make it work. Be willing to “give a little” in order to allow your housemate to “get a little.”
- If your housemate is not buying into your perspective, you may want to take a step back and see if your own assessment is as objective as it should be. If you reach a stalemate, you will need to decide if the sharing relationship value is high enough to accept the relationship's limitations under the one roof.
- Remember, too, that there are always going to be multiple realities at play. What you see and believe is your reality, it might not be the other person's.

If the “real issue” is a problem behaviour: they drink too much, are extremely dirty, is always needing to borrow money or some other challenging behavioural issue, and they have no interest in changing, you need to recognise that your wishes won't make changes happen. You can change no one but yourself. Not everyone wants to be what others want them to be and you may have to decide when it's time to draw the line and walk away.

07

BLENDING FAMILIES TOGETHER



Busting Home-Sharing Misconceptions

There are a lot of misconceptions about home-sharing and what will make a good home. Many people have a certain view of what will work but in theory most of the time, these things don't work. So, I want to take a moment to highlight them, so you don't have to work it out the hard way.

- Blending two kids at the same age is not a good idea. Why? Because they both have the same learning milestones, the same learning development stages, normally a similar routine which bed, bath, food etc. They will be more competitive with one another, want to enjoy the same entertainment and toys which creates sharing challenges and demand the same attention from others around them.

Can you imagine having two 3-year-old girls in the one house or even two 16-year-old boys? Do you think it would be harmonious or challenging?

Ensuring kids have at least 3 years age between them takes away the sharing issues, routine similarities, similar needs and competition and puts it more as an older sibling, younger sibling relationship. The differences can be advantageous for staggered bedtime, staggered feeding, different capabilities and intellect, as well as learning from one another. Older kids become more of a helper to the younger kids and the younger kids have a role model to look up to and learn from.

This also goes for parents ages too. Having another parent who is a bit older than you or younger than you can be of huge benefit. For example, If you're a young, new single mum, an older, more experienced single mum can give you some great support and advice.

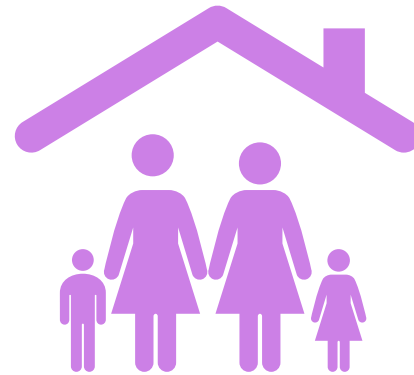
- Blending households that have the same routines might sound lovely at first. Same dinner time, same weekends at the house, same bedtimes ... but it's much trickier to co-ordinate than you might initially think. The best home shares over the years have been because of the different routines. One parent might work at home, while the other goes to a place of employment. One person might be an earlier riser and out the door by 7am while the other doesn't leave till 8.30am. This means utilizing things at different times to avoid crowding. Such as the kitchen and bathroom. Likewise for people coming home in the afternoons.
- One parent might work weekends while the kids go to the other parent's house and the other might only work weekdays and the kids don't go to the other parents' house. This is time away for the kids from one another and the adults can enjoy the house without the other parent. Parents and kids need time off from one another so ensuring that there is time away from one another is a great way to keep the harmony. Ensure that the co-parenting schedule will work with one another's routines to ensure there is always kid free time for both parents, as well as separation for the kids from each parent.
- Different experiences and interests of everyone is a great way to learn, bond and make memories. Looking for someone to similar to you could become quite frustrating over time. But imagine finding someone who can cook Thai and you love Thai or knows how to fix things that break around the house, or can grow a veggie patch, or does Yoga or works in finance or is a nurse. So, many different things can be shared, learnt and discovered by looking for things in people which are different.

Strategies for A Harmonious Home

Living in a share house can be a fantastic experience. You get to share costs, share responsibilities and meet some wonderful people who will introduce you to invaluable new life experiences and friendships for years to come. But, as I've mentioned above, a happy share house isn't created by throwing a bunch of like-minded parents and kids together. It's all about good communication, trust, tolerance and some good strategies firmly in place.

Here's those strategies:

- **The lease** – It shouldn't matter if someone is paying more for a larger room, no one person should lord it over the others. Everyone's equally responsible for paying their share of the rent and looking after the bond. And if you're a home-owner renting out a room in your house, make sure you don't hold that over anyone renting from you either.
- **Rental payments** – Establish and agree on a means of delivery that doesn't lay the burden all on one



person to chase late rental payments. For efficiency, payments could be made into one third party account via automatic bank deposit. Alternatively, you can download a variety of different apps that help you manage this together.

- **Utilities** – Electricity, water and gas bills should ideally be split equally between all housemates. If you're a home-owner, this is a private agreement between you and who is renting from you. Whatever you decide, make sure it is in writing.



- **Internet and TV** – These should be shared equally too, but if you do have a child who plays a lot of games online or streams a lot it might be smart to discuss this and see if they can stream at a low peak time or play games at a low peak time. Or maybe hotspot of their parents phone. TV is a shared resource, unless one is set up in one of the parent's private rooms. If subscriptions are a problem then just pay for them individually.
- **Cleaning** – This is a big one and probably about the toughest sharing issue to get right. The challenges are that people can have wildly different expectations about what is clean and what's not. Everyone has a different mess tolerance and some people just are not great at picking up after themselves. The key to cleaning is to find out what your level of mess tolerance is and the other persons. And to work with that to find solutions.

Frankly, no-one should have to clean up after another person (unless it's your kids, of course). Cleaning up after someone else who isn't cleaning up after themselves breeds resentment. Creating a white board up where everyone can see with the House Rules is a great reminder to everyone, all the time. Write things like. Keep mess to your own room – it's your space, do with it what you will. Always clean up after yourself in communal areas. Stick to the cleaning roster you have created for those communal areas which need more cleaning, like cupboards, floors, walls, toilet, kitchen, bathroom.

- **Food and Cooking** – It's best to discuss early on how you want to manage food. Don't make assumptions because you may unwittingly step on someone's toes if you use their butter without asking. It's best to establish rules about who uses what fridge and cupboard space. Communal means can bring great joy to a household. If this is something you'd like to try, you'll need to arrange a cooking and shopping roster. A good tip is to buy food online, so you don't overspend and do Click and Collect so you don't have to pay for delivery. Another good tip is to create a kitty

for common supplies such as toilet paper, washing liquid, cleaning products etc.

- **Communal property** – Living in a share house means respecting not just other people, but also their belongings. Try to be conscientious and ask if it's okay to use their food processor.
- **Public areas and noise** – You'll be surprised how far noise travels, especially if you live in an apartment or townhouse. Take note of thin walls and be respectful when others are in the house. If people are studying, or shift work, or there is a baby asleep, they're likely to be far more noise sensitive. Which is why, every now and then, it's worth asking your home-share person whether they're happy with how things are going – this opens up a dialogue for them to feel safe to speak to you and a chance to change things, if things aren't working.
- **Visitors** - Whether it's romantic attachments, mates, family members or kids friends, you need to discuss when and how often people can come over and even stay over. By the same token, a new boyfriend or girlfriend can dramatically change the dynamics in a house, so just be sure they don't overstay their welcome. After all, it's meant to be a safe space for everyone. Seeing if you or they can stay at the other persons house, if it is romantic might be a better option for all involved sometimes. It's important people in your life know they can't just drop by unexpectedly, that they need to let you know because other people can be put out because of it. It's a great house rule for everyone!
- **House traditions** – The very best share houses do fun things as a group. Do a once a fortnight meal together where the kids create the menus, and the parents cook. Maybe a games night or movie night together. Even build a veggie patch together. At the end of the day, you're in a shared space, so you'll have to compromise here and there but creating the memories and making the time to do them will create lifelong friendships for all of you.

Blending Families

What's the best way to blend two single parent families?

How can we ensure our successful home-sharing? How can we help our kids, and each other's kids adjust?

How does conflict resolution and family rules assist in maintaining a long term home-sharing relationship?

The First Night Home-Sharing

The first few weeks of a new home-sharing arrangement are not only transitional, but delicate because you, your children, the other parent and their children are all processing the new dynamics of what each now calls home.

One way to smooth the changeover is to plan a family meal that's more celebratory. There is something bonding about eating a meal together which has been cooked together.

It connects the parents when they cook and connects the children as they all sit down and eat the meal. Kids can even go that one extra step and draw a menu for everyone and set the table in a fun way.

It's a great idea to do is regularly in the beginning, once a week or fortnight so as to make a point of being together to bond together.

This celebratory first night dinner is a good time to talk about things as a family, include the kids in how they are feeling and what they are looking forward too. Don't assume the first night will be as routine because it is exciting and fun and that's OK, everyone needs this time to adjust in their own way. Let things slide a bit but remind the kids that tomorrow it is back to normal routine.

And at the next dinner done, hopefully within a week of the first one, then you can bring up rules of the house and ask for their input and make it a good discussion. This way they feel involved in the big decisions, but they also don't have their first night which is about fun dimmed in anyway. Getting that week under everyone's belt while settling in, is very important too.

Once dinner is over, and you serve desert which should be a massive thing for the kids as its a celebration, it's a great time to chat about sleeping arrangements, boundaries and rules as a general topic. Asking for their support, their thoughts and their flexibility as everyone adjusts. Conversations that promote curiosity in a light way will be received so much better from the kids than a sit down "not here are the rules!"

Don't assume the first night will be as routine because it is exciting and fun and that's OK, everyone needs this time to adjust in their own way. Let things slide a bit but remind the kids that tomorrow it is back to normal routine.



What about the kids? How does one handle other people's kids? How do you want other to treat your kids and how can you blend the two of them?

Children And Change

Most children like routine. Adjusting to a new family structure, new residence, or new peers (let alone all of the above simultaneously) can be quite a test for many kids. Of course, each child is different and, obviously, his or her reaction to change will vary as well. Your son may be depressed for weeks after a best buddy moves away while your daughter adapts by keeping in touch but still makes new friends.

How your child handles life changes like death, divorce, and moving will depend on their temperament, personality, and your family's circumstances. He or she may become clingy, moody, irritable, angry, sad, anxious, afraid, less sociable than usual, or a combination of any of these. Younger children may regress or take a step backward in behaviour. For example, your child may wet the bed again or go back to playing with toys they outgrew months ago. But as children adjust, these negative behaviours typically tend to disappear.

Helping Your Child Deal With Change

You can best help your kids by staying aware of what your children are feeling and body language, and by acknowledging that their reactions are normal. You can talk with your child, in age appropriate terms, about what she or he is feeling. Be an active listener and offer extra attention, compassion, and encouragement. More specific ways to prepare and support your kids through change:

- Simplify your schedule as much as possible to be physically and emotionally available for your child
- Talk about what is happening and what it means for all house - sharing members. Spend equal or less time discussing cons as you do pros
- Mention how hard it may be, how fun the new things will be, and what to expect next so they are not surprised by things but expectant
- Answer as many of your children's questions as you can
- Acknowledge your child's worries and fears. Allow them to feel angry, sad, and confused during times of change. Empathise and identify with their emotions, reassuring them that their feelings are normal and acceptable.
- Be proactive in familiarising the kids with the forthcoming changes. Visit the school/daycare before the first day of class if this is changing, show them the neighbourhood online, or set play dates with your new housemate before the time to move in.
- Involve your child in decisions about the change. Let them decide how to arrange their bedroom furniture, or select their school supplies. Since kids tend to understand that they have no control over the major changes in their lives, involving them gives them a stronger sense of security.
- Help your child mark the occasion. Do something special to recognise the change. Maintain as many family routines as possible. Aim to keep other changes in daily activities to a minimum.

If your child was not able to accept transition in the past, they may have difficulty again and so needs extra support. Determine if your child needs to visit their school psychologist, guidance counsellor, paediatrician, or other professional assistance. Also, clue in teachers or child care providers about the changes going on in your family life.

Children who live between the two homes of divorced parents may have extraordinary feelings of shame, guilt, loss, abandonment, rejection, and pain, and often times with the inability to fully express them. Keep in mind that because you have no control over what happens at the other parent's home, you should consider making your time and home life as upbeat, nurturing, and effectual as possible. What is most important is that the share parents set a supportive climate in the home where every child feels included and valued.



Competition Between The Kids

Conflict amongst children is normal. It only becomes problematic when one child bullies or dominates another. On the surface, you have two or more kids who are “at war”, bickering constantly and never interacting peacefully. Although there may be many reasons for this, the standard theme is that one child has somehow fallen victim to the other and believes they get less love, attention, or rewards than the dominating child.

Ideally, a family unit is supposed to be a safe place where everyone feels loved and of equal status to the other members. In reality, some of the children may be jealous of each other. Kids have a right to their emotions, and there is probably little you will be able to do to stop competitiveness between them. You absolutely can however, empower each of them with genuine regard and positive reinforcement. You and your housemate must learn how to administer such an environment and concurrently reduce the chaos between the younger house members.

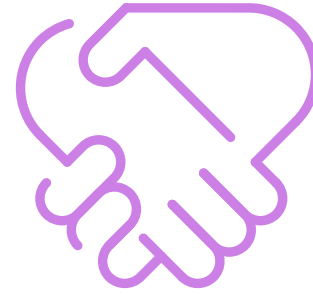
Help the children learn to manage their negative feelings. The earlier children grasp emotional self-control, the better their communication skills as they grow into functioning adults. Demonstrate and teach them how to T - H - I - N - K before they speak.

Is what they are about to say:

- True?
- Helpful?
- Inspiring?
- Necessary?
- Kind?

Even write it on a chalkboard for everyone to see and always refer back to or on a colourful piece of cardboard hung up. Repetition will ingrain this so they do those questions fairly automatically over time and behaviour not just with the other child, but with you, the other parents and people they come into contact with will be more positive and self-disciplined.

This is a conscious discipline process designed to get them to self-regulate, ponder and be mindful in how they deal with things. If the answer to any of these is “no”, they should not speak. It’s about being mindful of creating a space which is conducive to harmony and support of one another. It’s all inclusive as it focuses on them helping themselves to make a decision about behaviour and it’s a fantastic learning process.



Ways To Minimise Conflict Between The Kids

In a bid to deliver you the best methods for minimising conflict between the children, I gathered my own experiences, some other single parents that co-live experiences and advice and ran it by a conscious parent coach and here they are:

- Introduce a “bickering table”. Bickering is the constant, petty, verbal fighting among kids. Schedule between fifteen and thirty minutes every few nights for the arguing children to sit down and – yes - bicker. They cannot touch each other, but they are required to bicker for the entire allotted time. It’s surprising at how quickly they’ll stop bickering, because they will feel silly trying to come up with things to argue about. They may even begin to

laugh hysterically. But even if they run out of things with which to quarrel, make them stay at the table the whole time. Emphasise that if they don’t bicker during the day, they won’t have to go to the bickering table in the evening. This becomes a great motivator for kids to avoid squabbling with each other.

- Stop refereeing the kids’ fights. Yes, they are not blood but they live in close quarters and will form over time a sling like relationship. As long as it’s not a bullying situation, don’t play referee. Don’t become the judge of who’s right or wrong. Don’t try to decide who the worst antagonist is. Instead, inform them that there is no fighting in the house and of what the consequences for their behaviour will be. Let them know that they must learn to walk away from each other and that if they are not willing to do that, they will both be held responsible for the consequences.



- Defuse jealousy. If one of the children is envious of the other, downplay it. Don't magnify the jealous comments or tête - à - tête, and make a habit of pointing out the children's good qualities. When they receive compliments from you, they experience your affection. This is called "hypodermic affection" and it is an effective way to build up your child's confidence and decrease jealous feelings.
- Remember to talk about how we are supposed to treat each other. Pull out the house vision and mission statements, and have the children take turns reading them aloud. Then ask each child to rephrase what they have read to substantiate how well they truly understand them. Discuss what friendship is and what it means to help each other.
- Model the behaviour you're teaching them by supporting each other's parenting efforts.

Helping Kids Transition With Essential Oils

Yes I know.... woo woo and all that but seriously essential oils have been scientifically proven to help humans move through emotions and settle quicker and when it comes to children they work especially well.

I am an advocate of using them around the home in diffusers to keep the energy calm, welcoming and tranquil and I use them daily and so do my kids. It's not so much what they won't do but what they might add that you didn't think would help, but have a subtle difference to your kids and yourself even, with a harmonious house.



08

ENDING THE RIGHT WAY



Moving on

Sometimes things just don't work out or they end sooner than expected. For a myriad of reasons. Some good and some bad. And it's OK. Things always happen for a reason and ending on bad terms is never going to leave a good taste in your mouth. So, no matter what happens or happened, try to be the bigger person and make movement to leave things on a good note. You will feel better about it over the coming days, and they will too. It doesn't do any good to stay resentful or angry. So, here are some ways to help with ending the home-share in the right way.

Diplomacy & Respect

In Chapter 5 we covered Early Termination and End of Lease Agreements. All about ensuring you have something written down. This is when you will need those documents.

Look at what was written and agreed upon and follow those steps. If you are the one moving out, then ensure you find someone to replace you, before you do. It's the

right thing to do. If they are the ones moving out, give them time to find someone and also put your feelers out to see if you can find someone to replace them. Up and leaving suddenly because of a big fight is not a mature way forward and leaving someone to come up with rent they can't afford is a horrible thing to do.

At the end of the day it takes two to tangle and you played a part in the sharing not working, so play a part in making it at least end on a good note.

Terminating The Tenancy

Ending the tenancy is called 'termination.' Landlords and tenants can terminate for different reasons in each state and territory. If the tenancy agreement is breached, the other party may be entitled to compensation—e.g. tenants may have to compensate landlords for lost rent for breaking a lease before the end of a fixed term.



State And Territory Guides

The exact rules and processes for ending a tenancy agreement vary between each state and territory. For the most specific information relevant to your tenancy agreement, you should read the applicable guides linked below:

NSW - <https://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/.../ending-a-tenancy>

VIC - <https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/.../ending-a-lease-or...>

QLD - <https://www.rta.qld.gov.au/.../Ending-a-tenancy-agreement>

SA - <https://www.sa.gov.au/.../Ending-a-fixed-term-lease-early>

WA - <https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/cons.../tenant-ending-tenancy>

TAS - <https://www.cbos.tas.gov.au/.../ren.../ending-a-tenancylease>

ACT - <http://www.tenantsact.org.au/.../ending-a-tenancy-and.../>

NT - <http://www.consumeraffairs.nt.gov.au/.../Ending-The...>



Rental Assistance

There are various grants and corporations that can help you with coming up with a bond and initial 2 weeks rent. They are always changing so it is best to Google rental assistance and your state.

09 HELPFUL RESOURCES



Apps To Help With Home-Sharing



Yes, there are apps which can help with home-sharing specifically to streamline, document and make the money side and chore side effortless.

Chorma

Forget leaving passive aggressive post-it notes around the house and let this handy app pester the other parent instead (or remind you) whose turn it is to empty the bins, clean the bathroom or unpack the dishwasher. Chorma allows you to allocate chores to one another or allows you both to pick chores you want to complete. There is also a points system which can be used to determine who slacked off this week and who was the MVP. This is a great app to involve the kids with also.

SplitWise

SplitWise is a great app for tracking how much each parent has spent on what and who is owed what. This app will help remove any doubt around group or household purchases and avoid any future arguments that could arise. The app will even pester you both if you're late to settle up any debts with one another.

Simply drop the amount spent, say on toilet paper, into the app and it will instantly split it equally across both of you.

AirTasker

If neither of you cbf completing your chores for the week or you've had a big week and cleaning the house is too difficult, AirTasker is the app for you. Simply list your task

and the amount your willing to pay and workers will bid to complete your task. Some workers will even offer up extras to secure your job. Once the task is complete, you can approve it through the app and the amount agreed will be paid from a nominated credit card to the worker.

Epicurious

If you both love cooking at home, Epicurious is a great tool to have. What better way to 'wow' the kids and one another at the next house dinner with a delicious meal cooked thanks to step by step directions.

Epicurious allows you to search thousands of recipes, bookmark favourites and create handy shopping lists. The app also allows you to search for recipes by excluding specific ingredients—making life much easier if you have kids with allergies (or aversions).

Companion

Concerned about one another heading out on their Tinder date or walking home from work late at night? Or seeing their ex? Companion might be the app for both of you. Especially as single mums and kids with mobile phones.

This app allows the user to be tracked, and will even alert authorities if they begin to run really fast and jerky, their phone is dropped or at the tap of a button.

Our Groceries

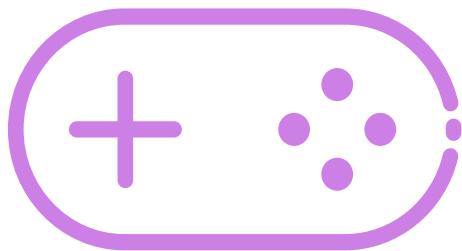
Theres nothing more frustrating that being halfway home from the shops—groceries in hand— only to receive a text from the parent your co-living with asking you to grab toilet paper or washing powder.

Shopping lists can be synced across all smart phones in the home. So if one of you wants to add something to the list you can grab it on the way home from work or vice-versa, without the need to text each other back and forth.

Bonding Games

Make time for bonding, for every individual. It's so important to do this. Here are some games that are kid and adult friendly that most ages can play.

- Charades – there is a kid version that's great for 4 years and up.
- Lava Game – Everyone has to devise ways to get from one end of the house to the other without touching the floor. Use pillows, chairs and work together as a team.
- Balloon Walk – put a balloon between two people, side by side with the balloon in the middle and walk across the room without dropping the balloon and without using hands.
- Catch my ribbon – get a clothes peg and attach a piece of ribbon to everyone's back pants and the idea is to catch someone else's ribbon, but don't let your get caught.
- Build a fort together – then added bonus is watching a movie in it with popcorn at night
- You can Google kids bonding games and get tons more ideas.



Round Table System

The idea of a roundtable is for everyone to sit down and talk things out together as a family unit under one roof. The best way to do it is as follows:

- Ensure everyone is aware of when it's happening. It should be a planned discussion, not just sprung on someone at the last minute.
- Get the people who can, age appropriate to write down their issues/challenges/problems prior to the discussion so they can bring them up
- Each person gets a turn, starting with the kids. Why? Because smaller person, smaller problems, usually. And the adult discussion might not be appropriate in front of kids either.
- The children do paper, scissors, rock best out of three for who goes first.
- Whoever is meant to talk holds whatever you want them to hold. A wand, a ribbon, a peg. The holding something is about having that person say what they need to without interruption and then whoever wants to reply asks to reply and they get the "whatever" to hold.
- Parents it is up to you to hold a mature, non-argumentative, fair and calm environment doing this. They will role model the way you react to this as their learned behaviour. This is a great time to shape them into effective listeners and solution oriented human beings.
- Create new house rules from these discussions, if need be, together. It is a constant adjustment as life changes and people change. Another great skill for all of us to have.

Communication Board

This is for communicating things to one another that doesn't need to be discussed in person. Do not use this board for writing things like "replace my milk!" or any other nasty remarks or comments.

This can be a simple whiteboard somewhere that is agreed upon that you write things like:

- Your mum stopped by to say hi, I told her I'd let you know.
- A package arrived for you, I left it in the kitchen
- I found your missing sock! I've just put it in the washing machine/your laundry basket
- I found your daughters lost dummy. I've put it in the sink for you.
- I am going to be home really late tonight and the kids are staying at their dads so I'll see you in the morning
- I arranged for the cleaner to come next Wednesday

When you have different schedules, you can't always pass messages through easily, so this is a great alternative.

At the end of the day home-sharing is about coming together for a common goal, a bigger goal and can give you so many wonderful life lessons for growth. For both you and your children. It can be hard work sometimes but that's where the growth is.



www.shareabode.com.au

