There are positive ways to address any challenges and work through differences to maintain or build upon the relationship you have with your roommate, suitemate or member of your residential community. Follow these helpful communication tips to build positive relationships.

**Step 1**
If you are uncomfortable talking with your roommate(s) initially, talk with your First-Year Resident Assistant (FYRA) or Community Resource Assistant (CRA) as they are an objective person available to listen to your concerns and help you brainstorm ways to address them. Campus Living and Community Development staff are also ready to help and aid you in this process.

**Step 2**
Share your concerns with your roommate(s). This can be the hardest steps to undertake. There can be feelings of guilt and fear prohibiting you from taking this step. You may think sharing your thoughts will hurt their feelings or create more problems, but it is the first step in communicating through differing opinions. Make sure that each person takes a turn describing their perception of the situation, how they feel about it and what they want. When sharing:
- **Be specific.** What is the main concern you have with the situation?
- **Share your feelings.** Let him/her know that this is a difficult process for you but that you are committed to resolving the problems.
- **Take ownership for your feelings.** In order to maintain open communication, don’t attack your roommate(s) and put them on the defensive. Use “I” statements such as “I feel upset when you watch TV while I am trying to study” or, “I need the room quiet when I go to bed because of my early morning class.”
- **Be positive.** Share the things you appreciate in your relationship.
- **Take time out.** Make sure that you are not trying to discuss your concerns while you are upset or angry. Taking time to cool down will help you be more open and objective during the conversation.

**Step 3**
Work with each other to create resolutions to the concerns. Once everyone has shared their concerns, it is important that the dialogue continues as an equal exchange between you. Once an issue has been identified, brainstorm ways in which it can be addressed.

**Step 4**
- **Take action.** It is great that you have outlined resolutions and ways to work out your issues but it is important to take this plan and put it into action.
- **Be patient.** Things will not change overnight. Recognize that you and your roommate(s) are trying to adjust and work to make living together better.
- **Be positive.** Give your roommate(s) positive feedback when you notice them doing the things you had discussed.
- **Be flexible.** Both you and your roommate(s) need to make adjustments, compromise, and cooperate.
- **Be persistent.** If you find that you are slipping into old habits, address this. Go back to Step 1 and share your concerns.