



Living with other people presents a great opportunity to become aware of new challenges and to find solutions to overcome those challenges. You can think of living with others as a way to develop your interpersonal and communication skills and improve your sense of responsibility and commitment to cooperation. The guidelines below will help you build these skills whether you're thinking of living with a new person or attempting to improve your current living arrangement.

1 Make a list of issues that could arise with others as a result of having ADHD.

- Forgetting to do dishes, chores, and/or cleaning up after yourself
- Borrowing stuff impulsively and forgetting to return it
- Disorganized room and/or shared space
- Distractions from others like music, TVs, people
- Disrupting others

2 Create a second list of solutions for each issue.

- Set a task schedule and designate who's accountable for each task.
- Keep a whiteboard notification of borrowed items – sign each item in and out so its clear when it will be returned.
- Commit to doing a spot check every time you leave a shared room to see if there's something that's out of place that you can put back in place, like dishes, books, or socks.
- Set guidelines for appropriate music/TV volume and “curfews” if necessary.
- Set Privacy guidelines, e.g., a closed door is a sign not to disturb. Honor it for others and expect the same in return.

3 Schedule regular meetings.

- Present the list from above to those living with you. Allow for discussion about whether or not they can help you achieve the solutions.
- Aim to understand each other's perspectives and expectations of:
 - Sounds & loudness (how loud, how often, how long)
 - Common & shared space (access to and cleanliness of)
 - Household responsibilities (cleaning, groceries, garbage removal)
 - Time & schedules (who's on what kind of schedule?)
 - Privacy
- Aim to adopt solutions for everyone.
- Meet regularly (monthly). Regular meetings help create a forum for these discussions to happen easily and comfortably.
- Deal with people face-to-face as often as possible. It encourages great communication skills.
N.B. Write notes cautiously. Leave notes as helpful tools not as a way to avoid confrontation. The latter can often create tension.

Things to check in about during regular meetings:

- What's working?
- What's not working?
- What can/should change?
- What needs to be monitored?
- What needs to be negotiated?
- How is everyone feeling about the living situation?

***always end on a positive note**

4 Come up with a Terms of Agreement together that incorporates everyone's needs in your living environment.

Invite everyone, (including yourself) to be open, honest, and kind while living together, knowing it's all for the sake of cooperation. Fostering a harmonious living environment helps you adapt better to other stressors that arise in your life. You will also enhance important skills necessary to work well with others at work and in life.

