



Shared Housing (Home-sharing) #1 Know YOURSELF – “20 Questions”

Print this out - then get started . . .

[1]Step 1: ~~Before you start talking with others about homesharing~~, we suggest you take time to think about previous times when you've shared living space. Everyone has done this - with parents, roommates, children, other significant people. Pause and reflect on positive experiences.

- What were the ingredients that made them positive?
- Now, turning to negative experiences, reflect on those experiences that were negative.
- What went wrong and why were they negative?
- Finally, think about you and your current needs, and what kind of experience you'd like to have. There are many reasons to homeshare. You don't have to match up perfectly, but you'll be better able to find a good match if you know what you are looking for.

Step 2: Answer the following 20 questions as honestly as you can. This is for You! Be brutally honest with yourself and then with others. Take this step even if you're considering moving back with parents, in with friends, or thinking about having children or parents come into your home.

Steps 3 – 11 come after you've completed these questions.

[2]THE QUESTIONS:

1) I think homesharing would allow me to (check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce my rent and utilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Have another adult in the house |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prevent eviction | <input type="checkbox"/> Feel like a better parent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce expenses | <input type="checkbox"/> Keep my sanity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Find companionship & support | <input type="checkbox"/> Stop worrying so much |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Form an extended family | <input type="checkbox"/> Live in a nicer neighborhood |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Get help with chores or tasks | <input type="checkbox"/> other? |

2) If I share a home I'm afraid that: (check all that apply)

- ☐ I'll end up doing all the cooking since I'm a good cook
- ☐ I will discover the other person has only chrome & black furniture, while I have antiques
- ☐ I'll be exposed as being a slob
- ☐ They'll be slob - or neatniks!
- ☐ I'll always feel like a visitor
- ☐ I'll never get to see my boyfriend/ girlfriend overnight again
- ☐ There'll be too much company



___ I'll expect too much from the other person and be disappointed

___ They'll expect too much of me

___ I'll lose my autonomy

___ I'll want to control the others

___ I might have to move out ... and then what?

3) I could take steps to make sure the above things don't happen by ...

___ Meeting with the other person/s at least 4 times & getting to know them in more than a superficial and social only way

___ Visiting the other person's home to check it out there before deciding

___ Having any kids meet any others to see if they like & are compatible with one another too

___ Getting, then checking and interviewing several references carefully

___ Talking honestly with the other person about my fears and my hopes

___ Writing down expectations for TV, cleaning, timing, expenses, etc.

___ Reviewing these worksheets with the other person

___ Talking about things that make me angry and how I resolve disputes

___ Setting up regular "house meetings" to discuss things before they're big

4) I would describe my interpersonal and/or parenting style as:

___ Authoritarian: when I give a direction, I expect others to jump

___ Authoritative: there's communication, but also decisions are made

___ Libertarian: whatever happens is just fine - don't sweat the details

___ Other:

5) A "Service Exchange" is another way to reduce housing costs. For example, Jane can afford \$500 a month in rent, but she and Jada found a place to rent together that would cost each \$650. Jane might make up the difference (\$150) in agreeing to provide that amount of services to Jada, who can afford \$800. (her \$650 + \$150)

I would be willing to consider providing or receiving as part of an exchange:

___ house cleaning

___ grocery shopping

___ errand running

___ music lessons

___ car maintenance

___ dog walking / care

___ transportation

___ other

I could provide or might need ___ (1-15) hours per week in services – what dollar value would we place on each hour? _____.



I could communicate my expectations on schedules, quality of services, flexibility, changes in needs by ...

- ☐ writing down the exact nature of the issue
- ☐ being specific in requesting changes or preferences
- ☐ keeping track of actual time on a time sheet
- ☐ saying “whatever...” or “whenever...”

6) I can make a new homesharing situation comfortable by:

- ☐ letting others bring their things in to my space & discussing arrangements
- ☐ treating them as I'd like to be treated
- ☐ extending an assumption of goodwill
- ☐ introducing them to my friends
- ☐ including them in my family's activities at least once a month
- ☐ letting them know they'd better do all the above for me

7) How might I handle the first time one of my things gets damaged?

- ☐ I'll keep it all separate so it'll never happen (fairytale scenario)
- ☐ I'll cry, pout, yell or scream
- ☐ I'd expect to be paid for the damaged item or damage done
- ☐ I'll ignore it. It won't happen again (another fairytale)
- ☐ I'll damage something of theirs in return
- ☐ I'll ask for a time to talk to find a mutually agreeable solution
- ☐ I'll assume it was my fault, yet be angry
- ☐ Other

8) What furniture and/ or appliances can I bring to the home? What might I have to find a place to store or sell?

9) If I have kids, how might each, and they collectively, react to sharing a home?

- ☐ Adopting a “wait and see” attitude ☐ Jumping in with both feet
- ☐ Being needier than usual ☐ Getting competitive
- ☐ Being difficult so they'll leave ☐ Waiting to see if they can be trusted

10) I (or those in my family) have special wants and needs. These are:

- ☐ Restrictions on diet ☐ A room of their own
- ☐ Allergies ☐ Many hours of quiet



☐ A yard or park nearby ☐ Time to practice drums

☐ Nearby public transit ☐ Other

11) I may feel uncomfortable sharing a house with someone who ...

☐ has different religious beliefs ☐ has different politics

☐ is on AFDC, food stamps, etc ☐ is gay, lesbian, bisexual ...

☐ has a prior criminal record ☐ has another language than mine

☐ is in recovery ☐ is of a different ethnic group / race

☐ is in a different economic group ☐ is or has been “homeless”

☐ owns guns ☐ likes different music

☐ Other ☐ wants to be “like family”

12) My communication preference and style could be described as being ...

☐ in person ☐ ‘text,’ email, voice mail

☐ casual ☐ formal

☐ extroverted (say it right away) ☐ introverted (think it through first)

☐ changes when I’m under pressure ☐ other

13) I think that I...

☐ would be excited about the opportunities that would be possible by living with people that I’ve listed above

☐ would be open to living with some of the people I’ve listed above. It could be a good learning experience, even if challenging

☐ would prefer not to take risks for myself or my family

☐ other:

14) What kind of behavior in adults makes you angry?

☐ pushy ☐ controlling ☐ uptight

☐ too open-ended ☐ crisis / drama lover ☐ not caring

☐ inflexible ☐ nitpicky ☐ neatnik

☐ inconsiderate ☐ drunkenness ☐ procrastination

☐ unwilling to talk ☐ makes too many assumptions ☐ sloppy

☐ stuffs feelings ☐ other

15) What kind of behavior in children makes you angry?

☐ overly aggressive ☐ neediness & dependency ☐ whining



☐ needing attention ☐ overactive ☐ too talkative

☐ won't take “No” for an answer - always bargaining

☐ simply existing in “my” space

16. What about pets is a problem for you?

☐ overly aggressive ☐ needing attention ☐ overactive ☐ smelly ☐ noisy ☐ simply existing

17) When I get angry, I:

☐ immediately tell you what's on my mind and let it all hang out

☐ try to calm down and then say something

☐ try to calm down and then write a note

☐ withdraw and think about it before saying anything

☐ hit and break things

☐ simmer and then erupt when I can't take it any longer

☐ meditate ☐ other

18) Describe your ideal homesharing situation:

Number of bedrooms for your family =

Number of bathrooms for you/your family =

Willingness to share rooms? Y / N – under what conditions?

Willingness to share bathrooms? Y / N – under what conditions?

Maximum number of adults =

Maximum number of kids =

Gender of other adults? Of kids?

Presence of pets? Types?

18) What are 3 to 5 words that best describe your ideal home atmosphere? (i.e. - calm, fun, safe, active, warm, quiet, alive, ...)

19) What are the best things you bring to a homeshare?

20) Write down any non-negotiable areas for you. (i.e. - smoking, drinking, restrictions, religion ...)

** Make notes here of anything else you want to be sure to include to remind yourself to be honest with yourself.

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[3]OK - now that you’ve taken the PRELIMINARY SELF CHECK, you’re ready to meet someone who is also looking to share housing!

Step 3: Get the word out that you are looking to share housing. Start with; your Personal Safety Net and you can use their connections too. Then add, Bulletin boards, Linked-In, Craig’s List, Facebook, etc.

Step 4: Meet the first person you have been introduced to in some fashion to get the ball rolling. Keep it neutral, public & just adults. You might wish to use the “20 Questions” to have in mind and on hand for topics for consideration and possible discussion

Step 5: To keep this from being crisis-oriented, plan ahead to have at least 4 meetings before scheduling any move-in dates. You’ve now had one already. It’s OK to have more than one person/family to interview.

Step 6: Meet a second time, both having completed “Know Yourself” and “Do We Fit?” - this meeting probably also in a public, neutral space. Bring your checklists when you next meet. Get each other’s references, and check them out!

Step 7: Each of you can do a basic background check through the Washington State Police web site www.WSP.WA.gov/crime/crimhist.htm [4]) for residents of Washington State.

Step 8: Meet at the place where one of you lives: talk about areas still not-yet-covered and questions still outstanding. Be curious. Ask questions.

Step 9: Meet where the other person lives - write down an agreement.

- ~~Who is moving into where? What spaces?~~
- Who will do what?
- When does this start? How long do you envision it lasting? (we recommend a trial period, with renewal)
- If money is to be exchanged, who pays how much, to whom, in what fashion, when?
- If services are to be exchanged, what, by whom, who decides how well, etc.
- Cover all the things that are important, in writing.
 - For example: Vacations and responsibilities
 - Access to and time with internet/wifi – on line, etc.
 - Quiet / Noisy times
 - Cleaning public / private spaces / garbage / recycling / yard
 - Guests – numbers, warnings, times, who’s welcome who’s not
 - Cars
 - Courtesy and respect – what these mean, examples from each of you

Step 10: The preceding questions have been intended to aid you in gathering information, having useful conversations, and moving you toward a making a good decision. However, any one set of questions can only get you started. Think carefully, ask yourself hard questions, confer and seek opinions from respected members of your own personal safety net.

Step 11: Make your decision and perhaps move in, and begin a new chapter and may it be positive and good for all!

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