Student Households – Chores and Daily Living

Perhaps this is your first time living away from home and in your own household. Depending on your situation, you may want to simplify day-to-day living by organizing a list of household chores and concerns. Here are a few ideas to consider for completing household tasks:

Chores with housemates:
- **Make a list of chores.** Have a shared understanding as to what is necessary on a daily, weekly, bi-weekly, and monthly basis.
- **Assess your schedules.** Know when everyone can commit to their chores to avoid the possibility of future arguments. Reassess each quarter.
- **Assign chores.** Would you like to design weekly schedules? Or would you like to rotate the different responsibilities?
- **Create a spreadsheet or calendar.** Create a spreadsheet or calendar that clearly outlines each chore and who is responsible for it. Print the household chore assignment and hang it in a place where everyone can see it, such as on the refrigerator or bulletin board in the kitchen.
- **Evaluate.** Do the chores make sense? Does the schedule work for everyone?

Cleaning tips:
- **Invest in cleaning supplies.** Good supplies make household chores easier and less time consuming.
- **Multi-task to save time.** A few suggestions you may want to consider:
  - Use a disinfectant shower spray after every shower to avoid the strenuous job of scrubbing mold in the future or staining the grout.
  - Wash the dishes while you wait for water to boil or pick up clutter during television commercials.
  - Take out the trash in the morning on your way out.

Planning your budget:
- **Assess your budget record.**
  - Make sure that you each have enough money to cover necessities such as: rent, utilities, transportation, food, telephone, Internet, school supplies, and emergencies.
- **Establish good credit.**
  - Open one of the household monthly bills in your name.
  - Be wise in your personal spending.
Communicate with your housemates:

- **Have regular house meetings.**
  - Pick a day each month for a house meeting that everyone can and will attend.
  - Work out potential snags before they become larger problems. Make sure everyone agrees before implementing large changes, such as establishing a chore schedule or adding movie channels to your cable service bill.
  - Talk about any problems you might have, as ignoring problems will make things worse. If a financial issue will cause you to pay rent a week late, be up front about it ahead of time.

- **Establish rules.**
  - Establish a public or private food system, or combination of both.
  - Are overnight guests allowed? If so, how many nights a month?
  - Tell people if you’re going to be gone, so that chores can be rescheduled and misunderstandings can be avoided.
  - Designate private areas versus common areas.
  - Do you need quiet hours? Talk about it.
  - Determine and agree how bills will be paid. Do you need a communal fund?
  - Is smoking allowed inside or outside? (Be sure to check your rental agreement before establishing this one).

- **What are the consequences?**
  - Decide what will happen if someone breaks a rule. For example, what if an overnight guest overstays their welcome? Should they have to pay a portion of utilities, food or rent? Put your agreement in writing.