What is the Mediation Resource Center?

Mission
The mission of the Mediation Resource Center (MRC) is to strengthen the university community by enhancing student development, encouraging healthy relationships, and assisting students in contributing productively to society.

History
This is the third year the Mediation Resource Center has been in operation. The Mediation Resource Center was developed and is managed through a partnership between the Division of Student Development and Campus Life and the Department of Counseling and Educational Leadership in the College of Education and Human Services. Staff members from the Office of Residential Education and Services work with faculty members and students from the graduate programs in Counseling to provide this service to students.

Services
- Mediation services to resolve interpersonal conflict in a safe, neutral environment
- Psychoeducational programming for students on issues including but not limited to: improving communication skills, stress management, resolving conflict, diversity training, college adjustment and healthy and responsible living
- Blackboard course in residential living
- Assist CAs and CDs to develop residential programs
- Collaborate with campus partners to create student programming that strengthens the campus community
- Assist parents and family members in understanding the campus life experience and potential adjustment needs of students

Contact
Mediation Resource Center
Montclair State University
Dinallo Heights Room 2510
Student Development and Campus Life

MRC - Family Guide - What you Need to Know About Your Student Living On-Campus

By: The Mediation Resource Center
Jaclyn Cirello, Jessica Spera, Dana Richardson, and Michael Alves
How to help your student deal with roommate conflict:

**Be open** - College presents a great opportunity for your student to form new friendships and relationships. Remind your student that their ideas, opinions and habits may differ from others. When living with a roommate, it is necessary to have an open mind in discussing differing living habits and coming to a compromise instead of becoming defensive.

**Don’t assume or ignore** - Pretending that a problem does not exist will not make it go away. Similarly, assuming a roommate thinks or means something without asking first, may lead to unnecessary conflict. Encourage your student to address any concerns early as it will prevent future problems or blowups. In addition, it is important for your student to talk with his or her roommate in the beginning with what is and is not acceptable when living together (See Assumption Guide for examples).

**Communicate** - Communication is key! It is important to have good communication with a roommate to discuss likes/ dislikes, and prevent major problems. If conflict arises, encourage your student to talk face-to-face with a roommate, instead of using other forms of communication via technology (i.e. texting, facebook). In addition, encourage your student to calmly discuss any rising issues with a roommate. Staying positive, using “I” statements, and avoiding “all or nothing” phrases such as the words always and never will more likely lead to better end results.

**Roommate contract** - Roommate contracts are a good way for your student to get to know their new roommate, while discussing living agreements. Contracts spell out points of agreement, including cleanliness, guest policies, and sharing or borrowing of personal belongings. It is recommended that roommate contracts are completed with a CA or Mediation Resource Staff member.

**Work with residential education staff** – Residential Education staff are there to assist your student with any problem or concern he or she may have. If your student is specifically dealing with a roommate conflict, the Mediation Resource Center staff is there to help! As a free resource, these staff members are trained to help roommates work out issues. Encourage your student to seek help when needed instead of dealing with an issue by himself or herself.

**Negotiate/compromise** - Negotiation and compromise is key when living with a roommate. Encourage your student to discuss differences and/ or any issues, and work towards an agreement that works for both roommates. Two-way discussion is key that way both roommates have input to the solution.

**Know when to quit** - Moving should never be the first option when having a roommate problem. However, if your student believes his or her situation is unlivable and all options have been exhausted, (i.e. mediation) he or she can take action to move to another room. Although changing rooms is not guaranteed, your student can discuss this option with their Community Director.