

Summary

The interviewee is a female student working part time in her twenties living in a shared flat since around around 6 months with up to 14 flat mates. She has an overall good relationship with all of her flat mates, but would like to have more exchange. Sometimes she would prefer some people to communicate more especially their needs so everybody knows about them and they could all work on them to improve the situation and avoid conflicts. They don't have a clear schedule on who does what in the shared flat so she's unsure of how much does who and would like to have a clear schedule in best case over an online tool. Because she also feels like doing more care work she would like to have a discussion about it and track it somehow. She thinks tracking household tasks and doing a schedule could be a help but it would be good to take external factors like work load from studies or work also into account when distributing tasks for a certain time.

General Information

Do you work or study?

both

Living situation

How many people do you live with?

Up to 14

How long have you been in this living situation?

6 months

What is your relationship with these people? (Family, shared apartment, colleagues, friends, partners)

Flat share

How would you rate yourself on a scale from 1 (completely spontaneous) to 10 (everything planned)?

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Cohabitation/Communication

How would you describe your cohabitation?

Very uncomplicated; focus on living together; random meetings in the shared flat, ask about well-being, play together; sometimes pass each other by as everyone has lots of things to do; think we would like to see each other more; shared flat meeting every 2 weeks for decisions about shared flat life such as rent and to discuss conflicts if necessary

Is the cohabitation as you imagined it? (What is different?)

live in an intergenerational flat share; would like a more familiar environment; lack physical closeness, e.g. as with my parents or colleagues of the same age

How would you describe the current communication in your living situation?

many positive aspects, communication often via signal; attempt to express non-violently and focus on transformative justice; prefer to digitise systems such as food/shopping planning;

Are expectations clearly communicated?

not always or it depends on the person's history and how much trust they have in others; people should communicate more proactively when things are not going so well or something is bothering them

How would you describe your relationships with your housemates?

[...] don't know everyone super well yet; pretty good and balanced with quite a few; sometimes I take on more care work in the relationship

How do you deal with conflicts?

very reflective; communicate non-violently and with understanding; start to maintain more of your own boundaries again; hand over responsibility for solutions to other people; all: Transformative justice, i.e. no person is unchangeable and support people who have been assaulted and start a process with the assaulted person and change things on a structural, systematic level

How do you handle forgotten tasks?

Speak to the person (several times if necessary)

How do you handle shared spaces and tasks in your living situation?

different needs, e.g. when cleaning; currently no office plan (I would like to have one), but simply clean when seen ⇒ in my opinion sometimes very dirty and then cleaned a few times in succession

Household Work/Tasks

How is the household work divided?

- Cleaning: not much at the moment; there are lists for different areas, e.g. bathroom, in which the date (without name) is entered when the area has been done
- Shopping: write down when something runs out; vegetable and bread subscription; simply shop when necessary
- Finances: Table for entering joint expenses; Excel spreadsheet is then used to calculate the fair distribution of expenses (including age, work, ...); there are points of contention, e.g. what to buy

Do you think the distribution of tasks is fair? Do others see it that way?

Care work not yet visible; appreciation is lost due to anonymity; not yet fairly distributed

How often do you notice things in the household that still need to be done?

Every second

How do you deal with it?

try to do it, but often no more time or resources available

How is it handled when something isn't done satisfactorily?

not yet addressed, although some cleaning was not to my satisfaction; would like it if things that are a burden, e.g. "I think I do everything", were communicated

Personally (e.g., estimates, product opinions, etc.)

Are there things in the household or living situation that cause you stress?

- Fear of people interpreting and what they think of me (as they may not see what I am doing)
- how can I maintain my own boundaries
- Fear of commitment before saying no or making mistakes

Do you think of other reasons for mental load?

Work, hand overs, social networks, ...

Can you estimate how large your share of the household planning is?

more than one twelfth [for twelve adults]

Can you estimate how large your housemates' share is?

< 11 twelfths [difficult to estimate with a large community]

Product

Have you ever tried to track your work in household planning?

no, simply anonymous in shared flat

Do you think tracking mental load would be helpful?

yes

What aspects would you find interesting to see or share with others?

previous flat share: tracked by name and tried to have done about the same amount every month; having a name helps with a feeling of fairness that everyone does the same amount or that it is talked about; makes care work visible

- Rhythm and planning would be good for the current shared flat to avoid extra work and mess and to create clarity

Are there things that are often underestimated in task distribution?

Different cleaning styles resulting in different time requirements