

# **“The Nest”**

## **Homesharing Support Services Program**

**“WHAT IS HOMESHARING, AND IS IT  
RIGHT FOR ME?”**

Area 1 Agency on Aging (A1AA)  
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[www.a1aa.org/homesharing](http://www.a1aa.org/homesharing)

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

This informational booklet will help you to get a better understanding of what homesharing is and if it may be right for you.

Make notes and right down questions you have that you can explore further. Take some time on the reflection questions to help you make decisions about homesharing.

## HOMESHARING BASIC INFORMATION

### WHAT IS HOMESHARING

Homesharing is an arrangement where two or more unrelated people share a dwelling, each having her or his private space and sharing certain common areas. Providers may arrange a regular rental payment, or exchange services to offset a portion or all of the rent. **No two Homesharing situations are alike; each is tailored to the needs and desire of the individual people involved.**

Home providers may be living in a house too large due to life changes (empty nest or loss of a spouse), or they may be a one-parent family finding it difficult to cope with maintaining a household alone.

Home seekers may be seniors, college students, newly divorced persons, professionals recently moved to the area or travelling, or anyone in need of lower cost housing who enjoys living with others.

## WHAT HOMESHARING IS NOT

**Homesharing is not meant to provide a home health service for the home provider.** Home seekers are not expected to provide personal care services which include but are not limited to:

- Bathing assistance
- Dressing
- Toileting assistance
- Turning or lifting
- Service which brings the housemate in contact with bodily fluids
- Injections or administering medications

**Homesharing is not meant to be used as emergency housing.** Finding a compatible housemate and setting up a new homesharing arrangement takes time, sometimes several weeks or more.

**Homesharing is not meant to be a short term situation.** Many home providers prefer a longer term commitment. Be sure to be clear and open about your housing needs.

## COMMON TYPES OF HOMESHARING

In a ***rental*** arrangement, the home provider will rent out a spare bedroom for extra income.

In a ***service exchange*** arrangement, the home provider may offer a rent-free room in exchange for services such as transportation, cooking, housekeeping, laundry, running errands, yard work, handyman, companionship, or pet care.

In a *mixed* arrangement, the home provider will offer a reduced rent to be offset by services.

## IS HOMESHARING RIGHT FOR ME?

### CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUCCESSFUL HOMESHARER

A commitment to the decent treatment of housemates -- combined with enough self-awareness to evaluate and possibly modify one's own behavior in order to honor the same commitment on the part of others.

Genuine interest in your housemate – Doesn't mean you have to share their interests, hobbies, etc. but seeing them clearly and honestly can be helpful.

"Privacy AND company are essential -- and you can drive someone crazy by depriving them of either." This quote, by science fiction author Robert Heinlein, can make a huge difference in almost any relationship if everyone involved will take it seriously and adjust their behavior as needed.

Tolerance and flexibility – It's crucial to be aware of, and willing to enforce, your own "showstoppers." But it's also worth challenging these from time to time. Some of them might not be as essential as you had thought. This can lead to some interesting negotiations: "I tend to be on the casual side about housekeeping, but I'll do my best to keep things neat if you'll be willing to keep the noise down after, say, 10 pm."

It's REALLY important to NOT be perfect! When things go wrong -- and sooner or later, they will -- looking at the situation 100% objectively can go a long way

toward coming to a solution. This means recognizing how your own behavior may be part of the problem. Practice saying "I goofed" or "I blew it" -- and notice that the world doesn't come to an end!

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What kinds of things do I do that would make it *easy* for someone else to be comfortable living with me? And how can I do even more of those things?
- What are some things that I do that might make it *harder* for a housemate to be comfortable around me? What can I do to improve those areas?
- How willing am I to be flexible and accommodating?
- How comfortable am I with change?

## OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER

Do some of your own research at the library, online, or ask friends and family what they think. For internet resources, use the "More Information" section.

## A1AA ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Area 1 Agency on Aging (A1AA) and its staff or other representative's acts only as a facilitator providing the tools for individuals to find successful homeshare matches. **It is the responsibility of the individual participants to determine whether referred individuals are found to be compatible.** All final decisions regarding homesharing rest with the seekers and providers of housing.

## **MORE INFORMATION**

### **NATIONAL SHARED HOUSING RESOURCE CENTER**

**[www.nationalsharedhousing.org](http://www.nationalsharedhousing.org)**

A clearinghouse of information for people looking to learn more about homesharing.

### **SILVERNEST**

**[www.silvernest.com/redwoods](http://www.silvernest.com/redwoods)**

An online house sharing service pairing homeowners with pre-qualified housemates. Offers background screening, matching, lease creation, and automated rent payment tools.

### **HOMESHARE CENTRAL**

**[www.homesharecentral.org](http://www.homesharecentral.org) or 707-362-8000**

Offers regularly scheduled FREE, LIVE, telephone-based conversations about homesharing. Talk to others with similar questions and concerns, learn techniques for making the most of homesharing, or bring up your own issues.

### **THE ROOMMATE COACH**

**[www.theroommatecoach.com](http://www.theroommatecoach.com)**

Information and techniques for homesharers and others wanting to make their living situations work as well as possible. Individual and group coaching services are also available.

## A1AA SENIOR INFORMATION GUIDE

[www.a1aa.org](http://www.a1aa.org) or 707-442-3763

A directory of services and resources for seniors living in Humboldt and Del Norte counties.

## SHARING HOUSING

[www.sharinghousing.com](http://www.sharinghousing.com)

A resourceful website by expert homesharer and author, Annamarie Pluhar.

## NOTES

*\*Thank you for the support from Ventura Homeshare in creating this booklet\**

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