



Back to School

with  HEART

Dorming, Commuting, and More

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The transition to college comes with a lot of changes and decisions. One of the first decisions incoming students make is whether to commute or live on campus.

For students who are dorming, setting boundaries with roommates can be a challenge in building community:

SETTING BOUNDARIES IN SHARED SPACES

Creating healthy boundaries with your roommates early on is a great way to ensure a comfortable living space.

Boundaries are especially important during a pandemic to prioritize your physical, mental, and spiritual health. It

can be intimidating to have that first conversation and voice your needs, but chances are your roommate also thinks about the same questions you have. Some topics to discuss can include who's allowed in the room and when, cleaning schedules, personal hygiene, sharing food, sleeping schedules, significant others, and more. It **can be**

helpful to have your boundaries and comfort levels explicitly written out to advocate for yourself. Your residential advisor (RA), friends, or upper class people can be great resources in navigating boundary setting.

Commuting students have different challenges in building a community. Here are some recommendations to navigate school as a commuter:

BUILDING COMMUNITY AS A COMMUTER

It can often feel isolating to be the only one in a friend group to commute. Your experience relationships can feel limited to those who live on campus. Remember, **you aren't the only one who feels that way**, and finding meaningful connections may take more effort. Consider reaching out to other commuters, and even upperclasspeople for support. For example, ask **if your school has lockers for storage** and brainstorm accessible transportation.

Navigating Religious
Practices: (gender, dietary
needs and religious spaces)

NAVIGATING RELIGIOUS PRACTICES: GENDER

It is essential to understand the privilege of cis bodies in prayer spaces that often uphold gender binary and practice segregation. Those privileged enough to always feel safe in prayer spaces (i.e., non-Black cis heterosexual Sunni men) should make space for marginalized Muslim students. Consider starting a conversation in the community that centers on historically marginalized genders and identities and actively work to make space for all Muslims in spaces of worship. If you do not feel safe in the prayer room due to your identity, you may want to share your experience with a trusted friend or staff member. However, please keep in mind that it is not your responsibility to carry the burden of advocacy.

NAVIGATING RELIGIOUS PRACTICES: FOOD

Whether you only eat Halal food or prefer having Halal options, check in with the campus dining services and the Muslim Student Association (MSA) to learn about dietary accommodations on and off-campus. Navigating nutritional options can be especially important if you are planning to observe Ramadan. **If your campus has a nutritionist, you may want to inquire about changes in diets to accommodate fasting.**

Similarly, you can ask your MSA or dining services staff about how they are planning to accommodate students for pre-dawn (suhoor) and breaking fast (iftar) meals. Accommodations may look like: allowing students to use the cafeteria after midnight, providing to-go meals, classroom and exam accommodations, etc.

NAVIGATING RELIGIOUS PRACTICES: PRAYER

Prayers may be an important part of your practice. Some campuses have designated prayer spaces, while others may not. If you don't have time to walk to the prayer room or masjid, you can choose to make prayer in your dorm or other common spaces, based on your comfortability. **Some prayer spaces may require you to bring a prayer mat per COVID guidelines, so it can be helpful to have it in your bag.** Making plans to attend Jummah prayers with friends can be a fun ritual on Fridays. If you are new to the community, you can make friends at Jummah.




SCENARIO 1: COVID


You and your roommate are looking to celebrate the end of finals week. They suggest that you host the gathering at your apartment. You agree on the condition that it will only be people who are in your pod, and know are COVID conscious. However, you discover your roommate invites people who are not in your pod and are known to have been traveling and partying. When asked why they did not check in with you about the invitee, your roommate argues that they are all vaccinated. How do you respond?

SCENARIO 2: PRIVACY & BOUNDARIES



You are a hijabi (wear head covering for religious observance) and living in a college dorm. You have asked your roommate not to have people over in the dorm room frequently as you want to take off your hijab while you are in the room. However, you notice that your roommate likes keeping the door open and often invite new friends. As a result, you find yourself sometimes even sleeping with your hijab or a hoodie on. How do you navigate the situation?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

-  Who are folks that you can include in your support system on and off-campus?

-  Try thinking of boundaries that are important for you when creating a safe and comfortable space for yourself. Be honest with yourself about what deal-breakers are and what are some softer boundaries. Write them out and discuss boundaries with your roommate(s). (Some examples may include: noise levels during exam periods and at night, hosting opposite gender guests, boundaries around being sexiled, shared spaces, and cleanliness of those spaces)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

-  How will you ensure that your boundaries with masks, social distancing, and other boundaries are communicated?
-  What are some ways you can communicate that you need alone time in your space so that you can recharge?

Reminders...
because sometimes you
just need to hear it

BACK TO SCHOOL WITH HEART

♥ Being nervous or anxious about this new transition in life is normal, perfectly okay, and something everyone experiences! Don't worry, soon you will come to adjust to your new surroundings and spaces.

♥ You are going to learn and grow throughout this year :)

♥ Although academics are important, you deserve rahma (compassion) and sabr (patience) during this difficult time

♥ Allah (SWT) is here for you and is going to take care of you always