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## Love shack! Time to move in together? <sup>[1]</sup>

Hi Alice,

How common is it for college couples to move in together while still being undergrads? My boyfriend and I have been dating for two years and plan on getting an apartment the following year. However, we worry that if we attend graduate schools in different areas, having to then live apart may harm our relationship. Also, how can I convince my parents to accept the idea (I have already tried having an open discussion but they reject the idea completely even though they love my boyfriend). His parents have already said that this would not be a problem. Also, my parents help finance my housing so it would be difficult to move in without their approval.

Thanks for your help,  
confused

### **Answer**

Dear confused,

Wow, sounds like you're in a complicated situation! Breaking these issues down into relationship logistics (are you and your partner ready to move in together?) and other logistics (your parents' support, your finances, not to mention where you might live) may help to simplify matters. Although it used to be rare, today it's fairly common for couples to live together before forming a more "official" union (marriage, a civil union, or other committed partnership), a trend that has been increasing since the 1960s. One recent study shows that about 66 percent of young adults are cohabitating or have cohabitated at some point in their lives. While the majority of these couples reported an intention to eventually get married, others cited financial and logistic reasons for moving in together, rather than plans to get hitched.

First, relationship logistics: Before you start apartment hunting, be sure to consider all of the reasons you may and may not want to move in with your partner. It may help to make a list of pros and cons — how would living with your partner be different, better, or worse than living with a different roommate or alone? You mention that you are concerned about going to graduate schools in different locations — are you moving in together to be closer to each other now? Does it make sense for your relationship as it is currently, or are you trying to prevent breaking up later? Moving in together can be a great source of comfort and enjoyment for some couples, but

some studies show that unmarried couples living together report more conflict and less commitment than unmarried couples who do not cohabit.

Onto the other logistics... Before you decide to move in together it's a good idea to [talk about finances](#) [2] and other household issues, since these are common sources of arguments and stress for cohabitating couples. To get started on the same page, it's best to confirm that you're both in agreement about who will pay what bills before you sign a lease. And, although it might be strange to talk about "what ifs," a conversation about what will happen financially (i.e., bills, lease, finding new roommates), if you break up, may not be a bad idea. You might also consider where you would be living with your partner. Will you have friends nearby? Will you be able to pursue school and your interests easily?

Since you mention that your parents are not completely supportive of this idea, and you rely on them for financial assistance, you may want to try to talk to them again. Be prepared to listen to their concerns. Are they worried about your grades? Are they morally against non-married couples living together? Although gaining their support on this might not be easy, it might be worth it to try. Their disapproval could put additional strain on your relationship with your partner, and not just financially. When you talk to your parents, you could start by outlining the pros and cons you identified in the list mentioned above. It's great that your parents already like your partner, but their resistance could indicate that they are concerned for you. Being prepared to talk about your concerns, and to listen to theirs, is a good way to demonstrate your maturity and to show them that you are serious about this living situation. That said, you might also want to prepare yourself to accept 'no' for an answer, at least at first. It may take time for your parents to support the idea of living with your partner, or they may never support it. In the latter case, consider that you still have options, such as living with your parents' decision, getting a job to earn money to pay your own rent, or continuing the discussion at a later date. For more advice on having tough conversations with parents, check out the [Go Ask Alice! Talking With Parents](#) [3] archive.

Finally, you asked about long-distance relationships. These can be complicated, but they are not doomed. Many couples make long-distance work, some for long periods of time. The [Go Ask Alice! Long Distance and On-Line Relationships](#) [4] archive has specific suggestions on how to make it work. By communicating openly with your partner and your parents, you'll be on your way to sorting out a living situation that makes everyone comfortable. Best of luck talking things through,

Alice!

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[Long distance relationships: Giving it a go!](#) [10]

[The up side of a long distance relationship](#) <sup>[11]</sup>

[Asking for space: Was it a mistake?](#) <sup>[12]</sup>

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