

Role Play Exercise #1

Landlord's Role

You and your spouse have owned this two family house for over 25 years. You live in the first and second floors. You have a tenant who lives in the third floor unit. This is a very nice house in a peaceful residential neighborhood. The tenant who lives upstairs is about 68 years old. The tenant has lived in the building for almost 20 years and has been a great friend to you... almost like a sibling or a parent. Years ago, when you and your spouse were having a difficult time and were separated for a while, the tenant was very kind and supportive to you. The tenant was a real comfort. You consider this tenant to be almost a family member.

The house needs to have new windows installed. New windows have already been installed on the first two floors. Your spouse, who is a carpenter, did the work. But the job fell a little behind schedule. The cool weather came along after only one window had been installed upstairs and the tenant asked your spouse to wait until the following summer before installing the remaining windows. Meanwhile, the windows are cluttering up the foyer in the common entranceway.

The tenant and your spouse have never gotten along with one another. Your spouse can be harsh sometimes... well, pretty often, actually. You also think your spouse may feel that the tenant sided against him/her when the tenant was so supportive to you during you and your spouse's separation. The tenant is also is upset because, when the first window was put in, your spouse came into the apartment when the tenant wasn't home and didn't clean up the construction mess for days.

You want to keep this tenant. It is April, now. Your spouse wants to install those darned windows and you would be very happy to get them out of the foyer. The tenant has to understand that he/she has to make some allowances for your spouse. Everything isn't going to be done just how and when the tenant wants. Your spouse will not come to mediation, but if the tenant is willing to give some, you are sure that can you can convince your spouse to make some allowances, as well.

Role Play Exercise #1

Tenant's Role

You are a tenant in the third floor apartment of a two family building. The owner's family occupies the bottom two floors. You have lived in this apartment and rented from the same family for almost 20 years. You are 68 years old. You have a very close relationship with one of the couple who owns the building, who is here today for mediation. A few years ago, when the owners were having some marital problems and separated for almost a year, your friend relied very heavily on you for emotional support. You were happy to provide this support, as your friend is very dear to you. You often think of her more as a daughter than a just a friend or landlord.

Your friend's spouse, on the other hand is a monster. This spouse is domineering and rude and, from the terrible noises you've heard coming from their apartment, you suspect that your friend's spouse may even hit your friend sometimes. You hate the spouse, but, out of respect to your friend, you rarely talk about your feelings about him. You feel that your friend's life is hard enough as it is.

Last summer the landlord started to install new windows all over the house. Your friend's spouse, a carpenter (actually, a very good one), did the work himself. They started in their apartment. By the time they got to your apartment, it was fall. While the first window was being installed, the cool air that came was just too much for you. In recent years, you have been terribly sensitive to cold and drafts. You asked that they wait until summer to install the remaining windows. They grudgingly agreed. Even your friend seemed to resent your request, as though you were trying to make his/her life harder!

Now, its early April and they want to start installing the windows again, but its still to cold. Last year, the rude carpenter showed up in your apartment to do the work without even knocking! You want to know ahead of time when work is going to be done and you want to be there at the time. Also, he/she took days to clean up the mess from the work. That can't be the case this time! Ever since last year, they have left the un-installed windows in the common entrance way. You think this is just to annoy you and remind you that you inconvenienced them.

You feel both angry and guilty. You know that you are a source of conflict between this couple. They don't know it, but you have applied for public elderly housing. You don't know if or when something might become available for you.