

Everyone paired off but you? Mingle to keep your cool and be the life of the party.

Stay chill all summer

Solutions for the season's prickliest predicaments **By Stephanie Booth**

THE STICKY SITUATION
You may be the only single person at your friend's pool party. How awkward!

THE FIX: ENTER SMILING
Feeling insecure? It's fine to acknowledge your discomfort, but then "talk yourself out of the negative thoughts as if you were reassuring a friend," suggests Yvonne Thomas, Ph.D., a psychologist in Los Angeles. (Try "Everyone seems glad to see me! No one is acting as if I'm pathetic.") Then throw yourself into the fun by asking guests how they met the host or anything to make a connection. "You'll feel less lonely and have a better time," Thomas says.

THE STICKY SITUATION
Your beach-bound colleagues duck out early every Friday afternoon.

THE FIX: SPEAK YOUR MIND
Instead of fuming in your empty office, take the slackers aside privately, without placing blame, Thomas says. You might say, "I'm nervous about our finishing this project on time. Can we divvy up tasks so we don't fall behind?" People may still take summer hours, but at least everyone will know what each person needs to accomplish. Even better, when you've finished your part of the work, you might decide to enjoy the occasional early Friday, too. If you can't beat 'em, join 'em!

THE STICKY SITUATION
The cottage you rented sleeps three guests. Boy, will your fourth pal feel left out.

THE FIX: SHOW SOME EMPATHY
Don't keep the trip secret. If your friend gets wind of it, "you'll have to do *more* damage control," Thomas says. So give her a heads-up, then make a plan for a later date: "I'll be away this weekend, but let's go hiking when I'm back!" If she asks why you didn't include her, let her know it's not personal. ("Quarters are tight, and I'd rather spend time with you alone.") "The point is to reassure her that your friendship isn't in trouble," Thomas explains.

THE STICKY SITUATION
Your neighbor's all-night luau's leave you teed off—and deprived of shut-eye!

THE FIX: GO IN PEACE
Resist the temptation to pound on her door and rant—who knows how long she'll be living nearby? A better idea: The next time you notice a party gearing up, head over ASAP to negotiate before things get crazy. "Bring a peace offering, like wine," Thomas advises. Then mildly say that you've got to get up early, and, wow, noise carries! By the time you inquire, "Could you move it inside after 11?" you'll have wrangled yourself a good night's sleep sans scene making.