



Elephant in The Room Q & A

Trinity Area High School (DVSSP)
Fall 2022

**This document can also be accessed at <https://www.bloom365.org/faqs>

Resources:

For additional resources, please visit [bloom365.org/resources](https://www.bloom365.org/resources)

<p>BLOOM365 Peer Support Helpline</p>	<p>Text or call a BLOOM365 advocate for free, confidential support. Text/Call: 1-888-606-HOPE (4673) Monday-Friday from 3PM-9PM (MST)</p> <p>To reach a specific advocate directly, please feel free to contact our Helpline and tell us who you would like to speak to.</p>
<p>Domestic Violence Services of Southwestern PA (DVSSP)</p>	<p>24/7 Hotline www.peacefromdv.org/hotline WASHINGTON COUNTY: 800-791-4000 or 724-223-9190 GREENE COUNTY: 724-852-2463 FAYETTE COUNTY: 724-439-9500</p>
<p>Teen Lifeline</p>	<p>Text or call 602-248-TEEN (8336) for free, confidential support 24/7 relating to suicide, depression, bullying, or relationships.</p>
<p>National Teen Dating Violence Hotline</p>	<p>Text "LOVEIS" to 22522 24/7</p>
<p>National Domestic Violence Hotline</p>	<p>1-800-799-SAFE (7233)</p>
<p>National Sexual Assault Hotline</p>	<p>1-800.656.HOPE (4673)</p>
<p>Suicide Prevention Lifeline</p>	<p>988</p>

***Content Warning:** For some, Elephant in the Room Cards are places where they might disclose trauma, violence, or harm. We encourage you to proceed with caution if you have experienced power-based violence or abuse of any kind. If you need support, you can reach out to the Hotlines listed above.

Q: Student

A: BLOOM365 Advocate

Q: How would I know I am being used or they really love me?

A: This question is a bit outside of our area of expertise, but we'll do our best to answer! It can be helpful to keep the [Blooming and Wilting Flowers](#) in mind when considering if a relationship is genuine or not. If you feel that you are not receiving the type of love or affection that you'd like to, it might be helpful to talk to your partner about how you're feeling using "I" statements, typically following the format of "I feel (emotion) when (situation), can you/we (solution or compromise)? This type of communication can be beneficial in sharing how you're feeling without directly placing the blame on the other person and asking directly for your desired outcome. It can also be a good idea to remember your deal makers and deal breakers in a relationship— the things you definitely DO or definitely DO NOT want in a relationship or partner. If these things are happening persistently in the relationship and you're not feeling loved, or if changes are not made after using "I" statements and talking it out, it might be a good idea to consider whether this is a relationship that you want to continue. If you have additional questions or would like to talk more about this, feel free to reach out to a BLOOM365 or DVSSP advocate at the numbers listed above. We are here for you!

Q: my bf hit me

A: We are so sorry to hear that you've had this experience, and we're glad that you've reached out to share this with us. You are not alone, and support is available if you find that you'd like to talk more about this, or anything else that you're going through. You deserve to be treated with respect and kindness, and to feel safe in all of your relationships. To talk with an advocate, we encourage you to reach out to the DVSSP or BLOOM365 phone numbers listed above.

Q: What if I want my gf to ** me and she doesn't want to**

A: When it comes to any sexual act, it's important that all individuals involved consent to the activities happening. If someone is unsure if they want to consent to something, or if they definitely do not consent to something, it's important that their boundaries are respected and that they are not pressured or coerced into changing their mind. To talk more about consent, feel free to reach out to a DVSSP or BLOOM365 Advocate!

Q: my gf slapped me once

A: We are very sorry to hear that your girlfriend has slapped you. This experience was not your fault, and you deserve to be treated with respect and to be safe from violence in all of your relationships. If you'd like to talk more about this experience or anything else on your mind, we encourage you to reach out to a trusted adult or a DVSSP or BLOOM365 Advocate for additional support.

Q: How do I know that we are more than friends but we are friends with benefits?

A: This question is a bit outside of our area of expertise but we will try our best to answer! It can feel confusing when we are unsure of what type of relationship we have with another person. Asking the other person directly whether they see your relationship beyond friendship can be a way to start an open and honest conversation. Using “I” statements such as “I feel unsure about the status of our relationship, can we talk more about this?” can be a great place to start.

Q: I’m bored to death and want to go hit the gym

A: Going to the gym can be a great self-care and coping skill. We’re glad that you found an activity that works best for you!

Q: Why do I get yelled at during a program about abuse when I’m talking with my mom about one on the phone? What has society gone to?

A: That sounds like such a disorienting experience. We’re sorry to hear that incident happened. We hope you are able to continue to reach out to your mom for support and know that our DVSSP and BLOOM365 advocates are also here for you!

Q: two faced: based on an ex-friend of mine, she was very manipulative + jealous/possessive

A: Toxic friendships can be just as impactful as a toxic romantic relationship. We’re sorry that you experienced this with a friend you cared for and we’re glad to hear that you are no longer in a friendship that was unhealthy for you. We encourage you to be kind to yourself as you process the feelings that come up with the end of a friendship and to find ways to cope such as journaling or talking with trusted people that work best for you. If you would like to talk more or process this with another person, our DVSSP and BLOOM365 advocates are here to listen! Please feel free to reach out to us at the information above.

Q: Why do I feel jealous when my guy best friend talks to/about other girls to me?

A: Jealousy is a natural, human emotion. Most humans have felt or experienced jealousy. It is not necessarily a bad thing and like other emotions, they can be a tool to help us better understand how we’re feeling about ourselves or situations we may be in. Taking some time to understand where and why these jealous feelings arise using coping strategies such as journaling or talking to a trusted person can be helpful in figuring out why we may be feeling this way.

Q: What should I do if in school I’m getting made fun of for my preferred name?

A: We’re sorry to hear that you are experiencing such dismissive behavior regarding your preferred name. Your identity and the name you choose for yourself is not a joke and is deserving of respect. If there are trusted adults at your school that you feel comfortable talking to regarding this, we encourage you to reach out to them for support in navigating this.

Q: I was in an unhealthy relationship in the past and I’m worried I’m gonna adapt those traits onto my boyfriend. What should I do to make sure that doesn’t happen?

A: Being self-reflective and aware of our unhealthy behaviors and remaining committed to doing the work to change this behavior are skills that can be supportive in disrupting unhealthy patterns. Changing unhealthy behaviors can be a daunting task but with tools such as the [Blooming and Wilting Flowers](#) and reaching out for additional support from a trusted professional such as a counselor or advocate, we can turn unhealthy wilted flowers into blooming healthy ones. Our DVSSP and BLOOM365 advocates are here to offer any support or resources you may want or need - you can reach out to us at the information above.

Q: My boyfriend hit me. I'm scared to leave him, no I'm not joking b/c this class I'm being serious. IDK how to leave

A: We are so sorry to hear that you have experienced this physical harm and are feeling afraid to leave your boyfriend. What you have experienced is not your fault and you deserve to be treated with respect and to be safe from violence in all of your relationships. Leaving an abusive relationship can be a difficult and scary thing to do. If you would like to talk more about this or would like to create a safety plan, we encourage you to reach out to a DVSSP or BLOOM365 advocate at the information above. You are not alone and there are resources and support available for you.

Q: My biological dad ripped me away from my step brother when he was drunk. My step brother was trying to protect me. My step brother died in a car crash 3 years ago. I also haven't seen my dad in almost a year. My step mom just left him and his drinking has gotten bad again and I'm scared to see him

A: We are sorry to hear about the passing of your step brother and what you have experienced with your dad. Being around a family member who engages in harmful behavior or has intense substance use issues can be a stressful and sometimes isolating experience. We encourage you to reach out for support from trusted people in your life and to take some time to find healthy coping skills or strategies that work for you. Spending time with those you love and trust and sharing what you're going through with them can make you feel more supported and less alone. Other coping skills like writing in a journal, yoga, joining a new sports team or club, or simply spending time outside can also be helpful. Our advocates are also here to offer support. Please feel free to reach out to us at the information above.

Q: If I do not feel comfortable coming out to my parents, what should I do? I know they might support me and I don't think I will ever want to. But I feel bad for not wanting to.

A: Thank you for being brave enough to share this with us and reaching out for help. Coming out can be a scary process for many people. You aren't alone if you're feeling worried, anxious, or afraid. Remember that there's no wrong way or right time to come out. It's your decision, and no one else's. There can be positives to coming out to the people around us such as letting close people in your life know about an important part of you. However, there are also some risks to coming out, especially if you worry that your friends and family might not be accepting. The most important thing is for you to stay safe, and know that any negative reactions your friends or parents might have are not your fault. Coming out may be a process and can take time. Some great resources that you may find helpful are the [Trevor Project's Coming Out Handbook](#). If you'd like to talk more about this, we encourage you to reach out to the resources listed above. You are not alone!

Q: How do I tell if I'm just a friend and nothing else?

A: Communication is a key component of a healthy relationship; sometimes the best way to know how someone feels about us is to ask them! If you'd like to talk more about this or anything else on your mind, feel free to reach out to a BLOOM365 or DVSSP Advocate for support.

Q: How do I get out of a funk with my boyfriend?

A: This question is a bit outside of our area of expertise. Communication is an important part of healthy relationships; it might be helpful to talk with your boyfriend about how you're feeling and ask him what he thinks could be helpful. You both know your relationship best! It could be helpful to have a conversation using "I" statements to discuss how you're feeling and what you'd both like the solutions or compromises to be. If you feel that things could be unhealthy or abusive, please know that support is available. Feel free to reach out to a BLOOM365 or DVSSP advocate for additional resources or information.

Q: How do I stop my overthinking?

A: This question is a bit outside of our area of expertise, but we'll do our best to answer! Sometimes it can be helpful to write our thoughts down in a journal or even in your phone's notes app. If you're comfortable, it can also be helpful to share our thoughts and concerns with someone close to you that you trust. We also encourage you to engage in self-care activities that help you to feel mentally and physically refreshed. If you'd like to talk more about this, feel free to reach out to a DVSSP or BLOOM365 Advocate for additional support.

Q: My girlfriend won't let me get a buzz cut is this a sign of dating abuse?

A: It can be helpful to consider the [Blooming and Wilting flowers](#) to determine if a relationship is healthy or unhealthy. Agency and equity are important components of a healthy relationship; if you feel that your relationship is interfering with your agency, that could be a sign of dating abuse. It's also important to respect our partners' boundaries in relationships, including their deal makers and deal breakers. If a haircut is super important to your girlfriend, it's possible this could be a strong boundary for her and could be a deal breaker. It's up to you and your girlfriend if you want to talk through the situation and discuss how you're both feeling using "I" statements and discussing what a solution or compromise could be. If you'd like to talk more about this situation or your relationship, we encourage you to reach out to a BLOOM365 or DVSSP Advocate for additional support.

Q: What do I do? I'm being sexually harassed at school

A: We are so sorry to hear that you are experiencing this. What you are going through is not your fault and you deserve to feel safe at school. If there is a trusted adult at your school like a teacher or school counselor that you feel comfortable with, we strongly encourage you to reach out to them for support in addressing this issue. It could also be helpful to talk to another person, such as an advocate, about what you're experiencing. Advocates from organizations such as RAINN, DVSSP, and BLOOM365 are here to offer confidential, non-judgemental support to you. You can reach out to us at the contact information listed above. You are not alone and there are people who are here for you!

Q: What should I do if i'm showing bad behaviors at time when I can't control it coming out because I'm upset?

A: When intense emotions arise, it can be hard at the moment to find healthy ways to cope with it. Taking time to identify our emotions and the situations or circumstances that trigger certain emotions can be a great place to start in coping with emotions in healthier ways. Coping skills such as journaling, taking a break from a stressful situation, or even listening to your favorite music can be supportive in moving through overwhelming emotions. Take some time to find what works best for you and we encourage you to reach out to an advocate or mental health professional such as a school counselor if you are finding it difficult to control your emotions on your own. Our BLOOM365 and DVSSP advocates are also here to offer support and additional resources, please feel free to reach out to us at our contact information above.

Q: If I realize that I am perpetrating controlling or abusive behaviors and tendencies, what would be good ways to help myself get out of my cycle of doing that? How can I teach myself to do other, healthier things, and unlearn the unhealthy behaviors?

A: It can feel overwhelming when you realize that you have internalized and/or perpetrated abusive behaviors. Asking for help can be a daunting thing to do and we're glad that you reached out. Access to resources such as an advocate, a mental health professional, or tools like [Blooming and Wilting Flowers](#) along with a commitment to self-reflection and change can be helpful in ending the cycle of controlling and abusive behaviors. You don't have to figure this out on your own and having a strong support network can be important in this process. We encourage you to reach out whenever you need support, guidance, or encouragement. Please feel free to reach out to our DVSSP and BLOOM365 advocates for additional resources and support at the information listed above.