



Elephant in The Room Q & A

Washington 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: Thank you for teaching us about this. It helps me

A: Thank you for sharing your kind words with us! We're glad you felt that the 7 Doses were helpful. If you'd like to talk more about anything you learned or any questions you might have, feel free to reach out to a DVSSP or BLOOM365 Advocate at the phone numbers listed above for additional support or information.

Q: When you get sexual assault how do you get through it when it's been about 6 ½ years

A: We are so sorry to hear that you've had that experience and we want you to know that you are not alone. We are glad that you reached out for support while navigating something so personal and challenging. Everyone's journey of healing is different, and the journey can even look different over time. Some individuals find that engaging in self-care or talking to a counselor/therapist/social worker can be helpful in processing an experience like sexual assault. Sometimes it can be helpful to find outlets that help us to feel safe or more at peace; this could be spending time with friends or loved ones, engaging in an activity like yoga or taking an art class, or even creating playlists to listen to can all be helpful in processing tough emotions from those past experiences. We encourage you to try some of these ideas or other ones that you're interested in to see what feels best for you. If you'd like to talk more about this or any other questions that might come up, feel free to reach out to a DVSSP or BLOOM365 Advocate at the numbers listed above. We are here for you!

Q: What do you do if a parents verbally abusing you? Is there a limit to what they can & can't do towards their kids?

A: Navigating parents being verbally abusive can be especially challenging, and can be just as harmful and difficult to deal with as other types of abuse. Some parents have different parenting or discipline styles, but there is never an acceptable reason to be abusive towards anyone, even your own child.

According to PAFSA, "Child abuse in Pennsylvania is defined as when an individual acts or fails to prevent something that causes harm or a high likelihood of harm to a child under the age of 18. This harm can take many forms, such as bodily injury, serious mental injury, or sexual abuse or exploitation."

For more information on what constitutes as abuse, check out these links:

- 1) <https://pafsa.org/what-is-child-abuse-neglect/>
- 2) <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/CFDOCS/LEGIS/LI/consCheck.cfm?txtType=HTM&ttl=23&div=00.&chpt=063.&CFID=460495332&CFTOKEN=29582286>

If you or someone you know is experiencing this, we want you to know that we are here to support you and you are not alone. If you're comfortable, we encourage you to talk to a trusted adult about what's going on so that you can get some additional support in the situation. You can also reach out to a BLOOM365 or DVSSP Advocate to talk more about a specific situation or any additional

questions you might have. It can also be helpful to try spending time practicing self-care; this might include taking a walk outside, spending time with friends or loved ones that make you feel safe and cherished, engaging in an art activity or physical activity, or even journaling to process big emotions or situations as they come up. If you feel that a situation is unsafe or that you could be in danger, we encourage you to contact a trusted adult or 911 as soon as you can. Please feel free to reach out to the numbers listed above for more support, we are here for you!

Q: The part I did not like today was the S/A because it just reminds me of the past and it's triggering

A: We are very sorry to hear that the material in the 7 Doses was triggering for you. If you or someone you know has experienced S/A, we want you to know that you are not alone and support is available if you need or want it. We encourage you to practice self-care both during and after each lesson of the Doses; this could look like taking a break and excusing yourself from the classroom, talking to a DVSSP or BLOOM365 Advocate about those feelings or experiences, taking some time to zone out or doodle/draw on a paper, or even practicing some breathing exercises if that's something you find helpful to feel re-centered when triggered. Everyone's journey with healing from traumatic events can be a bit different, and that's OK! If you'd like to talk about any past experiences or additional questions you might have, we encourage you to reach out to a DVSSP or BLOOM365 Advocate at the numbers listed above for additional support.

Q: I was in a relationship with this one person he put his hands on me & got me pregnant & I had a miscarriage idk if he fell some type of way about it. But he acted like he didn't care. But now that we're not together he talks on my name, calls me out my name. But now he's telling everyone that we're together etc. But when he sees me he says a lot of rude stuff. I do miss him but I don't miss what he did to me & I don't know what to do about that. I don't know what to say for him to leave me alone. Should I get back with him or leave him alone? The relationship wasn't the greatest but he made me happy.

A: Thank you for trusting us with such an intensely personal and vulnerable experience. We are glad that you reached out. We are so sorry to hear that you are being treated this way by a person that you care about. You are the expert in your own life, so only you can make that decision if you should stay or leave. However, if you are concerned about your safety and you find that the bottom 5 red flags from the [red flags checklist](#) are occurring, it could be helpful to take some time to consider if having a relationship with this person is something you want to continue. The process of figuring out if a relationship is abusive and choosing to leave is an extremely difficult one. There are barriers that can make leaving an abusive relationship difficult such fear, love, dependency, and insecurity. Think of these barriers as hooks. It's not easy to unhook them all at once and we understand that it can be difficult to leave an abusive relationship, especially when we have hope that the abuser will change or eventually stop. You are not alone as you figure this out and we encourage you to reach out to a DVSSP or bloom365 advocate for additional support. We are here for you!

Q: I've been in an abusive relationship before he would act different around his friends/siblings for example. When we were alone he would be all affectionate but when he got around people he wouldn't talk to me, he would call me out my name, and this one time his brother was flirting with me

and I denied him and D came out and he just got on top of me and started choking me & this one time we were just laying down and I guess he just snapped and hit me in my face and gave me a black eye

A: We are sorry that you went through an abusive relationship with someone that you loved and trusted. We are glad that you are no longer in that unsafe situation. Thank you for trusting us with this experience and sharing what you went through. While it can be triggering to revisit traumatic experiences, talking about what we have gone through can be helpful in our healing journeys. You are not alone as you process this experience and move through your healing journey. If you would like a listening and empathetic ear or access to additional resources, DVSSP and bloom365 advocates are here to offer any support you may want and need. We are here for you!

Q: How do you know if you really have good self-esteem or if you just tell yourself that to feel better

A: You are not alone in feeling this way. Building high self-esteem and a loving relationship with ourselves can be a hard thing to do. But, knowing that you want to learn how to have better self-esteem and that you can improve is a great place to start. It can be normal to have times where you feel good about yourself and other times where you don't. It can be helpful to remember that having moments of insecurity does not negate the work that you have already done to create a kind relationship to yourself. We encourage you to continue building healthy self-esteem by remembering the things you love about yourself (your strengths, aspirations, personality/physical characteristics, etc.), writing these things down and having them easily accessible, and spending time doing activities that make you feel happy and confident.

Q: Don't like the consent dose because it was triggering for me

A: We want you to know that you are not alone, and we thank you for letting us know how you are feeling. We recognize that this material can be difficult to talk about and can be triggering when you have experienced these things. We encourage you to do whatever you need to do to take care of yourself. This might include practicing forms of self care such as journaling, listening to music, or reaching out to a trusted person about how you're feeling. Giving yourself time to process feelings and emotions is important. We all cope with things in different ways and at different speeds. Find what works for you and please know that DVSSP and BLOOM365 advocates are always available to talk and we'd be happy to talk with you if you need support.

Q: How do you heal from sexual assault

A: Sexual assault can be a very traumatic experience and is never the fault of the survivor. How a survivor processes and reacts to their experience is deeply unique and personal experience. Healing from sexual assault will look different to each survivor. We encourage your partner to reach out to an advocate from RAINN to receive free non-judgemental support and resources for navigating such a traumatic experience. DVSSP and BLOOM365 advocates are also here to offer support in the healing journey, you can find more information at the information above.

Q: Is being autistic and having anger issues the start of abuses

A: Having autism or anger issues does not mean that someone will automatically be abusive. Engaging in abusive and/or controlling behaviors is an intentional choice that is not linked to a specific identity or disorder. Anger issues that have not been worked through with anger management skills or support from a mental health professional can lead to someone engaging in abusive behaviors. If a person who is engaging in abusive behavior is open to being self-reflective and seeing their behaviors are harmful, they can make the choice to change that behavior with the support of a counselor, social worker, advocate, or other trusted adult. If you'd like to talk more about this, DVSSP and BLOOM365 advocates are here to offer support and resources - you can reach out to us at the information above.

Q: Thank you! I enjoyed having you guys in our class!

A: Thank you for sharing such kind words with us! We're so glad to hear that you enjoyed having us as much as we enjoyed being in your class! :)

Q: Why do boys S/A girls when you thought he was a good guy. Also what is boys mind are telling them to do it to a girl. Also I was S/A 5 years ago like I remember what happened but some days I don't remember because I never really healed from it I just try to forget it. But the more you remember it gets worse because it just repeats in your head

A: We are so sorry to hear that you have experienced sexual assault. Thank you for trusting us with such a deeply personal and vulnerable experience. What you went through was not your fault and you are not alone as you process what has happened. We encourage you to reach out to an advocate from RAINN to receive free non-judgemental support and resources for navigating such a traumatic experience. DVSSP and BLOOM365 advocates are also here to offer support in the healing journey; you can find more information by calling/texting the phone numbers above. Regarding why sexual assault occurs, there are many social norms that contribute to sexual assault/violence being normalized among people. The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape has several [online resources](#) with more information on the prevalence of and risk factors relating to sexual assault. When we engage in productive conversations that break down some of these unhealthy social norms about sexual assault/violence, we can work together to end cycles of violence.

Q: Is it okay to have a relationship with someone 18+ as a minor?

A: There are limitations around the legality of relationships between a minor and an adult who is 18+. Age of consent laws vary between states but in Pennsylvania, youth who are 16 and older can consent to sexual relationships with those who are 18+ while those who are 13 and under cannot. You can find additional information [here](#). Age and experience can create power imbalances in relationships. We encourage youth who are in relationships with a legal adult and are concerned about the relationship to reach out to an advocate or other trusted adult for support.

