



# Elephant in The Room Q & A

Charleroi (DVSSP)  
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\*\*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><b>BLOOM365 Peer Support Helpline</b></p>	<p><b>Text or call a BLOOM365 advocate for free, confidential support.</b>  <b>Text/Call: 1-888-606-HOPE (4673)</b>  <b>Monday-Friday from 3PM-9PM (MST)</b></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><b>Domestic Violence Services of Southwestern PA (DVSSP)</b></p>	<p><b>24/7 Hotline</b>  <a href="http://www.peacefromdv.org/hotline">www.peacefromdv.org/hotline</a>  <b>WASHINGTON COUNTY: 800-791-4000 or 724-223-9190</b>  <b>GREENE COUNTY: 724-852-2463</b>  <b>FAYETTE COUNTY: 724-439-9500</b></p>
<p><b>Teen Lifeline</b></p>	<p><b>Text or call 602-248-TEEN (8336) for free, confidential support 24/7 relating to suicide, depression, bullying, or relationships.</b></p>
<p><b>National Teen Dating Violence Hotline</b></p>	<p><b>Text "LOVEIS" to 22522 24/7</b></p>
<p><b>National Domestic Violence Hotline</b></p>	<p><b>1-800-799-SAFE (7233)</b></p>
<p><b>National Sexual Assault Hotline</b></p>	<p><b>1-800.656.HOPE (4673)</b></p>
<p><b>Suicide Prevention Lifeline</b></p>	<p><b>988</b></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: I'm being emotional abused at home and I'm getting tired**

**A:** We are so sorry that you are going through this at home. We're glad you reached out to us to share this experience. Living in an emotionally abusive home environment can be a very stressful and sometimes isolating experience. We encourage you to continue reaching out for support 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, practicing 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 a DVSSP or BLOOM365 Advocate at the phone numbers listed above. We are here for you!

**Q: How are you sure you are in an abusive relationship?**

**A:** There are a few ways that we can identify if we are in an abusive relationship. Some tools provided by bloom365 that can be helpful in identifying this are the [blooming/wilting flowers](#) and the [red flags checklist](#). If you find that your relationship has more wilting than blooming flowers and/or you are experiencing any of the red flags listed on the checklist, it is likely that your relationship may be unhealthy and we encourage you to reach out to an advocate at the DVSSP or BLOOM365 phone numbers above. We are here for you!

**Q: Sorry I didn't talk. I thought it would hurt.**

**A:** 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 take care of yourself during these sessions which might include stepping out of the classroom, choosing not to talk or share, or practicing some other form of self-care. We support whatever choice feels best for you at the moment. If you would like to talk more about what you're experiencing, our advocates are here for you. Please reach out to a BLOOM365 or DVSSP advocate at the number listed above.

**Q: How do you get your dad to realize my OCD? I see a therapist for is more than cleaning and why I'm afraid to sleep if he's not home?**

**A:** Realizing that our mental health is in a precarious place can be an unsettling feeling and it can feel scary or difficult to share our experiences with others. Reaching out to people and/or organizations who address mental health could be a useful tool for you and your dad to understand your experiences better. This could look like reaching out to a school social worker/counselor or an advocate with the [National Alliance on Mental Illness of Pennsylvania](#), DVSSP or bloom365. You are never alone and we encourage you to reach out if you are having trouble coping with OCD symptoms.

**Q: What exactly is going on if I think I am abusing my own mental state in order to make sure that my friends and family feel better than I do?**

**A:** It sounds as though the wellbeing of your friends and family is really important to you. That is such a loving trait to have and your loved ones are very lucky to have you in their lives. However, your mental and emotional wellbeing is important too. If you find that you are neglecting or ignoring your own mental and emotional needs in order to take care of others, it may be helpful to take a step back and fill up your own cup. This could look like sharing honestly with your loved ones about how you're doing, reaching out and talking with a professional about your mental and emotional wellbeing, or using coping skills such as journaling or listening to music. You can also reach out to a DVSSP or bloom365 advocate for support. You are not alone and your mental wellbeing is important!

**Q: How do you handle any relationship if you are asexual or aromantic**

**A:** There is a diversity in what relationships can look like for all people. When you are asexual or aromantic, relationships might look different for you than others who are not asexual or aromantic. Talking with others who have similar experiences to you can be helpful in understanding how to navigate relationships in a way that works best for you. Organizations like [The Trevor Project](#) offer a lot of different resources for understanding and supporting asexuality - we encourage you to take a look at what they have to offer. To talk more about this, feel free to reach out to a DVSSP or BLOOM365 advocate!

**Q: What do you do if you can't tell someone they hurt you?**

**A:** Having the opportunity to communicate how you feel with someone who has caused you harm can be a way to get closure and move forward. However, for a variety of reasons, there are times where communicating directly with the other person isn't possible. Finding other ways to receive closure can be helpful. This could look like talking with someone about what you've experienced, journaling, or writing a letter to the other person that you do not actually send can be ways of getting closure without communicating directly to the other person. Take some time to find what works for you and do know you can always reach out to a DVSSP or bloom365 advocate to talk more about this.

**Q: I love someone in this class and they don't know it. But I haven't talked to him in a year**

**A:** This is a bit outside of our expertise but we understand that it can sometimes be nerve-wracking to be in a room with someone that we have feelings for. Talking about our feelings can be helpful and we encourage you to find ways to express your feelings that work for you. If you have additional questions relating to healthy or unhealthy relationships, or any similar topics, feel free to reach out to a BLOOM365 or DVSSP Advocate for more support.

**Q: How do you fix negative relationships with friends? If they pry into your private life and then tell everyone else, it's toxic, right? I don't want to lose them, but I don't think we are really friends anymore. And how do I not feel like their family will hate me because I don't like them anymore?**

**A:** We are sorry to hear that you are experiencing this with those you consider friends. As with romantic relationships, you are deserving of blooming friendships that are built off agency and equity, where both

parties feel equal. If we are in friendships that feel negative, where our boundaries and privacy aren't respected, or challenges are unable to be fixed by using "I" statements - it may be a good idea to take some time to think about whether these are friendships that you want to continue. You don't have to process this alone. If you would like to talk more about this, DVSSP and bloom365 advocates are here to listen. You can reach out to us at the HelpLine information above!

**Q: So, I tried to confide in my step-mom about my OCD that I am medically diagnosed with. My OCD likes to convince me that I did something bad when I did not. And she told me that I don't have OCD bc it's not cleaning. How do I make her understand? I mean at least I can confide with my mom. I don't know. My dad's side of the fam doesn't know how to deal with mental illness. Especially when they say oh I have this, when they don't makes me sad. I wish they could see my struggle. Bro I don't like when ppl normalize things that are not OK. Especially when ppl blame people for something they didn't do**

**A:** We're so sorry to hear that you are experiencing this. It can feel isolating when others are dismissive or uninformed about our mental health struggles. We're glad that you have a safe and understanding space with your mom to share about your experiences with OCD. If your step-mom is open to it, it could be helpful to explore resources such as the [National Alliance on Mental Illness of Pennsylvania](#) to gain a better understanding of the experiences of those with mental illnesses. Regardless of your step-mom's ability to understand your struggles, your experiences are valid and important. We encourage you to reach out to advocates from NAMI, DVSSP, bloom365 or a social group with others with OCD for additional support. You are not alone and your experiences are important!

**Q: Why when men get hurt, it's the man's fault? Why when women get hurt it's the woman's fault? Why are victims blamed first?**

**A:** Victim-blaming is when survivors/victims of violence are blamed for what has happened to them instead of the blame being shifted to the one who has caused harm. Victim-blaming can be a huge barrier to getting help for survivors/victims. There are quite a few reasons as to why people engage in victim-blaming that are shared within [this article by VeryWellMind](#). Understanding why people engage in victim-blaming behavior can help us in working together to address and challenge it when we see it. When we work together to challenge victim-blaming, we can create a world where victims feel empowered to access the services and resources they need.

**Q: If my friend threatens me with taking their own life, or talks about it a lot is that abusive towards me or towards themselves?**

**A:** We are sorry to hear that you are experiencing this with your friend and we want you to know that when someone makes threats of ending their lives, it is not your fault. However, when anyone makes threats or actually follows through with hurting themselves or others, it is very important to take these threats and actions seriously. In a situation where someone is threatening to or has already hurt themselves or someone else, the best thing to do is call 911. We encourage you to talk to a trusted adult such as a school counselor or social worker, a parent, teacher, and/or a DVSSP or BLOOM365 advocate for additional support. You do not have to navigate this alone.

**Q: I feel bad all the time**

**A:** We're sorry to hear that you are feeling bad. We're glad that you reached out to us. If you are finding that you are experiencing persistent feelings of loneliness, sadness, or despair or other symptoms of depression, please know that help is available. Some signs of experiencing depression can include: Loss of interest in activities previously enjoyed, withdrawal from friends/family, sleeping too little or in excessive amounts, and sometimes more drastic changes in behavior. If these symptoms are present for most of the day over more than two weeks, this may be a sign that it's more serious than just feeling sad. We do work alongside a few organizations that specifically help youth experiencing depression, including Teen Lifeline and the Suicide Prevention Lifeline. You can contact them at the numbers above for additional support relating to depression. School social workers and counselors are also a great source for information on dealing with depression. BLOOM365 and DVSSP advocates are also available at the number above if you'd like additional support or resources. We are here for you!

**Q: Here's the thing I don't know what I would do until I'm in that situation it's hard to tell**

**A:** It is hard to know or to plan for intense situations such as experiencing abuse or other toxic behaviors. We as humans have a variety of different ways we react to traumatic situations that can be influenced by personal temperament, experience, or even the society and cultures we grow up in. Having the knowledge of how to identify abusive or harmful behavior and where we can access support can help us to feel empowered to advocate for ourselves.

**Q: Why am I not a likeable person? I cant talk to women????**

**A:** We're sorry to hear that you are feeling as though you are not a likeable person. Building healthy self-esteem and having confidence in who we are can be a tough thing to do. Our self-esteem can include the thoughts, feelings, and opinions we have about ourselves. That means self-esteem and how we view ourselves isn't a fixed thing. Our thoughts and feelings about ourselves can change with time and work. Focusing on the things we love about ourselves can be one helpful way to lift our self-esteem. We encourage you to take a moment to remember the things you love about yourself (your strengths, aspirations, personality/physical characteristics, etc.). Writing these things down and spending time doing the things that make you happy can be helpful tools in building up our self esteem. Take some time to find what works for you and know you aren't alone in feeling this way!