



Elephant in The Room Q & A

Mountain Ridge High School Fall/Winter 2020

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

Resources:

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

<p>BLOOM365 Advocacy Line and Support Groups</p>	<p>Text or call a BLOOM365 advocate for free, confidential support. Text/Call: 1-888-606-HOPE (4673) Advocacy Line Hours of Operation: Monday-Friday from 9AM-9PM (MST)</p> <p>To reach a specific advocate directly, please feel free to contact our advocacy line and tell us who you would like to speak to.</p> <p>Join us on Monday, Tuesday, and/or Thursday evenings for one of our drop-in support groups (Holidays excluded)! Visit bloom365.org/peersupport for specific dates and times.</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>1-800-273-TALK (8255)</p>

Q: Student

A: BLOOM365 Advocate

Q: What is it; Q: What is the elephant in the room?

A: Our "Elephant in the Room" cards provide a safe and confidential space for asking questions, sharing thoughts and reaching out for help. To talk directly with an advocate, please reach out at the number listed above.

Q: What is the reason for abuse, why do ppl do it

A: Sometimes people witness abuse growing up and start to believe this is what is normal (taught abusive behavior). Other potential root causes for why someone may abuse another person are those other "root causes" we explored in doses 3 and 4: Rigid beliefs in unhealthy gender norms, social acceptance, oppression, etc. While these root causes increase one's risk for perpetuating abuse in their own relationships, it's important to recognize that everyone still has a choice in whether they are going to treat someone with equity and agency or power and control. If you'd like to talk more about this or anything else, feel free to reach out to a BLOOM365 Advocate at the number listed above.

Q: How do you get involved in this

A: If you would like to stay involved, we encourage you to sign up for our Peer Advocate Crew (PAC!) You can read more about PAC and the opportunities available in your workbook, or at www.bloom365.org. To get involved or for more information, please email bhag2030@bloom365.org or reach out through our Advocacy Line (1-888-606-4673) or Instagram (@bloom365pac).

Q: Can a situation like this happen to anyone.; Q: Can the idiom "the elephant in the room " happen to anyone?; Q: Could something like this happen to anyone; Can something elephant in the room happen to anyone?

A: While there are some factors that might increase one's chances of exhibiting abusive behavior, these situations generally can happen to anyone. Relationships can become toxic when one person believes they have the right to gain and maintain power & control over another person. Choosing to have power and control over someone else or to have equity and agency in our relationships is a deliberate choice that we all make. People do not usually begin a relationship as overtly abusive or controlling. There is a gradual progression of power and control. It can first show up as possessive jealousy or even in comments about your choice of clothing or friends. Oftentimes if we were raised in an environment where abuse was present, the early signs/actions can be really tough to spot because they could be viewed as okay or normal (taught abusive behavior). Sometimes it takes direct education, like the 7-Dose BringLove365 curriculum or a friend's concern to notice what's really going on. In Doses 3 and 4, we explored additional root causes of abuse (taught abusive behavior, unhealthy gender norms, insecurity, etc.)

Q: What is considered abuse in a relationship? (Verbally)

A: Verbal abuse can take many forms such as put downs, humiliation and threats.

Both verbal and physical abuse are tactics a perpetrator may use to gain or maintain power and control over their partner. The two may occur simultaneously at times, but they are different. Verbal abuse typically involves yelling, screaming, rampaging, or refusing to talk. On the other hand, physical abuse can involve: Hitting, kicking, biting, shaking, pinching, pushing, pulling hair, choking, hitting with an object, threatening with a weapon, and/or threatening physical assault. Both have the same root causes, however, physical abuse includes all physical actions that hurt/violate the person; while verbal abuse consists of only abusive language. If you or someone you know is experiencing this, we encourage you to reach out for support. You are not alone!

Q: Why do the abusive dating partners want to have power and control over another human being?

A: There are a number of root causes that we explored during Doses 3 and 4 for why someone might choose to use power and control over someone else. Some people may be abusive to their partners because they were exposed to violence in their homes as a child and taught that this behavior was normal or acceptable. Rigid beliefs in gender norms can also play a role, and insecurity is another root cause. If someone lacks confidence, they may try to gain power or control over their partner in an attempt to feel better. Remember, though, that even though these root causes may increase one's risk of becoming a perpetrator, they still can make the deliberate choice to have relationships based in equity and agency. BLOOM365 and the BringLove365 program exists so that teens like yourself have the skills and knowledge of how to build and grow healthy relationships, in addition to the tools of what to do when you experience or witness any form of power-based violence (bullying, teen dating abuse, domestic violence, etc.). If you'd like to discuss this further, please reach out to our Advocacy Line at the number above for free, confidential support!

Q: How do you identify signs of being peer pressured into sex?

A: Communication and keeping boundaries is key in every blooming relationship. Saying no should be as simple as just, well, saying no. In reality, someone might feel pressured, guilty, manipulated, or coerced when they say no. Everyone deserves to have their boundaries respected. While we recommend using I-statements ("I feel ___ (emotion) when ____ (situation), can you/we please _____ (solution)?), it may not always be easy to use this technique.

Although "No" is such a simple word, saying no can be hard when you're saying it to someone you care about. Here are some tips on turning down sex/consent:

- Be confident and know what you want and what you do not want. Maybe you just want to kiss, maybe you just want to sit next to each other. Once you've thought about what you want, try to clearly state that.
- Say "no." You don't owe anyone, even someone you love, an explanation for why you don't want to do what they want you to do. You can explain if you want, but you don't have to.
- Tell them what you do want to do: kissing, touching, watching a movie together, etc.
- Be clear and direct. Look them in the eyes and use a serious tone of voice.

- You can also let them know that you really do like or love them, but you're just not ready for sex.

If your partner pressures you or threatens to break up with you because you don't consent, this is a sign that the relationship is unhealthy. If you would like to talk with a BLOOM365 advocate further, feel free to reach out to our number listed above.

Q: My friend really craves male attention and approval and because of that she lets guys walk all over her and she ends up really getting attached to them even if they are rude to her. I try to tell her that she shouldn't be letting that happen to her and she's gotten better, but I wish I could just show her that she's worth more and shouldn't need to do things just to please guys.

A: This sounds like a frustrating situation and I want to thank you for reaching out! It can be really difficult for us to watch our friends go through situations where we feel they aren't being treated right. It's important to remember in these situations that although we cannot force anyone to leave a relationship or situation we see as unfair, we can do our best to be supportive.

Here are some tips/things we can say to support a friend who is experiencing dating abuse:

- "I am here if you want to talk"
 - This lets them know that they are not alone and that we are there to support them
 - We want to try our best to reserve any judgement and avoiding trying to "fix" the situation
 - Again, it's important to remember that leaving unhealthy relationships can be very difficult and we cannot force a friend to leave an unhealthy relationship/situation
- "Is everything okay?"
 - It is definitely okay to let them know that you are concerned about them!
- "You deserve respect"
 - Help your friend realize their value and remind them that they deserve safety and respect. We can also make sure that we remind our friends of the things that we love and appreciate them.

These are just some of the ways that we can be supportive friends for those around us. If you are concerned about your friends safety or you want to learn more about how you can help them, you can always reach out to a BLOOM365 Peer Advocate at 1.888.606.HOPE (4673). You can also encourage them to reach out for support by providing them with resources like BLOOM365.

Q: Why do people that are being abused not just leave the relationship?

A: It's important to recognize that leaving an abusive relationship can be extremely difficult for a survivor. There are a lot of reasons why someone who is experiencing abuse in a relationship may not leave. They might have hope that the person will change, they truly love the person (most VISIBLE red flags don't occur until about 6 months into a relationship, when there is most likely already love and connection established), or maybe they don't even recognize that what is happening in that relationship is abuse. They also could have fear that if they do leave, their partner will hurt them or someone they

love, they don't know where they could go for help, or maybe their being pressured by their friends or family to stay in that relationship.

Even in healthy relationships, it can be difficult to Draw the Line and break-up. However, even if we remove all the barriers or reasons why someone might not break up and leave the relationship, the Power and Control of the perpetrator is still present, which is one of the biggest barriers that can even impact survivors after they leave the relationship.

Q: Why is it so hard for people to ask for consent?

A: This is a tough question to answer because each situation and individual are different. Some people might find it awkward or vibe-killing to stop and ask, or they're just unsure how to ask. Consent is so important because no one should ever be forced to do anything that they do not want to do. Consent is a huge part of freedom and all the rights that we have as individuals, and is required each and every single time an act of sex is initiated, whether this is in a long term relationship or not. So even if it's an uncomfortable thing to do, we encourage you to find a way that works for you to ask for consent and to give consent each and every time when it comes to sex.

Consent may look different for everyone, however, consent should look like FRIES:

- **Freely given.** Consenting is a choice you make without pressure, manipulation, or under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- **Reversible.** Anyone can change their mind about what they feel like doing, anytime. Even if you've done it before, and even if you're both naked in bed.
- **Informed.** You can only consent to something if you have the full story. For example, if someone says they'll use a condom and then they don't, there isn't full consent.
- **Enthusiastic.** When it comes to sex, you should only do stuff you WANT to do, not things that you feel you're expected to do.
- **Specific.** Saying yes to one thing (like going to the bedroom to make out) doesn't mean you've said yes to others (like having sex).

If you want to talk more about this topic or anything else, feel free to reach out to an advocate at the number listed above for free, confidential support. We are here for you!

Q: Why do gender stereotypes still happen?

A: Unhealthy gender norms are very common in our society. This idea goes back many years and historically it has been passed from generation to generation. We know that rigid belief in unhealthy gender norms contributes to power and control in our relationships. Sometimes stereotypes or norms are in place because society wants to limit the rights of a certain group of people. We can engage in productive conversations that break down some of these unhealthy gender stereotypes to work together for justice and equality.

Q: Schools should probably help kids who have been put through abuse and violence

A: We agree, school staff play an important role in supporting students who have experienced abuse or violence. Counselors, teachers, and other school staff are responsible for supporting students that need help. In Arizona, teachers are also mandated reporters, which means that they are required by law to report suspected abuse or neglect. If you have questions about this or would like to talk more about this, feel free to reach out to our advocacy line at the number listed above.