



Elephant in The Room Q & A

Barry Goldwater High School
Spring 2022

****This document can also be accessed at www.bloom365.org/faqs**

Resources:

For additional resources, please visit bloom365.org/resources

<p>BLOOM365 HelpLine</p>	<p>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>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>
<p>ACESDV: Arizona Sexual and Domestic Violence Helpline</p>	<p>Call: (602) 279-2980 or (800) 782-6400 SMS Text: (520) 720-3383 Arizona Relay Service 7-1-1 Monday-Friday, 8:30a – 5:00p with extended hours on Tuesday 8:30a – 7:00p</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 does one deal with her or his

A: We are not sure what this question means, but we would love to better understand how you're feeling and what you're asking! If you would like to talk more about this question, please reach out to us at the information above.

Q: Is it normal to crush on all your friends

A: Having a crush can be a normal and common feeling for a lot of people. It is not a bad or abnormal experience, but we should still take the time to process our feelings, practice open communication with others, and to respect and affirm other people's boundaries. If you'd like to talk more about this, we encourage you to reach out to our HelpLine for free, confidential, non-judgmental support.

Q: Is abuse contagious

A: Thank you for asking this important question. Abuse is not contagious, but it can be learned or taught/modeled from others or the environments we spend time in. With the support of trusted people and other resources, abusive behaviors can be unlearned. By educating ourselves and others about abuse, we can all work together to end abuse and create blooming relationships!

Q: What came first A) chicken B) egg C) neither D) it's a loop

A: What about all of the above? 😊

Q: Have you ever went through it?

A: All of us at BLOOM365 have different reasons for why we chose to be involved with BLOOM365. Some of us have experienced or witnessed dating abuse or domestic violence in our own lives or the lives of our friends, while others have not. BLOOM365 was founded as the Purple Ribbon Council back in 2006 by Donna Bartos, a survivor of teen dating abuse. You can watch the story of her story [here](#). You can also read more about the history of bloom365 and how we came to be at www.bloom365.org/story.

Q: How can you find help if it's parents being the emotional/mental abuser?

A: Being at home with parents who engage in abusive behavior can be a very stressful and sometimes isolating experience. We encourage anyone in this type of situation to reach out to a trusted adult, such as a school counselor or BLOOM365 Advocate for support. It can be helpful 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 help you feel more supported and less alone. Other

types of coping skills can be writing in a journal, yoga, joining a new sports team or club, or simply spending time outside. Our advocates are also here to help, please feel free to reach out to us at our HelpLine. We are here for you!

Q: Someone I know is in a relationship where their significant other tries to kill herself when they try to break up.

A: We are so sorry to hear that someone you know is going through that. When anyone makes threats or actually follows through with hurting themselves or others, it is very important to take these threats and actions seriously. Someone threatening to kill another person or themselves if the relationship ends is one of the Top 5 Red Flags that increases a person's risk of being seriously hurt or even killed. 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 this person to talk to a trusted adult such as a school counselor or social worker, a parent, teacher, or a BLOOM365 advocate for additional support.

Q: My friend ____ needs help. She's in a mentally abusive relationship and won't leave it. I don't want to be involved, I just want something to give her a signal that she needs help

A: Thank you for reaching out. We can tell that you care about your friend very much and that is such a thoughtful trait to have. It's important to remember that we cannot make people get help if they do not want to, but we can do everything in our power to help our friends feel supported.

We should also understand the barriers to leaving an abusive relationship (fear, love, dependency, and insecurity). Think of these barriers as hooks—it's not easy to unhook them all at once. It can be very difficult to leave an abusive relationship, especially when we have hope that the abuser will change or eventually stop. Sometimes our friends are not ready to accept the help we would like to offer them. The most important thing we can do is let our friends know that we are there for them when they are ready, make sure they are safe, and let them know that they are not alone. You are not alone as you navigate this! If you or your friend would like to talk more about this, our advocates are here to listen. Please feel free to reach out to us at our Helpline - you can find the information above.

Q: Thanks for bringing LGBT into the conversation. I feel like all my life school has tried to keep quiet about the gays

A: We are so happy that we were able to make you feel seen! It can sometimes feel lonely when we feel like our identities are not being affirmed. Connecting with a community can be so helpful! If you'd like to come to a space where everyone is welcome and safe, we encourage you to reach out to BLOOM365 or onenten.org. We are here for you!

Q: When my friends ask if I'm okay why can't they look at my body language and my expressions instead?

A: We are sorry to hear that you're feeling this way. Talking about our feelings with others, even those we trust, can be a difficult thing to do sometimes. Body language can be a communication tool and can signal to others how you're feeling, but it can also be hard for some to understand. Asking questions like "how are you feeling?" or "are you okay?" can be a way to help create better understanding. We hope that you feel comfortable sharing with your friends about how you're feeling. If you'd like to talk with our

advocates about this, we're here to support you. Please feel free to reach out to us at our HelpLine at the information above.

Q: When you tell your mom how you feel and she says “idc” then you have a break down

A: It is very brave to share with your parents how you're feeling. We are so sorry that happened to you and that your mom reacted that way. Being at home with a parent who can be dismissive of your feelings can be a very stressful and sometimes isolating experience. We encourage you to continue sharing about your feelings and to reach out for support to other trusted people in your life. 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. Finding 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: I feel like my relationship is toxic, but I don't know if it's me or him. I'm scared I'm like my mom. I care about him & I don't want to lose him but I don't want us to lose ourselves

A: You are the expert in your own life, so only you can make that decision. If you are not receiving the type of love you would like, you can think about whether or not this is a relationship you want to be in. It can be useful to look at the [blooming and wilting flowers](#) to help you determine whether this relationship is healthy or unhealthy. If the relationship is built off of power & control and we are not able to make changes by communicating in a healthy way with our partner using “I statements,” we may consider whether this relationship is one that we want to continue. Figuring this out can sometimes be a confusing process and you are not alone as you navigate this. Our advocates are here to support you. You can find us at the HelpLine information above!

Q: How do I get taller?

A: By inheriting tall genes from your parents!

Q: I want to be happy without being high

A: Thank you for trusting us with such a vulnerable experience. Having difficulties with substances is a common experience for many people, and you are not alone in feeling this way. There are resources available to support you as you navigate through these intense feelings. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has a free confidential HelpLine that provides information and referrals about substance misuse. You can reach them by phone at 1-800-662-HELP (4357) or by texting your zip code to HELP4U (435748). Our advocates are also here to support you if you may want or need. Please feel free to reach out to us at the information above. We are here for you!

Q: Gender norms: why is it that lesbians are seen as masculine, and gay male presenting people are seen as feminine?

A: Thank you for asking this really good question. Unhealthy gender norms can impact everyone regardless of sexuality. These are unhealthy because people who do not follow norms may be ridiculed or made fun of. Sometimes stereotypes or norms are in place because society wants to limit the rights of a certain group of people; sometimes stereotypes or norms are in place because these ideas are taught

and passed from generation to generation. We can engage in productive conversations that break down some of these unhealthy gender stereotypes to work together for justice and equity.

Q: Where would I go for therapy for teen abuse? And would reaching out cause harm to the abuser, or would it help them?

A: Thank you for reaching out and we are so glad you did. Accessing help and support can be a really scary thing to do. BLOOM365 has counseling services available free of charge (*parental/guardian consent is required to start therapy for participants under 18 unless you are legally emancipated or homeless). If you would like to know more information about our counseling services, you can fill out this [inquiry form](#). Teen Lifeline provides a call and text crisis line that you can also reach out to. You can reach them by phone or text 1-800-248-8336 (TEEN). Alternatively, you can reach out to the National Teen Dating Violence Hotline for additional support by texting “LOVEIS” to 22522 24/7 or by calling 1-800-799-SAFE (7233). We hope you are able to find a resource that works best for you! If you’d like to talk through these resources or additional information, feel free to reach out to a BLOOM365 Advocate on our HelpLine or in school after the Doses.

Regarding an abuser changing their behavior, if the perpetrator is willing to see their behavior as abusive, they can make the choice to change that behavior. A counselor, social worker, advocate, or other trusted adult can be there to help if the perpetrator is willing. Ultimately, it is up to the perpetrator to recognize their actions and to make the choice to change their behavior. If someone is at risk of harming themselves or harming someone else, we encourage you to reach out to a trusted adult or 911 if you are concerned for anyone’s safety.

Q: I don’t know if I am able to feel empathy and IDK why.

A: While there are people who may find it easier to express empathy than others, empathy is not an innate personality trait but a skill and trait that can be nurtured and grown. It’s a bit of a read, but if you’re interested, Better Tools offers an [online guide on how to build empathy](#). Another great resource is Brene Brown’s video on [The Power of Empathy](#). Sometimes not feeling empathy can be a bit deeper, and talking to a doctor or clinician (like a licensed therapist or social worker) about these concerns can be really helpful, also. If you would like to talk more about this, our advocates are here to listen. Please feel free to reach out to us at the information above.

Q: What if they’re supportive but don’t really acknowledge my SA, but when they do it’s like kinda “get over it” type of conversation

A: We are sorry to hear you’ve had this experience when it comes to sharing about your assault. Healing from traumatic events like sexual assault can take time and can be different for each individual person. You are the expert in your own life, so only you can decide if this person’s response to what you’ve shared with them is OK/acceptable to you or not. If someone is pushing you to get over a traumatic experience or is not acknowledging what you’ve been through and how it’s affected you, it might be helpful to consider whether this person is a healthy, blooming person in our lives, or if they are more of an unhealthy, wilting person for us. If you’d like to talk more about this situation or any other questions you might have, feel free to reach out to our HelpLine at the number listed above. We are here for you!

Q: Sometimes I hide everything about me so people don't make fun of me using a hoodie

A: Thank you for reaching out to share this with us. You are not alone in feeling this way. We understand it can be hard to navigate the world and the different judgments people make about us. If using a hoodie is something that makes you feel more comfortable and safe, that is totally OK. To talk more about this or anything else that's on your mind, feel free to reach out to a BLOOM365 Advocate by calling or texting our HelpLine at the number listed above.

Q: How do you leave even if the abuser threatens to kill themselves?

A: It is very important to take threats of harm seriously. Someone threatening to kill or harm themselves or a partner if the relationship ends is one of the [Top 5 Red Flags](#) that increases a person's risk of being seriously hurt or even killed. If you or someone you know is concerned someone will kill themselves if you/they leave, it can be helpful to create a safety plan beforehand. A safety plan is exactly what it sounds like— a plan for safety! Safety plans are unique to each individual, but they typically include identifying a support system, planning ways to reduce the risk of harm, and considering options for that specific situation and person to remain safe. Talking to a trusted adult like a school counselor or a BLOOM365 Advocate about safety planning and what's going on in the relationship can be a good place to start. In a situation where someone is threatening to or has already hurt themselves or someone else, the best thing to do is call 911.

Q: I can't tell if I'm feeling an emotion or telling myself I should feel a certain way. I constantly argue with myself. I've become comfortable with being quiet but when I get home all I think of is all the (...)

A: Understanding our own emotions can be a difficult process. Thank you for sharing how you feel with us. We're really glad you did, and sometimes sharing our feelings with others can be helpful in better understanding our emotions. Along with sharing how we feel, there are other coping skills like writing in a journal or taking a walk that can also be helpful ways to process emotions. Giving yourself time to process feelings and emotions is important. It's also important to be kind to yourself and to be patient and give yourself time to process emotions and tough experiences. If you would like to talk more about this, our advocates are here to help. You can reach out to our HelpLine at the number listed above.

Q: How do I build a support system for myself?

A: This is such an important question, thank you for asking. Building a healthy support system is so important but can sometimes be difficult to do, especially if we have not had positive, supportive systems before. A helpful place to start in developing a support system is to take some time to think about the people in your life who you trust and feel the most supported by. This [worksheet](#) can be a useful tool in identifying those people in your life. Finding other coping skills like journaling, finding a hobby, or joining a new group or club can be great things to try while building your support system. We encourage you to find what works for you, and always know BLOOM365 is here to support you if needed.

Q: I have a long distance friend whose father was abusive and even though he may have changed my friend doesn't feel safe and the verbal abuse is taking an impact on his mental health. How can I help?

A: We are so sorry to hear that your friend is experiencing this. We are glad that you reached out and we can tell that you care about your friend very much. If your friend feels comfortable and safe to do so, we definitely encourage them to reach out to a trusted adult in their lives to share what's going on. If you are concerned for your friend's safety, it might be best to talk to a trusted adult for support, too.

Providing continual support with this friend is a good idea and can be a great place to start. Checking in and making sure they know you are there for them even after the initial conversation is a supportive thing you can do. The most important thing we can do is let our friends know that we are there for them, and to make sure they are safe. You both are not alone in navigating this complex situation. Please feel free to reach out to our HelpLine at the information above.

Q: If someone has been drinking and they aren't a violent person can they still become abusive while drunk?

A: Substances like alcohol can cause impairment to the parts of our brain that control memory, judgment, and decision making. Depending upon the person, being intoxicated can highlight violent or abusive behavior. We encourage anyone who may be struggling with substance use to text your zip code to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA)'s helpline at 435748 (HELP4U) to receive referrals to services. If you have any additional questions, feel free to reach out to a BLOOM365 Advocate by calling/texting our HelpLine at 888-606-4673. We are here for you!

Q: How do "messed up" people change their ways? (like if they're toxic)

A: Toxic and abusive behavior can be learned and can also be unlearned. If a person is willing to see their behavior as abusive or toxic, they can make the choice to change that behavior. A counselor, social worker, advocate, or other trusted adult can be there to help if the person causing harm is willing. Ultimately, it is up to that person to recognize their actions as harmful and to make the choice to change their behavior. If you have any additional questions, feel free to reach out to a BLOOM365 Advocate by calling/texting our HelpLine at 888-606-4673.

Q: How do you get enough confidence to tell people you want to be a girl

A: Thank you for reaching out and trusting us with such a personal and vulnerable experience. Coming out in regards to gender identity can be a scary and overwhelming process for some. It can also be a process that can happen over time. 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 are many positives to coming out to the people around us. It can let people in your life know about an important part of you, and help you to feel less alone by allowing you to meet new friends and connect with others who share your experience. An awesome resource that you may find helpful is the Trevor Project's [Coming Out Handbook](#). If you'd like to come to a space where everyone is welcome and safe, we encourage you to reach out to BLOOM365 or oneten.org. You are not alone!

Q: My parents are mad at me & won't talk to me or yell at me and say my dad beating me is my fault & now I am being neglected

A: We are so sorry that you are experiencing these things in your home. We are really glad you reached out. Being at home with family who engage in abusive or other harmful behaviors can be a very stressful and sometimes isolating experience. You deserve to be safe at home, and to be treated with respect. We encourage you to reach out to a trusted adult at your school or in your life for support. Sharing what you're going through with them can help you to feel more supported and less alone. It might also be helpful to find other coping skills like writing in a journal, doing an activity you love, or going for a walk to help you process your feelings and experiences. Our advocates are also here to offer support. Please feel free to reach out to us at the information above. We are here for you!

Q: How do you get over someone that left you

A: Losing someone you had a good connection with can be very painful, especially if we have known that person for a really long time and/or had history with them. While the ending of a close relationship can be tough, it can also be a great time for self-evaluation and growth. Giving yourself time to process feelings and emotions is important. It's also important to be kind to yourself and to be patient and give yourself time for your heart to heal. We all cope with things in different ways and at different speeds. Other activities like writing in a journal, talking with close friends, or spending time outside are great coping skills that could be helpful in the healing process. We encourage you to try different things to find what works for you, and always know BLOOM365 is here to support you if needed!

Q: How can I/what are ways I can start to love my body again?

A: Learning to love our bodies, especially if we are learning to do it again, can take a long time and is not always easy. But, knowing that you want to have a better relationship with your body and wanting to make that change is a great first step. Taking time to focus on the things we like about ourselves can be one helpful step toward loving our bodies. We encourage you to take a moment to remember the things that make you unique (your strengths, aspirations, personality/physical characteristics, etc.). Writing these things down and having them easily accessible can help build your confidence. Doing your own daily affirmation and spending time doing the things that make you happy can be supportive tools in creating a better relationship with our bodies. Learning a new skill or hobby can be a really awesome way to see your own growth which can be so helpful in building healthy self-esteem. We encourage you to take some time to find what works for you and feel free to reach out to our advocates if you want to talk more about this.

Q: I'm afraid of going to lunch without my strong friend or getting my food alone because i'm gay and people harass me for it. I'm so tired of it. I just want to eat

A: We are so sorry to hear that you are being harassed at school. You have the right to be safe at all times, especially at school. Under Title IX, students have specific rights and protection relating to gender-based violence & harassment (more information [HERE](#)). If there are trusted adults at your school that you feel comfortable going to, we highly encourage you to talk with them about what you're experiencing. Sometimes building connections with others who have had similar experiences to you can help you feel more supported and less alone. If you are interested in coming to a space where everyone

is welcome and safe, we encourage you to reach out to BLOOM365 or [onenten.org](https://www.onentten.org). You can also always reach out to our advocates at the HelpLine information above if you would like support or to talk more about this. You are not alone!

Q: What if a sibling is being abusive to your parent? How do I help stop it?

A: We are sorry to hear that you and your parent are experiencing this. We are really glad you reached out. We encourage you to reach out to any trusted adults that you have in your family, school, or community for support in figuring out the safest way to address your sibling's behavior. In an emergency, it is best to call 911 if someone is threatening to or already has harmed someone else or themselves. In the meantime, it could be helpful to spend some time finding coping skills that help you process what you're feeling and experiencing. Some examples could be writing in a journal, spending time with friends, joining a new club or activity, or even spending a bit of time outside. You are not alone; Our advocates are also here to offer support. Please feel free to reach out to us at the HelpLine information above.

Q: How can you handle your emotions when your relationship changes due to religion?

A: Finding ways to process our emotions in healthy ways can be helpful in understanding and coping with our feelings better. There are so many different coping skills and strategies that we can use to handle emotions in a productive way. Some examples of these skills and strategies are writing in a journal, listening to or making music, spending time with a close friend, spending time outside, or even coloring. We encourage you to take some time to find what works best for you, and know that our advocates are here to support you! Please feel free to reach out to us at the HelpLine information above if you would like to talk more about this.

Q: What is considered date rape?

A: Date rape, which is sometimes referred to as acquaintance rape, is legally defined as unwanted sexual contact that occurs within the context of a prior social interaction or relationship. We want to affirm to any survivors of this experience that it was not their fault and there are resources available, if needed. We encourage survivors to reach out to resources like the RAINN hotline at 800-656-HOPE (4673) or through [online chat](#) for additional support and resources, or the Arizona Sexual and Domestic Violence Helpline by phone at 602-279-2980 or text at 520-720-3383. BLOOM365 advocates are also here to offer support, you can find us at the HelpLine information above.

Q: What if a guy tries to force me in a relationship with him. What do I do?

A: We are sorry to hear that you are experiencing these things, and we want you to know that none of it is your fault. You have the right to set boundaries and to say no. If this person isn't respecting your boundaries or your answer even though you communicated them to this person, it might be helpful to talk with a trusted adult for additional support and to ensure you stay safe. BLOOM365 advocates are also here to offer any support you need. If you would like to talk more about this situation, we encourage you to reach out to our advocates at the HelpLine information above.

Q: What do I do when I'm always sad and don't want to be here anymore but am scared to ask for help?

A: We are so sorry that you are feeling such intense feelings. It can be scary to reach out or share how we're feeling with others, and we are glad that you did. Finding healthy ways to cope with sadness can be a good place to start. This could look like writing in a journal, spending time in nature, practicing mindfulness (like picking one thing to look forward to each day, for example), exercising, or even blasting music. If you are experiencing depression or extreme feelings of loneliness, sadness, or despair, please know that help is available. Some signs of experiencing depression 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.

Reaching out for help can be uncomfortable and hard to do. For a helpful list of ways to reach out for help, check out this list [HERE](#). 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 or feelings of sadness. School social workers and counselors are also a great source for information on dealing with depression. BLOOM365 Advocates are also available at the number above if you'd like additional support or resources. We are here for you!

Q: What are some signs of deteriorating mental health

A: Some symptoms of declining mental health 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 encourage anyone who is having this experience to reach out to **Teen Lifeline** by calling/texting **602-248-TEEN (8336)** or the **24/7 Suicide Prevention Lifeline** by calling **1-800-273-TALK (8255)** for 24/7 support relating to mental health and depression. BLOOM365 advocates are also here to offer any additional support or resources— even if it's just to talk about how you're feeling, please feel free to reach out to our HelpLine at the information above. We are here for you!

Q: I have a controlling and manipulative friend who I keep trying to push away but he keeps coming back and spreading lies. Help.

A: We want you to know that you're not alone, and we are glad that you've reached out for support. If changes within a friendship or relationship are not able to be made by communicating in a healthy way using "I statements," we may consider whether we want to continue a connection with this person. If this friend's behavior escalates or you feel unsafe around him, we encourage you to reach out to a trusted adult in your life. BLOOM365 advocates are also here to support you with this. Please feel free to reach out to our HelpLine at the information above.

Q: Thanks for bringing LGBT into the conversation I feel like all my life school has tried to keep quiet about the gays

A: We are happy that you felt seen and affirmed! If you'd like to come to a space where everyone is welcome and safe, we encourage you to reach out to BLOOM365 or onenten.org. You can also always reach out to our advocates at the HelpLine number listed above if you want to talk more about this. You are not alone!

Q: Are you still allowed to be upset with someone who says they're trying to get better?

A: In short, yes. We can affirm the change that a person is going through and also have our own feelings about it. There is no right or wrong way to feel. Sometimes taking some time to process our emotions can be helpful. Coping skills like writing in a journal or talking to someone about our feelings and experiences can be supportive tools in that process. BLOOM365 advocates are also here to listen and support! Please feel free to reach out to us at the HelpLine information above for free, confidential, non-judgmental support.

Q: I like this boy but he has a girlfriend, should I tell him how I feel? Or not, will it hurt their relationship?

A: You are the expert in your own life, so only you can decide if telling him how you feel is the right decision for you. Unfortunately, there's no sure way to know how it would affect his current relationship. We encourage you to think about what feels important to you, and also to respect the boundaries of others while navigating this situation. It could be helpful to take some time to process your feelings and find coping skills that are supportive for you. Some examples could be writing in a journal, practicing yoga, or simply spending time outside. You can also reach out to BLOOM365 advocates if you would like to talk or receive more support. You can find us at the HelpLine information above!

Q: My "friend" judges me, nitpicks me, puts down things that makes me happy. She gets upset if I talk to others during lunch, and snaps at people who try to talk to me. My friends only come around when she's gone because she's mean, and if she doesn't like someone who talks to me. She makes us move tables. We got in a fight and I'm afraid she'll tell people about my mental illnesses

A: We are so sorry that your friend has been treating you this way and we are so glad that you reached out to talk about these experiences. This sounds like a challenging situation, and we understand if you're feeling scared or overwhelmed. If you do not fear for your safety, you could try to communicate how you feel using "I statements," letting this friend know how you feel about these different situations. If your friend is unwilling to respect your boundaries or if their behavior escalates, we encourage you to reach out to a trusted adult or a BLOOM365 advocate for assistance. You are not alone!

Q: How can I look at myself and feel pretty w/o make up?

A: You are not alone in having this question, and we are glad that you've reached out for support. A lot of times our society focuses on the things we are insecure about and things we wish we could change about ourselves. We encourage you to take a moment to remember the things you like about yourself, or things that make you unique (your strengths, aspirations, personality/physical characteristics, etc.). Writing these things down and having them easily accessible can help build your confidence. Focusing on

the things we like about ourselves can be one helpful way to lift our self-esteem. With practice and time, learning to love the way we look and changing the way we feel about ourselves can become easier! If you'd like to talk more about this, feel free to reach out to our Helpline at the number listed above.

Q: Is it reasonable to bad mouth someone who sexually assaulted you or should you just act like it didn't happen

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 a deeply unique and personal experience. Only that person can decide what is the best choice for them. We encourage anyone who is processing a similar experience to reach out to advocates at RAINN, ACESDV, or bloom365 who can provide you with free, non-judgemental support and resources.

Q: Why are girls taught to feel guilty for denying a man's advances?

A: Thank you for asking this important question. This is a great example of the impacts of unhealthy gender norms. An unhealthy gender norm is a rule or belief about how certain genders should behave. These are unhealthy because people who do not follow norms may be ridiculed or made fun of. Everyone has the right to say no and to have boundaries with others. When we engage in conversations about unhealthy gender norms and learn to respect each other's boundaries, we are able to break down those stereotypes and work together for justice and equity.

Q: How do I get out of a relationship where they isolated me?

A: Making the choice to leave a toxic relationship can be a difficult one to make. We are glad that you reached out for support. If you are concerned about your safety, we encourage you to contact a BLOOM365 advocate so that you can create a safety plan. If you do not fear for your safety, you may try to communicate how you feel using "I statements," letting them know that you believe this relationship isn't beneficial for you and you'd like to go your separate ways. If your partner is unwilling to let you leave and/or continues to not take you seriously, we encourage you to reach out to a trusted adult or BLOOM365 advocate for assistance in safely exiting the relationship. You are not alone!