



Elephant in The Room Q & A

Peoria Advanced Academy of Math and Sciences
 Dose 5 Flash Dose
 Fall 2022

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

Resources:

For additional resources, please visit bloom365.org/resources

BLOOM365 HelpLine	For free, confidential support: Text/Call: 1-888-606-HOPE (4673) Monday-Friday from 3PM-9PM (MST) To reach a specific advocate directly, please feel free to contact our HelpLine and tell us who you would like to speak to.
Teen Lifeline	Text or call 602-248-TEEN (8336) for free, confidential support 24/7 relating to suicide, depression, bullying, or relationships.
National Teen Dating Violence Hotline	Text "LOVEIS" to 22522 24/7
National Domestic Violence Hotline	1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
National Sexual Assault Hotline	1-800.656.HOPE (4673)
Suicide Prevention Lifeline	1-800-273-TALK (8255)

***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 to deal w/ self harm

A: Thank you for reaching out and trusting us with this question. We can imagine that you're feeling a lot of big emotions, and we are glad you're asking questions for support. It is important to understand that self harm is sometimes used as a coping skill. It might be helpful to identify healthy coping mechanisms and forms of self-care that you can do instead when you have those thoughts or urges. Some examples might include: Spending time with the people you love, moving your body or exercising, taking a relaxing bath or long shower, squeezing ice, or simply going for a walk. If you're struggling with finding effective coping tools, if you are looking for mental health resources, or if you need an empathetic ear - please feel free to reach out to the advocates at our HelpLine or Teen Lifeline. You are never alone and we encourage you to reach out if you are experiencing suicidal or depressive thoughts or having trouble addressing your self-harm in healthy ways.

Q: What is sexual assault

A: Sexual assault is typically [defined](#) as sexual contact or behavior that occurs without explicit consent of the victim and can be a deeply traumatizing experience for survivors. It is never the victim/survivor's fault and it is crucial that we do not blame victims for having experienced assault. We encourage anyone who has experienced sexual assault to reach out to advocates at RAINN or bloom365 who can provide you with free, non-judgemental support and resources.

Q: Is your program free?

A: Yes! All of our services are free. We aim to keep our services free and accessible for all. If you are interested in our counseling services or you would like to know about our other programs, you can fill out our [free inquiry form](#) or reach out to us at info@bloom365.org.

Q: I want somebody to talk to, but my mom wouldn't understand

A: It can feel isolating when we don't have understanding people to talk to. We're sorry to hear that you feel your mom won't understand what you're feeling and experiencing. If you would like somebody to talk to, you are always welcome to reach out to one of our advocates at the HelpLine information above. We are happy to listen and support you in any ways that feel good to you. You are not alone and our advocates are here for you!

Q: I'm gay and I'm scared to tell my parents

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 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. However, there are also some risks to coming out, especially if you worry that your parents may not be accepting. The most important thing is for you to stay safe, and know that any negative reactions your 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 come to a space where everyone is welcome and safe, we encourage you to reach out to BLOOM365 or [oneten](#). You can also always reach out to a BLOOM365 Advocate at the number above to discuss this situation more. We are here for you!

Q: I was bullied for my size

A: We are so sorry to hear that you experienced bullying because of your size. It was not your fault that you were bullied and we are glad that you shared what you went through with us. Some people who bully will do so because this type of abusive behavior is normalized to them, or to try to gain or maintain power and control over someone else, or because they have their own unresolved insecurities. These reasons do not excuse bullying behavior, but understanding them can help victims of bullying to not blame themselves for what has happened to them. We hope that you have been surrounded by supportive people as you process this experience. If you would like to talk more about this, our advocates are here for you. Please feel free to reach out to us at our HelpLine at the information above.

Q: Is it ok to like the same gender?

A: Our team at bloom365.org strongly believes in diversity, equality and inclusion. We respect the dignity and experiences of all people including folks in the LGBTQ+ community!

Q: Do you feel beautiful?

A: Even the staff at BLOOM365 struggle with this sometimes. Building healthy self-love and self-esteem, especially with our physical appearances, isn't always easy. A lot of times our society focuses on the things we are insecure about and things we wish we could change about ourselves. Taking some time to remember the things we love about ourselves (strengths, aspirations, personality/physical characteristics, etc.), writing them down, and creating loving affirmations for ourselves can be helpful in our journeys to create more caring, loving, and healthier relationships with ourselves.

Q: Is it ok to be shy

A: Some people are extroverted and feel comfortable expressing themselves to others, while some people may be more introverted and shy. There is no right or wrong way to be. One of the cool things about being a human is that there are so many diverse ways of being! As long as you feel confident and comfortable in how you express yourself in the world, that is all that matters. :)

Q: Is not liking being touched weird?

A: We all have our boundaries around physical touch. Some love it, some are indifferent to it, and some don't like it at all. What is most important is that we are expressing our boundaries to others and respecting other's boundaries. If you'd like to talk more about this or any other questions you might have, feel free to reach out to a BLOOM365 Advocate at the HelpLine above!

Q: I feel like no one listens to me

A: We're so sorry to hear that you are feeling this way. It can feel isolating when we feel as though others aren't listening to us or that our voice is unheard. Your feelings and thoughts are important and there are people who would love to hear what you have to share, including our advocates. If you'd like a kind and empathetic ear, our advocates are happy to listen. We are here for you!

Q: What if I can't get my self-esteem up?

A: Building healthy self-esteem is a journey that can sometimes take a long time and can get difficult. But with commitment, time, and patience we can slowly but surely raise our self-esteem and learn to love ourselves authentically. Making it a practice to affirm the characteristics about ourselves that we love and engaging in actions that make us feel confident can be helpful tools in building healthy self-love and self-esteem. Our advocates are here if you'd like to talk more about this. You are not alone in this journey!

Q: What about loving the same gender at a young age and not taking yourself seriously? I'm embarrassed to talk about the problems I have and I feel like it's rude to want to

A: We are so sorry to hear that you are feeling embarrassed and hesitant about sharing what you're going through. When you have felt that your problems aren't serious or that talking about them is rude, it can feel hard to believe that what you experience is important. Sometimes it can be helpful to connect with others who have similar experiences to you. Organizations like [one-n-ten](#) provide safe spaces for LGBTQ+ youth to connect with other youth in the community. Your feelings, experiences, and perspectives are important and there are people (like BLOOM365 advocates!) who want to hear what you have to share. We encourage you to reach out to bloom365 and/or one-n-ten if you'd like an understanding and empathetic ear. You are not alone!

Q: Does ignoring a person that doesn't like you, will you stop thinking about them?

A: Rejection, whether from a romantic interest or in a platonic situation, can be a sensitive experience to move through. It can be a normal human response to feel sad or hurt after being rejected. It can be helpful to take some time to process the emotions that rejection can bring up in a healthy way. This can look like journaling about your feelings, spending time with loved ones, or focusing on a new or existing hobby that brings you joy. Show yourself some compassion and give yourself time to feel your emotions. Rejection can be difficult but it is a common experience and the more we practice handling it in healthy and effective ways, the easier dealing with it becomes. If you find that you are still having trouble coping with rejection in a healthy way, we encourage you to reach out to our advocates for additional support.

Q: What do you do if you are told to kill yourself?

A: A person who is telling others to commit suicide is engaging in threatening and unsafe behavior. We encourage anyone who is the victim of threats like these to immediately reach out to a trusted adult who can intervene and provide support. This could be a family member or school staff such as a counselor, teacher, or administrator. Our bloom365 advocates are also here to create safety plans or provide other

resources to ensure your physical and mental/emotional safety. You are not alone and you do not have to go through unsafe and scary situations like these.

Q: Is being quiet annoying?

A: We all have our own preferences and comfortability on how we like to be in the world. Some people may prefer to be more talkative and engaging while others may prefer to be quiet and sit back. There is no right, wrong, or one way to be. We at bloom365 believe there is power in diversity and encourage all the different expressions that people bring!

Q: Why are people rude? What's the point if they know they're going to be in trouble

A: There can be a lot of different reasons why someone may engage in rude behavior. There could be feelings of insecurity or fear, or maybe being rude is a normalized behavior for them. Some scientists have even found that [rude behaviors can be as contagious as a cold or other sickness](#). While these reasons do not excuse or lessen the impact that rude behavior can have, understanding how they arise can be helpful in figuring out how to respond when someone is being rude. Cultivating kindness and empathy are great ways to combat rude behavior!

Q: Sometimes I hate my sis. One time my friend said do you eat you are still skinny

A: Thank you for sharing your experiences with us. We are sorry to hear that you are experiencing intense feelings regarding your sister and that your friend is making uncomfortable comments about your body. These can be intense feelings and we encourage you to speak to a trusted person about what you're feeling. If you'd like to talk more about this, please feel free to reach out to our advocates at the HelpLine information above.

Q: Are mental illnesses common?

A: Mental illnesses can be a common experience for many people in the US. According to the National Institute of Mental Health and the World Health Organization, [1 in 5 adults living in the US](#) and [1 in 7 youth globally](#) live with a mental illness. By reducing stigma and increasing the support available for those living with a mental illness, we can work together to create a world where those living with mental illnesses can live safe and healthy lives with dignity and respect.

Q: I like you

A: We are glad your Flash Dose facilitators had such a positive impact! Thank you for sharing your kind words with us.

Q: Would you talk to my parents if I talk to you or would it just be between us?

A: We at bloom365 value the confidentiality of those who reach out to utilize our services. This means that when we are able, we aim to protect your privacy including what you share with us and we do not share this information with others including your parents. While we aim to protect confidentiality when we can, our bloom365 staff are mandated reporters. That means that if we become aware that there is harm to yourself, harm to others or abuse of a minor by an adult we are legally obligated to report this

information to the proper authorities. For free, confidential, non-judgmental support, you can reach out to our HelpLine by calling or texting 888-606-4673.

Q: What if nothing makes you happy?

A: Persistent feelings of unhappiness and/or losing interest in activities that you previously enjoyed can be signs that you may be experiencing depression. Some additional signs of experiencing depression can include 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 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 Advocates are also available at the number above if you'd like additional support or resources. We are here for you!

Q: Hi can we be friends? :)

A: bloom365 Advocates are here to offer resources, information, and non-judgmental support relating to healthy or unhealthy relationships, self-esteem, coping skills, and social connectedness. If you have questions or would like to talk about any of these topics, feel free to reach out to our HelpLine at the number above!

Q: Are toxic relationships common?

A: According to the CDC, "Teen dating violence is common. Data from CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Survey in 2019 indicate that among U.S. high school students who reported dating during the 12 months before the survey: About 1 in 12 experienced physical dating violence. About 1 in 12 experienced sexual dating violence." For more information on teen dating violence and intimate partner violence statistics, check out the CDC's website [here](#).