



Elephant in The Room Q & A

Barry Goldwater HS
Fall 2021

****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 Helpline</p>	<p>Text or call a BLOOM365 advocate for free, confidential support. Text/Call: 1-888-606-HOPE (4673) Helpline Hours of Operation: Monday-Friday from 3PM-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>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>

***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: Why do people bully other people?

A: People bully for many reasons, but a huge component to bullying is to try to gain or maintain power and control over someone else. Some people may bully others because they were exposed to unhealthy or abusive behaviors in their homes as a child and taught that this behavior was normal or okay. Rigid belief in gender norms and insecurity can also play a role. If someone lacks confidence, they may try to gain power or control over someone else in an attempt to feel better. Remember, though, that even though these root causes may increase one's risk of becoming a bully, they still can make the deliberate choice to treat people in a caring way instead of in a controlling way. If someone is being bullied and we are witnesses to that, the best thing we can do is speak up and speak out. This can look like confronting the bully directly (if it is safe to do so) or telling a teacher or trusted adult. The most important thing to understand is that we must do SOMETHING.

If you are being bullied, there are resources available to support you. We always encourage you to reach out to a trusted adult at school or at home. You can always reach out to a Bloom365 advocate by chat and text at the number above or by chat at our website bloom365.org.

Q: My grandma is way too quick to overshare. She dumps her problems on me even when I've told her I'm uncomfortable. She guilt trips me when I set boundaries

A: It can be very difficult when it feels like someone isn't respecting your boundaries. Having healthy boundaries is a very helpful tool for creating healthy and reciprocal relationships with those in your life. Boundaries can also be a great way to help you better understand yourself and honor your own wants. As you're probably familiar with, setting boundaries can be really hard! We celebrate you for setting boundaries with your grandma despite her attempts to cross them. You are practicing an invaluable skill that will become easier as you continue to have opportunities to practice and nurture.

It is important to acknowledge that while your grandma tries to make you feel guilt for setting boundaries, you are not wrong for setting them and you are not responsible for how she responds. You are not responsible for her reactions even when she makes you feel like you are. Your boundaries are valid and important and worth saying. It can feel difficult to enforce your boundaries when others are reacting negatively. PsychCentral has a wonderful resource for setting boundaries that could be helpful: <https://psychcentral.com/blog/imperfect/2019/06/5-tips-for-setting-boundaries-without-feeling-guilty#5-tips-to-help-you-set-healthy-boundaries>

Most importantly, be sure to take time to care for yourself. Having your boundaries crossed and enforcing them with others, especially our loved ones, can be very draining. Self care can look like asking a trusted person if you can vent, taking a walk, or listening to your favorite music. We encourage you to explore activities that soothe and bring comfort to you and of course - we at BLOOM are always here to support you if you need it! You can also always reach out to a BLOOM365 Advocate at the number above to discuss this situation or chat online at bloom365.org for more support.

Q: I've been thinking about leaving my toxic ex/bf but I'm scared to let go cuz he's my first everything

A: We understand that ending any relationship can be challenging, and we want you to know that we are here to support you. Losing someone you had a good connection with can be very painful. It can be hard to let a relationship go, especially when you have experienced so many new experiences with the other person. While ending a close relationship can be tough, it can be a great time for self-evaluation and growth.

Finding ways to cope can be really helpful. For example: Spending time with the people you love, writing in a journal, yoga, joining a new sports team or club, or simply going for a walk. Giving yourself time to process feelings and emotions is important. It's also important to be kind to yourself and to be patient, and to give yourself time to heal. We all cope with things in different ways and at different speeds. Find what works for you, and remember that you know yourself and your needs better than anyone. You have the capacity to make choices that you feel are best for you, your safety, and your needs.

Always know that BLOOM365 is here to support you if needed! We also invite you to get involved in our free Peer Connections group, which provides teens with the opportunity to walk through the healing process alongside others. If you're still struggling with coping, you can always reach out to an Advocate at the number above for free, confidential support and a listening ear.

Q: Haha. Getting cheated on is fun :(

A: We are sorry that you've been cheated on. If you want to talk about the situation, or if you need any other support, we encourage you to reach out to our Helpline at the number listed above. We are here for you!

Q: What is the best way to communicate with an adult? (in-person, text, etc.) What should you say?

A: The answer to this question depends on a variety of factors (who is the adult? What needs to be communicated? Is it safe for you to do so? etc.). We encourage you to make decisions that prioritize your safety, which could look a little different depending on each situation. With just a bit more information, we can help you plan out the best way to communicate for your specific circumstance. Please call or text our Helpline at the number listed above for free, confidential support.

Q: mom: you're such a bad kid you should be like the other kid

Me: I'm trying my hardest to be the one you love I'm trying so hard for you to not hurt you

A: It sounds like you're dealing with a lot at home. We encourage you to reach out to a BLOOM365 Advocate, either in the classroom or by calling/texting our Helpline at the number listed above, for free, confidential, non-judgmental support. We are here for you!

Q: Why do guys get sexualized/harassed for wearing feminine clothes but girls don't when they wear masculine clothes?

A: Different people are sexualized for different reasons all too frequently. We are not sure of one exact reason why this happens. However, at BLOOM365, we believe all people are deserving of respect and safety, regardless of their choice in clothing or gender expression. If you want to talk more about this, we encourage you to reach out to our Helpline for free, confidential, non-judgmental support. We are here to answer your questions as best as we can, and to provide support and resources. Feel free to give us a call or text!

Q: My dad did crystal meth, coke, always was drunk and beat my mom and tried to run us over. He was always in and out of prison my whole life and when I called 911 on him before he left he threatened my life. He's back now

A: It sounds like you've been through a lot because of your dad. Thank you for sharing your story with us. We want you to know that you are not alone, and we are here to support you. We understand that it can be challenging to live with an abusive parent, and it can also be dangerous at times. If you feel unsafe, we encourage you to call 911 for help. It might also be helpful to talk to another trusted adult in your life about what's going on and how you're feeling about it. If you want to talk more about this or anything else, feel free to text/call our Helpline for free, confidential, non-judgmental support. We are here for you.

Q: I saw my mom get beat up a lot when I was younger and then when I got old I saw her get into drugs and then I was emotional neglected & abused but life has gotten better then before but

A: Although your card wasn't complete, we are glad that you reached out to us and have shared part of your story. We are also glad that life has gotten better than it used to be. It can be very challenging to experience abuse or witness someone else being abused, and we want you to know that none of it was your fault and you deserve to be safe. If you want to talk more about this or anything else, we encourage you to reach out to our Helpline at the number listed above for free, confidential, non-judgmental support. We are here for you!

Q: Why doesn't my cousin stay at my mom's place when she doesn't have anything?

A: Only your cousin knows the answer to this question. However, it's important to remember that we can't force anyone to accept the help we offer them-- but we can continue to be supportive and empathetic to those we want to help. If you want to talk more about this or anything else, feel free to reach out to our Helpline at the number listed above.

Q: Every day my dad yells at my mom and she doesn't say anything but sit there

A: Thank you for reaching out and sharing this with us. It can be very difficult to watch someone you know as a victim or perpetrator in an abusive relationship, and we understand wanting to do something about it. Please know that it is not your responsibility to change or fix anything, but there are some ways you can help if you choose to. For one, you can serve as a supportive person in your mom's life. Let her know that you are there for her. If you feel comfortable, you can give her the number to the National Domestic Violence Hotline (1-800-799-SAFE(7233)). Don't be discouraged if she is not ready to make the call. Remember the importance of not blaming the victim and understand there are a lot of barriers to leaving an abusive relationship. You can continue to let her know you are there for her, and that the hotline is available whenever she is ready to make the call. If you feel unsafe and need help in an emergency, we encourage you to call 911. If you want to talk more about this or anything else going on, we encourage you to reach out to our Helpline by calling/texting 888-606-4673 between 3-9pm, Mon-Fri. We are here to support you!

Q: How common is rape in teen abusive relationships?

A: Rape and sexual violence in abusive teen relationships is pretty common, unfortunately. According to the CDC's website, "Data from CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Survey and the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey indicate that: About 1 in 8 female and 1 in 26 male high school students report having experienced sexual dating violence in the last year. 26% of women and 15% of men who were victims of contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime first experienced these or other forms of violence by that partner before age 18." If you or someone you know has experienced abuse or sexual violence, we want you to know that you are not alone, and we encourage you to reach out to the resources listed above for support.

Q: I tried to kill myself 3 times when I was 14.

A: Thank you for sharing this with us. We are glad that you are still here and also that you've reached out to us. If you want to talk about your experience or anything else, we encourage you to reach out to our Helpline for free, confidential, non-judgmental support. We can offer resources, information, or just someone to listen. We also encourage you to check out [TeenLifeline](#) for additional information and resources on mental health and suicide prevention. We are here for you!

Q: What do you do when you've been taught by your relationships that that's the only kind of love you deserve

A: Thank you for reaching out and asking this question! Everyone is deserving of safety and respect in all of their relationships. Blooming relationships are built off agency and equity, where both parties feel equal. When someone loves us, they treat us with kindness, respect, empathy, affection, and so many more great qualities that make us feel appreciated. When someone loves us, they are willing to treat us with agency and equity and not power and control. It is also important to realize that we receive and give love in different manners; some people like hugging and kissing to show love, others might appreciate gifts and actions more. We should understand how we like to receive and how we show love to others. Having a partner that shows love in the same way you like to receive love can be an important

aspect of a healthy relationship. If you would like to talk more about this, please feel free to reach out to our Helpline for free and confidential support Mon-Fri from 3-9pm by calling/texting **888-606-4673**.

Q: What can I do if I realize I'm displaying abusive behavior? My partner seems happy, but I'm scared that's not true and they're pretending.

A: We really appreciate you reaching out to learn more about this. Identifying our potential negative actions and attitudes are some of the first steps towards positive change. Change is a process that requires awareness and it may take some time but it can be done. You are the expert in your own life, so only you can make that decision to act out of agency and equity rather than power and control. Toxic/wilting attitudes may come from different experiences or beliefs, but we all have the choice to treat others with respect. It might be helpful to talk to your partner about how you're feeling and ask them how they are truly feeling. You are not alone, we are here for you. If you would like to talk more about this, please feel free to reach us by call or text at: **1-888-606-HOPE (4673)**.

Q: How do you stop lashing out at your parents even if its because of their verbal/emotional abuse?

A: We want you to know that you are not alone, and we are glad that you reached out for support. If it is safe for you to do, you could use "I" statements to let them know they are hurting you emotionally. For example: Saying something like, "I feel (emotion) when (situation/behavior/experience), can you/we (solution)?" This style of conflict resolution allows for you to take ownership of your own feelings, allowing the other person to understand your perspective of the situation without feeling directly attacked. This prevents them from feeling like they need to defend themselves and allows for more effective communication. If you want to practice some "I" statements, or if you need additional support, feel free to reach out to our Helpline.

If they are 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 to make these changes. Ultimately, it is up to the perpetrator to recognize their actions and to make the choice to change their behavior. If you feel comfortable, you can give them the number to the National Domestic Violence Hotline (1-800-799-SAFE(7233)). Don't be discouraged if they are not ready to make the call.

Q: I feel like I have to do drugs to be popular and have friends

A: We want you to know that you are not alone, and we are glad that you reached out for support. It can be really stressful and overwhelming to not give in to what it seems like everyone else is doing. We encourage you to continue making choices that feel safe and healthy for you. True friends will respect your boundaries and decisions, and won't pressure you to do things you don't want to do. It might feel lonely and challenging, but it's important that you make choices you feel comfortable with and not pressured into. If you want to talk more about this, including ways to say no when faced with drugs or anything else, we encourage you to reach out to our Helpline for free, confidential, non-judgmental support. We are here for you!

Q: I have a very toxic relationship with my ex and we still try to make things work even though things always end bad, I'm kinda stuck not knowing what to do anymore because I still love him a lot, and we both don't wanna let go of each other.

A: Thank you for reaching out, we are so glad that you are accessing support that you need and deserve. It sounds like you are in a tough spot in figuring out next steps with your ex. It can be very difficult to figure out what to do in a toxic relationship especially when you really love the other person and you've been together a long time. 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. You are the expert in your own life, so only you can make that decision.

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. Finding ways to cope can be really helpful. For example: Spending time with the people you love, writing in a journal, yoga, joining a new sports team or club, or simply going for a walk. Giving yourself time to process feelings and emotions is important. Find what works for you, and always know bloom365 is here to support you if needed!

Q: What do you do when your emotional abuser genuinely has no idea that they're abusive and will victimize themselves every time you try to talk about it?

A: Thank you for reaching out and asking such a fantastic question. Experiencing emotional and mental abuse can be very traumatic. We are sorry that you experienced such harm from someone that you care and trust. It is great that you want to talk honestly about what you have experienced. If it's safe for you to communicate with this person, you could use "I" statements to let them know how their behavior is affecting you. For example: saying "I feel hurt when I am trying to share my feelings on our relationship and the conversation shifts away from discussing my feelings. Could we work together on focusing on one person's feelings at a time?" This style of conflict resolution allows for you to take ownership of your own feelings, allowing the other person to understand your perspective of the situation without feeling directly attacked. This prevents them from feeling like they need to defend themselves and allows for more effective communication.

However, it is that person's choice if they want to listen to what you have to say and change. There is no magic way to encourage someone to address and change their abusive behavior-- that is a decision that they must make for themselves. You are deserving of healing from the emotional abuse you have experienced. If you'd like to talk more about what you went through, we encourage you to reach out to a counselor or trusted adult - whether that be through your school or outside. You can also reach out to us at BLOOM365 by contacting our helpline at 888-606-4673. Our helpline is open through text/call, Monday-Friday between 3-9PM.

Q: How could I become more comfortable with my insecurities?

A: Thank you for reaching out to us and asking such a great question! It can be hard to feel secure about ourselves when we receive so many mixed messages from our friends, family, and society about who we should be. Focusing on the things that make us the unique individuals we are, can be one helpful way to become comfortable with ourselves and build up our self esteem. We here at bloom365 encourage you

to take a moment (or many moments!) to celebrate and remember the things that make you, uniquely you. These can be your strengths, goals, personality, or things you're good at. It can also mean loving the things about yourself that may seem average-- maybe you have great taste in music, or you put together outfits that make you feel and look good. 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 helpful tools in building up our self- esteem, as well.

If that is a hard place to start, which it can be for a lot of us, you can spend time showing appreciation and thanks for the things your body does to care for you. Sometimes talking about our insecurities can be helpful - if there's a trusted friend or adult that you feel comfortable talking with, reach out to them. And of course, we here at BLOOM365 are here to provide any support you may want or need. Please feel free to reach out to our Helpline Monday through Friday, 3pm to 9pm by calling/texting 888-606-4673.

Q: How do you deal with a situation like for example... When your significant other is saying don't get mad at me for hanging out with other females or they won't talk to you ever again...

A: It sounds like you're in a difficult situation with your significant other. We're sorry that you're experiencing such tough moments with someone that you love and care about. Sometimes it can be helpful to take some time to process our relationships to figure out the problems within them and the best ways to address them. One tool that we can use if we are ever concerned that the relationship might be unhealthy is to determine if that person is being caring or controlling. Do I feel free and equal in this relationship or is my partner holding the power? Another helpful tool to determine if a relationship is abusive is the [red flags checklist](#). Be sure to pay extra attention to the bottom 5 red flags-- if one or more of these is occurring, the situation has a greater chance of becoming dangerous and we strongly encourage you to reach out directly for support.

It can also 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. When a relationship is healthy, our partner treats us with kindness, respect, empathy, affection, and so many more great qualities that make us feel cherished. When a relationship is healthy, our partners are willing to treat us with agency and equity. Agency meaning we are able to act independently and make our own choices in a dating relationship or friendship. Equity meaning that there is fairness in the relationship. If you're still having trouble navigating your relationship with your partner, it could be really helpful to talk to trusted friends or adults in your life. And of course, our advocates at bloom365 are always here to offer support through our helpline at 888-606-4673, Monday - Friday, 3-9 PM.

Q: I felt like I had an obligation to stay friends with someone who abused me because I had been friends with them for 8 years. She would tell me I was her only reason for living, her world, her everything, together forever, and if I left she would kill herself, and when I asked her to get help or if she wanted help she would tell me I'm negative, not trusting, paranoid, psycho, annoying, a bad friend, not supporting her. I'm no longer friends with her but sometimes I feel guilty

A: We're so sorry that you experienced abuse from a trusted friend. Thank you for sharing such a deeply personal and vulnerable experience. Leaving abusive relationships can be hard and might bring up an array of different emotions. Some may feel relieved, some may feel scared, and some may feel guilty. Your feelings and all responses to leaving an abusive relationship are real, valid and very normal. Despite the tough feelings that may come with making such a brave decision, it's important to know and remember that you are worthy of healing from traumatic experiences.

Healing can be a long and sometimes hard process. Giving yourself time to process feelings and emotions is important. It's also important to be kind and patient with yourself, and to give yourself time to heal. Finding ways to explore your feelings and get support can be extremely helpful in that process. Some ways that you can process your feelings can be spending time with the people you love, writing in a journal, yoga, joining a new sports team or club, or simply going for a walk. If you have other friends in which you have a healthier friendship with or trusted adults in your life, it could be extremely helpful to reach out to them for support. You can also reach out to a mental health professional - through school or outside in the community, including here at BLOOM365.. And of course, we at BLOOM365 are always here to provide any additional support that you may want or need throughout this process.

Q: As a guy, I just learned to fake it all or feel nothing

A: Thank you for sharing your experience with us. It may feel suffocating when you feel as though you have to only exist in certain ways or fit in certain boxes. What you shared with us is a good example of an unhealthy gender norm. An unhealthy gender norm is a rule or belief about how certain genders should behave. Some examples are the idea that women should stay home and raise kids or have long hair and that men should be the "breadwinners" and be the "tough" ones in relationships - or in the example you shared, guys must either fake their feelings or feel none. These are unhealthy because people who do not follow norms may be ridiculed or made fun of. These norms also do not give people the opportunity to show up as they truly want to.

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. We can challenge these unhealthy gender norms and stereotypes by engaging in productive conversations about these norms and how they impact us. You are doing an important first step in this process by naming these norms and how they show up for you. If you want to talk more about this, we encourage you to reach out to our Helpline for free, confidential, non-judgmental support. We are here to answer your questions as best as we can, and to provide support and resources. Feel free to give us a call or text!

Q: What happens now..? It's all gone, no emotion, I'm not hurting, but I can't feel anything else either. Why..?

A: It sounds like you're having a hard time accessing your emotions and figuring out next steps. It can be difficult to address our feelings, or lack of feelings, when we aren't sure why we feel the way we do. We're so glad that you reached out to us with these questions. It sounds like you may be experiencing depression or have some extreme feelings of loneliness, sadness, or despair. Here's some additional signs that someone might be 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.

If this feels like something you are experiencing, there is support available for you. 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 listed 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 888-606-4673, Monday-Friday, 3-9 pm - we can support you in accessing these or other resources that can support you. You are not alone and we are here for you!

Q: (Just a rant) School is hard and pointless home isn't home, friends are strangers. Family is no longer family. Drugs make everything ok, guys make me feel wanted and loved, acting happy to make others not worry about me. Food starts to seem gross, sleeping is a escape from life, days feel not real, showers get longer and hotter, crying hurts and cuts don't hurt. Everything's going to sh*t, after I thought it was getting better, I just wanna go home and feel ok and not feel like this anymore

A: It sounds like you're going through a lot right now, and we want you to know that you are not alone. It sounds like you may be experiencing depression or have some extreme feelings of loneliness, sadness, or despair. If this feels accurate to how you may be feeling, please know that help is available. If these feelings 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 want you to know that there is support available for you. 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 listed 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 888-606-4673, Monday-Friday, 3-9 pm-- we can support you in accessing these or other resources that can support you. We can also get you connected with our free counseling services, here, as well. You are not alone and we are here for you!

Q: Is it okay to ever feel jealous?

A: Jealousy is a natural, human emotion that most people have felt or experienced within their relationships. It is not necessarily a bad thing, unless people act out based on that jealousy. When jealousy reflects possessive, obsessive or controlling attitudes and behaviors, that is an indication that it could be unhealthy and/or abusive. If you'd like to talk more about this or any other questions you might have, we encourage you to reach out to our Helpline at the number listed above.