



Elephant in The Room Q & A

Mountain Ridge 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 (24/7)</p>	<p>Text or call 602-248-TEEN (8336) for free, confidential support relating to suicide, depression, bullying, or relationships.</p>
<p>National Teen Dating Violence Hotline (24/7)</p>	<p>Text "LOVEIS" to 22522</p>
<p>National Domestic Violence Hotline (24/7)</p>	<p>1-800-799-SAFE (7233)</p>
<p>National Sexual Assault Hotline (24/7)</p>	<p>1-800.656.HOPE (4673)</p>
<p>Suicide Prevention Lifeline (24/7)</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: Can you further define emotional abuse?

A: Emotional abuse is a pattern of abusive behavior that centers around using harmful tactics such as control, manipulation, isolation or demeaning words and actions. This can look like constant criticisms and put-downs, gaslighting, or isolating a person from their support system. You can always refer to the [red flag checklist](#) for more red flags or early signs of dating abuse at bloom365.org. 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 or life-ending and we strongly encourage you to reach out for support. Our advocates are here to listen and offer support. You can find us at the HelpLine by text/call at 1-888-606-HOPE (4673) or on [online chat](#).

Q: What should I do when my boyfriend is having a hard time with something and won't let me help or hug me at all?

A: It can be very hard to watch someone we love and care about go through a hard time. While we may so badly want to help the other person, we cannot make people get help if they do not want to. But we can do everything in our power to help our loved ones feel supported. This could look like encouraging your boyfriend to engage in self-care activities such as sharing about what he's going through, journaling, going for a walk or hanging out with friends. If your boyfriend is still distant or not wanting to share how he's feeling, it may be best to respect his space and give him some time to process what he's going through. We encourage you both to reach out to bloom365 if you want support or talk more about this. You are not alone!

Q: A friend said if I kill myself then I have to leave him a note, still not sure how I feel about it

A: We're sorry to hear that your friend said something that made you feel uncomfortable. Suicide and suicide ideation are serious issues that deserve compassion and understanding. If it feels safe and comfortable, it could be helpful to talk with your friend about their comment and share how it made you feel. If a conversation using "I" statements does not change things, you can think about whether or not this is a friendship you want to be in. If you are having suicidal thoughts or feelings, or if you want to talk more about this or about any concerns around suicide or suicide ideation, please feel free to reach out to advocates at bloom365 or the Suicide Prevention Lifeline at the information above. We are here for you!

Q: My friends always make fun of me cause I can't pull

A: We're sorry your friends have been treating you this way. You deserve to be treated with respect and kindness in all of your friendships and relationships. If you'd like to talk more, feel free to reach out to our HelpLine at the number listed above. We are here for you!

Q: How can you help a friend stay out of their abusive relationship?

A: It can be a really hard experience to watch a friend go through an abusive relationship. Choosing to leave an abusive relationship and staying out of it can be a difficult choice for a survivor to make. It can be helpful to take some time to understand the barriers to leaving and staying out of an abusive relationship. Think of these barriers as hooks. It's not easy to unhook them all at once, and we understand that it can be difficult to leave an abusive relationship, especially when we have hope that the abuser will change or eventually stop.

Providing continual support with a friend is a good idea. Checking in and making sure they know you are there for them even after the initial conversation is a great option. 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. 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. Our advocates are also here to support! Please feel free to reach out to us at the information above.

Q: I'm not sure what to do if I'm really worried about my bf. He's not responding to me and he won't tell me what's wrong

A: It can be a confusing experience when someone's behavior changes and we don't know why or what is going on. While we may want to offer support to a loved one and for them to share what is wrong, we can't get someone to share or get help if they do not want to. But, we can help our loved ones feel supported. Sometimes others are not ready to accept the help we would like to offer them. The most important thing we can do is let them know that we are there for them when they are ready and let them know that they are not alone. You could also encourage your boyfriend to talk to a trusted adult or friend about how he is feeling. If you would like to talk more about this, please feel free to reach out to us at our Helpline number above.

Q: How do you ask for therapy if your one parent can't afford and other doesn't support

A: Thank you for asking this question, we are glad you reached out. Accessing therapy can sometimes be difficult but there are resources out there that can help make it easier. BLOOM365 has counseling services available free of charge for individuals in Arizona aged 11-24 that have witnessed or experienced interpersonal violence (*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](#). If there is a counselor at your school, you could also reach out to them and they may be able to help you find free or low cost therapy resources. You can also reach out to a BLOOM365 Advocate for additional support and information. You are not alone!

Q: My friend calls me fat but I don't want to get him mad. What do I do?

A: We are sorry to hear that your friend is speaking about you that way. You deserve to have your boundaries respected and to feel safe in your friendships. You could try talking with your friend about how his words make you feel. Using “I” statements can be helpful in communicating to another person how we feel and allows for 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 your friend gets mad or his behavior doesn’t change after you’ve communicated with him, you may want to take some time to think about whether this friendship is one you want to continue or not. Our advocates are here if you’d like to talk more about this. You can find us at the HelpLine information above.

Q: Should I feel guilty for wanting to report and get a restraining order on my mom. She molested me when I was in 3rd-5th grade

A: Thank you for trusting us with such a deeply vulnerable experience. We are so sorry that you went through that and you did not deserve that. We understand you might be feeling a lot of different emotions, and that is totally normal. You do not have to feel guilty for wanting to report what happened or for wanting a restraining order. Choosing to report an assault is a very personal choice to make and we support you in doing what you feel is best for you and your safety. Reporting can be a scary process and if it is something you want to do, we highly encourage you to reach out to any trusted adults in your life to support you in that process. This could be a school social worker, counselor, or family member. Our advocates are also here to offer you any support you may want or need. You can find us at our HelpLine information on the chart above. We are here for you!

Q: If my friend is in serious danger but they’re not telling anyone, how do I report it without them hating me afterwards?

A: If you are worried about your friend’s safety, we encourage you to talk to a trusted adult such as a school counselor or social worker about your concerns. They can help you navigate the reporting process and figure out the best way of getting support for your friend. Your friend getting upset or angry with you is a possibility if you choose to report. You cannot change how your friend feels, but you can affirm to them that their safety is very important to you and that you care for them. If you would like to talk to an advocate about navigating this situation, please feel free to reach out to us at our HelpLine above.

Q: Why are males less likely to be seen as the one being abused in any given relationship

A: This is such an important question and we are glad you asked it. The belief that men do not experience abusive relationships is an example of the impact of unhealthy gender norms and stereotypes. Unhealthy gender norms like expecting men to be strong or the tough one in a relationship are very common in our society. This idea goes back many years and historically it has been passed from generation to generation. Also, gender roles can prevent male victims from reaching out if they are experiencing abuse and violence in their relationships. Abuse has no bias and anyone, regardless of gender or gender identity, can experience it. When we engage in conversations about unhealthy gender norms and we create environments where all survivors feel safe, we can break down the impact of these norms and work together to end cycles of abuse.

Q: What about relationships that aren’t abusive but just not compatible

A: Experiencing an incompatible relationship can feel overwhelming or confusing. If you are not feeling comfortable within a relationship or you do not feel compatible with your partner, it could be helpful to take some time to consider whether or not this is a relationship that you want to continue. If it is not a relationship that you want to continue, you can use “I” statements to communicate to your partner that you want to break up. While ending a close relationship can be tough, it can be a great time for self-evaluation and growth. We all cope with things in different ways and at different speeds. Find what works for you, and always know BLOOM365 is here to support you if needed!

Q: If you are in a committed relationship for a few months and they try to go for your belt buckle, you push them away, say you don't know and all they do is insist it's fine till you agree, is that sexual assault, especially if it hurt/was uncomfortable

A: Even in a committed relationship, consent is required each and every time a sexual act is initiated. Coercion is forcing someone to do something against their will, or persuading someone to do something by using threats or force. If your partner does something to you without your consent, that can be considered assault. In any situation, but especially sexual ones, you have the right to have boundaries on what you want and don't want to do. In reality, you might feel pressured, guilty, manipulated, or coerced when you say no. You deserve to have your boundaries respected. If your partner pressures or coerces you or threatens to break up with you because you don't consent, it's a sign that you're in an unhealthy relationship. If you would like to talk with a BLOOM365 advocate further, feel free to reach out to our number listed above.

Q: always told to grow up and man up never got comfort till recently so thank you for this

A: Thank you for sharing this with us! We are so glad that we were able to create a space where you feel safe and comforted. :) If you ever want to talk more about this or anything else you may be feeling, our advocates are here for you! You can find our advocates at the HelpLine information above.

Q: There's only two genders!

A: Thank you for sharing your opinion with us. At BLOOM365, we believe all individuals are deserving of respect, empathy, and kindness, regardless of gender identity or anything else.

Q: How do you get out of a sexually abusive situation?

A: In any situation, we encourage you to prioritize your own safety and wellbeing first. If you are in a sexually abusive situation or a situation that you feel is dangerous or is making you uncomfortable, you can begin making a plan to safely get you away from that situation. We encourage you to find a trusted adult such as a family member, school counselor, or anyone who you feel comfortable sharing that information with. Once you are away from the situation you can decide if you feel comfortable reporting the abuse. If you would like to talk to a BLOOM365 advocate about what's going on please feel free to reach out to the HelpLine listed above. If you would like information about creating a plan to leave your situation, you can visit our [safety planning](#) resource.

Q: Why are boys expected to be strong, rude and to carry the burdens of both. Why can't society let me be. Why do I have to change to meet societies standards. Why can't I be me and be left alone

A: It can be frustrating when you feel like you're expected to meet certain standards that are not in line with what you believe or how you feel about yourself. It is important to remember that we are all unique and special in different ways, which means you are great just the way you are. Society telling us that boys have to be "strong" or "uncaring" are not healthy beliefs and we can help change these stereotypes by being ourselves and teaching others that we don't need to feel obligated to meet the expectations of society. We understand sometimes this is easier said than done. If you want to talk more about this, we encourage you to reach out to a BLOOM365 Advocate at our Helpline number listed above. We are here for you!

Q: How do I break the cycle of abuse in my family?

A: Breaking any type of cycle is very difficult, but the fact that you realize that negative things are happening and want to make a change is a great start! Being familiar with and noticing any signs of abuse can help you to know what behaviors are harmful, and actively work to change them to help stop patterns of abuse. Setting healthy boundaries and having support systems that you can reach out to during difficult times can be helpful as well. If you would like more information about healthy and unhealthy relationships or warning signs of abuse feel free to visit our resources site [here](#).

Q: What should I do if someone (a friend) threatens to "out" me?

A: We are so sorry that your friend is treating you this way. Coming out is a deeply personal experience that should only be the decision of an individual person. The most important thing is for you to stay safe, and know that any negative reactions your friends or parents might have are not your fault. We encourage you to reach out to a trusted friend, adult, or advocates at bloom365 or The Trevor Project. You can find us at the Helpline information above and The Trevor Project at this [link](#). You are not alone!

Q: How do I be friends with someone homophobic when I myself is a part of the LGBTQ?

A: You are the expert in your life, so how you choose to navigate having this person in your life is up to you. We do encourage you to prioritize your mental and physical safety and wellbeing. If you'd like to come to a space where everyone is welcome and safe, we encourage you to reach out to BLOOM365 or [onnten.org](#). 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: How can I explain to someone how SA/rape jokes are wrong, and how can I get them to stop?

A: It can be really frustrating and even retraumatizing to hear SA or rape jokes for a lot of people. Depending on how comfortable you are, you could try a direct approach of calling out the jokes when you hear them and letting the person who said it know that jokes like that are hurtful and normalize sexual violence. Another idea could be talking to a trusted adult about that person's jokes and how they're affecting you or others around you. You are the expert in your life, so how you choose to handle the situation will depend on the specific circumstances of that individual instance. In all situations, we encourage you to prioritize your own safety and wellbeing first. To talk more about this, we encourage you to reach out to a BLOOM365 Advocate at the Helpline number listed above. We are here for you!

Q: Why do the majority of my peers mock the LGBTQ+ community?

A: Unfortunately we do not have a sure answer for why your peers mock the LGBTQ+ community. At BLOOM365, we believe that everyone is deserving of respect, empathy, equality, and kindness regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, or anything else. If you'd like to talk more about this, feel free to reach out to a BLOOM365 Advocate at the HelpLine number listed above.

Q: What happens if your dating someone and they are on and off but he uses the same excuse why they broke up w/ that person twice?

A: This sounds like a pretty confusing situation. You are the expert in your life, so you know your relationship best. If someone seems like they're not being completely honest or if they're saying one thing and doing something else, this might not be the healthiest relationship. We encourage you to reach out to a BLOOM365 Advocate by calling or texting our HelpLine to discuss this situation further. We are here for you!

Q: I'm just so tired. I don't feel like doing anything

A: It sounds like you could use a break. We encourage you to take care of yourself mentally and physically, both during and after the 7-Doses. For any additional support, feel free to reach out to a BLOOM365 Advocate at the HelpLine number listed above.

Q: I want someone to listen to my problems. Not try to fix them. Not try to get me to stop. Not tell me I'm complaining. Not tell me to get used to it. Just listen

A: We definitely get it— sometimes you just need to vent to someone that will listen and that's all. If you want a safe, anonymous, confidential place to do this, you can reach out to the BLOOM365 HelpLine by calling or texting the number listed above. We are here for you!

Q: Why are women blamed for the type of clothes they wear

A: Sometimes women are judged for the clothes they wear, or blamed for victimization that is done to them because unfortunately, victim-blaming and shaming attitudes and beliefs are still pervasive in our society. If you want to talk more about this, feel free to reach out to our HelpLine!

Q: What happens if I'm scared to talk or even ask him anything

A: Although we don't know the context of your question, we encourage you to reach out to a trusted adult or BLOOM365 Advocate if someone is making you feel scared or intimidated.

Q: What if speaking your mind is considered "talking back"

A: This can be a tough dynamic to navigate, and we are glad that you've reached out for support. Sometimes it can be helpful to wait until things calm down to revisit what was on our mind in an earlier situation. Using "I" statements can be helpful in communicating to another person how we feel and allows for 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. You can try using "I" statements with the framework of "I feel (emotion) when (situation/behavior), can you/we/I (solution/compromise) next time instead?" or something similar that

feels right for you and your specific situation. To talk more about this, we encourage you to reach out to a BLOOM365 Advocate at the HelpLine number listed above.

Q: How can you figure out if you have some form of mental illness that can affect a relationship

A: It could be helpful to talk to a trusted adult, such as a school counselor or school psychologist, a teacher, a parent, or even a BLOOM365 Advocate for support in determining whether you have a disorder or something going on that could be affecting your relationships.

Q: How can I stop comparing everything about me to others

A: Comparing ourselves to others can be hard to avoid, but it might be helpful to try to notice when you feel yourself making those comparisons and instead focus your thoughts on the things that make you unique, or even the things that you like about yourself (you don't necessarily have to *love* them). Focusing on what makes us unique and special can be one way to work toward accepting ourselves and not comparing ourselves to others. For more ideas on how to build self-esteem and avoid self-comparisons, feel free to reach out to a BLOOM365 Advocate for additional information. We are here for you!

Q: How can I help my 16 year old friend get help from an abuser?

A: If you are concerned for your friend's safety, we encourage you to talk to a trusted adult about what's going on as soon as possible. Sometimes our friends are not ready to accept the help we want to offer them; we can't force anyone to get help or to do anything, but we can continue to support our friends and let them know we are there for them when they're ready to get help. For additional free, confidential, anonymous support, we encourage you to reach out to a BLOOM365 Advocate to discuss the situation further.

Q: I feel unworthy for being gay. My classmates laugh and fetishize it. It hurts more than I wish it did.

A: Thank you for reaching out and sharing what you are going through with us. We are so deeply sorry to hear that you are going through such intense experiences at school and that you are feeling unworthy. If there is a trusted adult at your school that you feel comfortable talking with, we encourage you to reach out to them about the things being said at school. The most important thing is for you to stay safe, and know that any negative reactions your classmates may have are not your fault. 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 an advocate at BLOOM365 or [The Trevor Project](http://TheTrevorProject.org) to discuss this situation and access non-judgemental support. We are here for you!

Q: Do you have any resources for students who want to participate in the pro-choice movement? Like presenting the overturning of Roe v Wade

A: We do not have those resources on hand as that is a bit outside of our area of expertise. But we support folks who want to become educated about issues and be changemakers in their community!

Q: How can I move on from abusive relationships & not think everyone is like that?

A: Healing from an abusive relationship is a deeply personal experience that can look different for each person. 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. Finding healthy coping skills can be helpful. This could be talking with a trusted friend or advocate about your feelings, journaling, or even listening to music.

We all cope with things in different ways and at different speeds. Find what works for you, and always know BLOOM365 is here to support you if needed! 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: If someone is constantly causing drama between people and takes their frustration out on me, is it okay to stop being friends w/ them? (for the sake of your wellbeing)

A: You are the expert in your own life, so only you can make that decision. The list of rights and responsibilities within a relationship provided in your workbook can apply to relationships of all kinds, including friendships. Strong, healthy relationships involve individuality, safety, boundaries, and a balance of power in the relationship. If you are not receiving these within your friendship, it could be helpful to take some time to consider if this friendship is one you want to continue. We encourage you to prioritize your mental and physical safety and wellbeing. If you want to talk more about this, our advocates are here to listen. You can reach out to us at the HelpLine number above.