



Elephant in The Room Q & A

Barry Goldwater HS
Spring 2020

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

Resources:

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

<p>BLOOM365 Advocacy Line and Support Groups</p>	<p>Text or call a BLOOM365 advocate for free, confidential support. Text/Call: 1-888-606-HOPE (4673) Advocacy Line Hours of Operation: Monday-Friday from 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>Join us on Monday, Tuesday, and/or Thursday evenings for one of our drop-in support groups (Holidays excluded)! Visit bloom365.org/peersupport for specific dates and times.</p>
<p>Teen Lifeline</p>	<p>Text or call 602-248-TEEN (8336) for free, confidential support 24/7 relating to suicide, depression, bullying, or relationships.</p>
<p>National Teen Dating Violence Hotline</p>	<p>Text "LOVEIS" to 22522 24/7</p>
<p>National Domestic Violence Hotline</p>	<p>1-800-799-SAFE (7233)</p>
<p>National Sexual Assault Hotline</p>	<p>1-800.656.HOPE (4673)</p>
<p>Suicide Prevention Lifeline</p>	<p>1-800-273-TALK (8255)</p>

Q: Student

A: BLOOM365 Advocate

Q: My mom hates my boyfriend because she thinks he looks deformed! How should I tell her we're dating? We've been dating for 6 months and 12 days

A: We are sorry to hear that your mom isn't being supportive of your relationship. At BLOOM365, we believe in equality for all people regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, appearance or anything else.

If the situation is not dangerous and you feel comfortable and safe to do so, it may be helpful to utilize the communication technique we learned in Dose 6 ("I-statements") to express your feelings/situation to your mom. You might consider telling your mom how important your relationships are with her and with your boyfriend. You could also remind her of all the good reasons why you're dating him that don't relate to his appearance. It might also be helpful to tell your mom how it makes you feel when she judges your boyfriend's appearance. "I-statements" allow us to take ownership of our own emotions and can help avoid defensive responses. We know communicating can be difficult, but communicating in a more healthy and respectful way could help to resolve problems more efficiently and prevent everyone involved from feeling hurt. Perhaps providing your mom with tips for communicating effectively (such as those you learned during Dose 6) could be a good first step in talking about the situation. If you feel safe, we encourage you to evaluate your own situation and come up with an "I-statement" that best suits your situation and what you envision as a solution. If you'd like to talk more about this, feel free to reach out to an Advocate at the number listed above.

Q: What's the easiest way to get out of an abusive relationship?

A: We understand that it is hard to leave any type of relationship. "I statements" are awesome for ending a relationship because they help you explain why you are choosing to end the relationship without placing blame on the other person. For example, you could say "I don't feel like I have enough time to commit to our relationship, so I think it would be best for both of us if we are just friends." Or "I feel like I am not able to give you what you want in a relationship. I think we should go our separate ways." This can apply to all types of relationships!

You can end a relationship in a way that makes you feel comfortable. If you feel like the situation could become dangerous or even just too uncomfortable for you, you can do a couple of things: you can make a safety plan to start with, you can have that conversation in a relatively public space like a park, and of course you could always have someone you trust nearby for emotional and safety support for during and after. These types of situations can be difficult for a lot of people. We encourage you to explore the coping strategies we discussed during Dose 6 and find one that best suits you. This could be spending more time with friends, or dedicating time to a new hobby or skill. If you have any questions or need to talk to someone, we encourage you to reach out to our Advocacy Line at the number above.

Q: How do I tell my family that I'm gay and transgender?

A: We want you to know that you are not alone, and we are glad that you reached out for support. 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, and help you to feel less alone by allowing you to meet new friends or even finding someone to date. However, there are also some risks to coming out, especially if you worry that your friends and family might not be accepting. 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.

If you're comfortable doing so, we encourage you to educate the supportive people in your life on what it means to be a part of the LGBTQ community and the barriers that are faced by people in this community. Coming out may be a process and can take time. Some resources that you may find helpful are the Trevor Project's "[Coming Out As You](#)" guide and "[Coming Out Constellation.](#)" 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 a BLOOM365 Advocate at the number above to discuss this situation or chat online at bloom365.org for more support.

Q: How many chances should you give him in a relationship if he has messed up?

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. We have learned about healthy qualities of relationships and how to communicate to resolve conflicts. It can be useful to look at the blooming and wilting flowers to help you determine whether this relationship is healthy or unhealthy. This can help you figure out what type of relationship you currently have. 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.

Another 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? Page 16 in your workbook explores your rights and responsibilities within a relationship. Strong, healthy relationships involve a balance of power in the relationship, freedom, individuality, safety, and boundaries. If you would like to talk more about your situation, we encourage you to reach out to a BLOOM365 Advocate. We are here for you!

Q: This whole gender stuff is weird

A: We understand that it seems weird that we showed up to your class and are talking about relationships. We talk about gender for a multitude of reasons. One of the main takeaways we want you to keep in mind is that having a rigid belief in unhealthy gender norms is something that can be a risk factor for having power and control over our partner. If someone believes that they should have power over someone because of their gender and their understanding over gender roles that can create an abusive situation. Also gender roles can prevent male victims from reaching out if they are experiencing abuse and violence in their relationships. If you have any questions, or would just like to talk with us, reach out to us above.

Q: After being raped, my mom says I should be scared to date anyone... Should I be scared? I've told my boyfriend about it... well some.. Should I open up more?

A: First, we would like to let you know that we appreciate you telling us a part of your story. We want you to know that you are not alone, and we are glad that you are asking us questions. Please know that our advocates are always available to talk and we'd be happy to meet or talk with you if you need support.

At BLOOM365, we do not want you to feel scared to date. Everyone reacts to traumatic events differently. For some who have experienced similar events like yours, they may feel scared to date. For others, they may not be scared. It is normal to feel either way, or somewhere inbetween. Allowing yourself time to process feelings and emotions is important. We all cope with things in different ways and at different speeds. Find what works for you and move at the pace you feel comfortable with. If you feel like you should open up more, or would like to, then allow yourself to do so. If you feel that you cannot open up at the moment, allow yourself to feel that way.

Always know BLOOM365 is here to support you if needed! If you need additional support and/or guidance on coping, please reach out to a BLOOM365 advocate at the number listed above. If you would like to try out our support groups as well, let us know.

Q: Why do guys insult girls?

A: Unhealthy gender norms are very common in our society. This idea goes back many years and historically it has been passed from generation to generation. We know that rigid belief in unhealthy gender norms contributes to power and control in our relationships. Sometimes stereotypes or norms are in place because society wants to limit the rights of a certain group of people. The important thing to know is that these norms and stereotypes are not facts but rather some people's opinions. We can engage in productive conversations that break down some of these unhealthy gender stereotypes. Once we know what the issue is we can work together for justice and equality.

It is also important to note that abuse has no bias, and both boys and girls can be perpetrators and victims of abuse. However, women are vastly more likely to be seriously hurt or killed in these scenarios, which is why a lot of the examples we chose show women as the survivors and men as the perpetrators.

Q: Why are young relationships natural? I really don't like it

A: Relationships are an important part of life. They help us connect with others. For some, beginning romantic relationships is a major part of growing up. For others, it is an uncomfortable subject and they may see that dating only for adults. Overall, it is your choice when you would like to start dating another. It is okay if you feel that right now is not the time. It is still okay if you feel college is not the right time either. However, we believe it is critical to understand what a respectful and healthy romantic relationship looks like, and how to create one. In addition, we want to help ensure that you are able to recognise respectful relationships, and importantly, when you might not be in one.

Q: I have a friend who has no respect for me. How do I respond?

A: We first recommend communication. A style of communication we recommend you to try out are "I" statements rather than "You" statements. Saying something like, "I feel (emotion) when (problem/situation), can (solution)?" Rather than saying something like, "Why are you always (problem)?" 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 this does not help, we may consider whether this friendship is one that we want to continue.

Q: I'm being harassed by one of my "old best friends" because I had an opinion on another old best friend only this one is a "pregnant freshman" should I have to apologize for having an opinion? This freshman cyber bullied me for 3 days. Saying horrible things like "mentally retarded"

A: We encourage you to utilize the blooming and wilting flower to determine if the situation and actions of yourself and others involved are more blooming or more wilting. At BLOOM365, we believe everyone is deserving of healthy, safe, and blooming relationships and friendships--regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or anything else.

Q: I get really overwhelmed and it causes me to cry, and half the time I'm scared to tell anyone because I feel like I'm going to be judged. I also used to cut myself because I was insecure about myself and I was stressed and overwhelmed. I know it doesn't do anything but I just did. Then my mom found out and forced me to go to therapy, which didn't help at all. I'm starting to get into that place again where I don't want to be here anymore and all I do is cry. I don't know how to talk to someone about this plus I have trust issues and I'm scared to tell people. I don't really wanna say anything but over the past few years my parents have been abusive and telling me that I was a mistake/disappointment and it's been leaving me with suicidal thoughts. I've been scared to talk about it. Life hasn't been the same over the past few years, I've been really stressed because of it, I wanna stop crying all the time. My family has been really judgmental and slut shames me. They just put me down and I can't be happy, so lately I've been taking a lot of naps just to stop thinking about things. I just want everything to be the same, to where I can be happy and I'm not scared to go home. When I'm home I lock myself in my room so I don't have to see my parents

A: It sounds like you're going through a lot, and we encourage you to reach out to a BLOOM365 Advocate for support and/or resources. We want you to know that you are not alone, and we are glad that you reached out for support. What you have experienced is not your fault. It's important to take time for yourself, and we also encourage you to get involved in one of our weekly support groups. Our support groups provide teens with the opportunity to walk through the healing process alongside others. If you decide that is not something that you want to do, that is okay too. If you are having suicidal thoughts or want to talk to someone about depression, we encourage you to contact the Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or TeenLifeline at 602-248-TEEN (8336).

Finding ways to cope can be really helpful. For example: spending time with the people you love, doing yoga, joining a new sports team or club, spending time in nature, or simply going for a walk can help us through the healing process. Giving yourself time to process feelings and emotions is important. 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 need additional support and/or guidance on coping, please reach out to a BLOOM365 advocate at the number listed above. If you feel that your life is endangered or threatened, contact 911 for help.