



# Elephant in The Room Q & A

Mountain Ridge High School  
Fall 2019

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

### Resources:

*\*For additional resources, please visit [bloom365.com/resources](http://bloom365.com/resources)\**

<p><b>BLOOM365 Advocacy Line and Support Groups</b></p>	<p>Text or call a BLOOM365 advocate for free, confidential support.  <b>Text/Call: 1-888-606-HOPE (4673)</b>  <b>Advocacy Line Hours of Operation:</b>  <b>Monday-Friday from 3PM-9PM (MST)</b></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 <a href="http://bloom365.org/peersupport">bloom365.org/peersupport</a> for specific dates and times.</p>
<p><b>Teen Lifeline</b></p>	<p>Text or call 602-248-TEEN (8336) for free, confidential support 24/7 relating to suicide, depression, bullying, or relationships.</p>
<p><b>National Teen Dating Violence Hotline</b></p>	<p>Text "LOVEIS" to 22522 24/7</p>
<p><b>National Domestic Violence Hotline</b></p>	<p>1-800-799-SAFE (7233)</p>
<p><b>National Sexual Assault Hotline</b></p>	<p>1-800.656.HOPE (4673)</p>
<p><b>Suicide Prevention Lifeline</b></p>	<p>1-800-273-TALK (8255)</p>

**Q: Student**

**A: BLOOM365 Advocate**

**Q: How do you get out of a relationship if they threaten to kill themselves?**

**A:** If someone threatens to kill themselves if you end the relationship, we encourage you to share this information with an adult that you trust as this is one of the red flags that increases your risk of being seriously hurt. If you ever feel threatened, you can also call 911 and ask about an Order of Protection. Because the most dangerous time in an abusive relationship is when it is about to end, we highly recommend reaching out to a BLOOM365 Advocate for help in creating a safety plan. You can reach our Advocacy Line at the number above. We can also help you explore healthy coping mechanisms, self-care, and ways to boost your self-confidence.

**Q: All bad stuff is a red flag right? And if it is not a question, I'm sorry**

**A:** No worries. Red flags, by definition, is a warning sign. Abuse does not look the same in every relationship because every relationship is different. One thing most abusive relationships have in common is that the abusive partner does many different kinds of things to have more power and control over their partners. These common abusive patterns are what we commonly refer to as red flags. In short, yes, typically bad stuff is classified as red flags.

**Q: I don't understand why some people believe that having sex before your married is healthy**

**A:** Feeling good about your body, enjoying sexual pleasure, and being comfortable with your sexual orientation and gender identity are also big parts of healthy sexuality. Having a healthy sex life means knowing what you do and don't want to do sexually and being confident enough to communicate that to your partner (aka, consent). Your partner should respect your boundaries, and you should respect theirs. For some, they find that their idea of healthy sex can only happen in marriage. Others do not believe the same. Having a healthy sex life is about taking care of yourself, whether you have a partner or not. Physically, that means practicing safer sex, getting tested for STDs regularly, preventing unintended pregnancies, and seeing a doctor or nurse if you have any problems. If you would like to learn more about others' perspective, and yours, I suggest you take a look at the ["learn" section of Planned Parenthood](#). No matter what you believe about them, they do have good materials for learning more about sex relationships, including [abstinence and outercourse](#).

**Q: My friend was sexually assaulted on a plane; Related Submission: Q: My friend was sexually assaulted and physically assaulted and got a restraining order and now she is ok**

**A:** Thank you for sharing your story with us. We want you to know that you and your friend are not alone, and what your friend has experienced was not their fault. We encourage you and your friend to tell a trusted adult, friend, or another trusted person about what you/they are going through. If family or friends are having difficulty understanding your feelings and experiences, you can refer them to "EMPACT" which they can call at 480-787-1500. Recovery can be a slow and individual process. We encourage you and your friend to get involved in one of our weekly support groups to begin the healing process alongside others. Additionally, starting a journal can be helpful for a lot of people who've experienced sexual assault. It may provide an outlet for your thoughts and feelings. It can also help you

to express yourself when it is difficult to verbally communicate your feelings. Everyone heals at different speeds and in different ways. We encourage your friend to find a way of coping that works for them, and always know that our BLOOM365 Advocates are here to provide additional support if needed.

**Q: My parents don't accept me for who I am**

**A:** Thank you for being brave enough to share this with us and reaching out for help. If you'd like to come to a space where everyone is welcome and safe, we encourage you to reach out to BLOOM365. You can also always reach out to a BLOOM365 Advocate at the number above to discuss this situation or chat online at [bloom365.org](http://bloom365.org) for more support.

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 to express your needs to your parents. "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 parents with tips for communicating effectively (such as those you learned during Dose 6) could be a good first step. 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.

**Q: What if some of these signs appear in a friendship?**

**A:** Abuse can happen in any type of relationship. The red flag checklist in your workbook or on [our website](#) can apply to any type of relationship including friendships, sibling, parent, and romantic relationships. If some or all of the red flags on the checklist are present, it's a good idea to talk to your parents or another trusted adult about what you're experiencing. If you feel that you are in immediate danger, we encourage you to talk to a trusted adult or contact 911.

**Q: What do you do about a love triangle?**

**A:** It's difficult to answer this question without additional context. We encourage you to reach out to our advocacy line for free, confidential, non-judgmental support.

**Q: At mountain ridge I feel that being in an abusive relationship doesn't happen. Everyone fits in a certain group**

**A:** Everything you learned in the Bloom It Up program is applicable to all types of relationships and friendships! Even if you are not currently dating, this information is still relevant to you both now and in future relationships and friendships. Knowing how to develop a healthy self-esteem and how to build and grow healthy relationships with healthy communication and conflict resolution skills are important life skills! It is also our goal to help boost the confidence and skills of yourself and your peers to model empathy, respect, kindness, safety, consent, and bystander accountability as the norm for your generation. We believe in the power of your generation to reach the tipping point moment and to help us uproot abuse and promote healthy relationships for all!

**Q: How do you separate yourself from a person who won't stop trying to be in a relationship with you**

**A:** If you feel safe to do so, it might be helpful to clearly express that you are not interested in being in a relationship with this person and that you would like for them to give you some space. You can have this conversation in a public setting and you can also bring someone along to support you. If that is not enough for them to stop, it might be helpful to let a trusted adult know what's going on so that you remain safe. If you'd like to discuss this further, we encourage you to reach out to our advocacy line at the number above for free, confidential, non-judgmental support.

**Q: Norms is like it is what you need to be and exceptions is like what you are not. Right?**

**A:** A norm is something that is seen as usual, typical, or standard by a majority of people (>50% of people). An exception is something that is not typically seen as usual, typical, or standard by a majority of people. For example, arriving to class on time is a norm. Being late to class or not showing up is an exception. However, keep in mind that not all exceptions are bad and not all norms are good. If you'd like to talk more about this or anything else, we encourage you to reach out to our Advocacy Line at the number above!

**Q: Why should we avoid comparisons when dealing with jealousy?**

**A:** Jealousy has much of its feeling derived from a lack of information or ignorance. Jealousy may lead one to not see the whole of another person that we may be comparing. Jealousy has a way of focusing on one thing at the expense of others. Since jealousy gives an incomplete and deceptive picture, avoiding comparisons can help our emotion and relationship well-being with ourselves and others.

**Q: My girlfriend hits me every day**

**A:** We want to say thank you for reaching out, and please know that everything you are experiencing is not your fault. We want you to know that you are not alone. If you are in immediate danger, please call 911. If you do not feel you are in immediate danger, we recommend talking to a trusted adult about your situation. This person can help you determine what steps can be taken to ensure you are safe and cared for, in addition to the safest way to make a report. If your trusted adult does not follow through, we encourage you to find someone who will. If you do not have a trusted adult in your life, know that BLOOM365 is here for you. We know that opening up about these situations can be really difficult, but it's important that you feel safe, and talking to a trusted adult or advocate can help you begin the process of healing. You can text or call an advocate at the number above for free, confidential support and a listening ear.

A safety plan is a great tool for helping to determine practical ways to remain safe. Check out the Safety Plan on page 21 in your workbook or on [our website](#) for some resources and a link to a template that can be helpful as you develop a plan. You can consider things such as: Who are the trusted adults in your life who you can go to or talk to? Who are the friends/peers who you could go to? What are some things you can do for self-care? Where could you go quickly if you needed a safe place to go in an emergency? Again, a BLOOM365 advocate can always help you create a plan. Feel free to text/call 1.888.606.4673 for assistance. We are here for you!

**Q: This lesson makes me hate my gender. Seeing the female norms, I am more of them. I am mostly male at heart. I hate being a girl, always have. Thanks for listening to me complain**

**A:** Thank you for sharing your feelings with us. We hear you. It can be hard to understand and figure out how we define ourselves, and sometimes that can change over time, too. If you would like to talk more about your individual situation, we encourage you to reach out to a BLOOM365 Advocate for support. We are here for you!

**Q: I'm mentally stressed**

**A:** You are not alone in feeling this way. It might be helpful to try some self-care strategies. A few examples can be found in [this article](#). Another one of the ways we can reduce mental stress is by lifting our self-esteem. I encourage you to take a moment to remember the things you love about yourself (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 helpful tools in building up our self-esteem. If you would like a supportive and non-judgemental ear, you can reach out to us at the number above.

**Q: whenever anyone calls attention to the breaking of gender roles, it ultimately undermines the concept of gender equalities by implying that this is an exception, and not the status quo.**

**A:** Thank you for expressing your opinion. We do realize that when people call attention to the breaking of gender roles, that shows that it is something abnormal and may make it harder to make normal. We also know that people are judged, disagreed with, and discriminated against for traits that are not the norm. However, we also know that rigid beliefs in unhealthy gender norms contribute to power and control in society and in turn, some of our relationships. Thus, it might be helpful in some situations to bring attention to the breaking of these barriers to begin engaging in productive conversations that break down some of these unhealthy gender norms and celebrate the progress, no matter how big or small, toward gender equality. And in other situations, it might be best to just let things happen without calling attention to it. If you'd like to talk more about this, feel free to reach out to our advocacy line at the number above. (submission references "Sonic Boom" episode, see: <https://youtu.be/xTd3Bry-ZT4>)