



Elephant in The Room Q & A

Brownsville High School (DVSSP)
February 2022

****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)

BLOOM365 Peer Support 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.
Domestic Violence Services of Southwestern PA (DVSSP)	24/7 Hotline www.peacefromdv.org/hotline WASHINGTON COUNTY: 800-791-4000 or 724-223-9190 GREENE COUNTY: 724-852-2463 FAYETTE COUNTY: 724-439-9500
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: Talk about rape culture

A: Thank you for your suggestion! Although we don't discuss rape culture in depth during the 7-Doses, it is definitely a topic that is related to interpersonal violence and the many other topics we do discuss in our curriculum. Rape culture is an environment where rape is prevalent and sexual violence against an individual, primarily women, is normalized and excused by the media and pop culture. Rape culture highlights the ways in which society blames victims of assault and normalizes sexual violence. If you have any concerns about this matter, please reach out to a DVSSP or BLOOM365 Advocate for support.

Q: Should you feel pressured to have sex? (or send nude photos)

A: You should never feel pressured to engage in sexual acts or to send nude photos. Consent is so important because no one should ever be forced to do anything that they do not want to do. Consent is a huge part of agency and all the rights that we have as individuals. Saying no should be as simple as just, well, saying no. In reality, you might feel pressured, guilty, manipulated, or coerced when you say no. Another helpful way to think about consent is remembering that consent should look like FRIES:

- **F**reely given. Consenting is a choice you make without pressure, manipulation, or under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- **R**eversible. Anyone can change their mind about what they feel like doing, anytime. Even if you've done it before, and even if you're both naked in bed.
- **I**nformed. You can only consent to something if you have the full story. For example, if someone says they'll use a condom and then they don't, there isn't full consent.
- **E**nthusiastic. When it comes to sex, you should only do stuff you WANT to do, not things that you feel you're expected to do.
- **S**pecific. Saying yes to one thing (like going to the bedroom to make out) doesn't mean you've said yes to others (like having sex).

In any situation, you deserve to have your boundaries respected. If your partner pressures you or threatens to break up with you because you don't want to consent to something, this is a sign that you're in an unhealthy relationship. If you would like to talk with a BLOOM365 or DVSSP advocate further, feel free to reach out to the numbers listed above.

Q: Is it normal for your partner to force you n a 3sum?

A: Thank you for reaching out and asking this question. It is not normal for a partner to force you into any sexual activity. Consent is so important because no one should ever be forced to do anything that

they do not want to do. Consent is a huge part of freedom and all the rights that we have as individuals. Consent is required each and every single time an act of sex is initiated, even in a long-term relationship. If your partner pressures you or threatens to break up with you because you don't consent to something, it's a sign that you're in an unhealthy relationship. If you would like to talk with a BLOOM365 or DVSSP advocate further, feel free to reach out to our numbers listed above!

Q: How do you deal with losing a friend because you developed feelings for them?

A: Losing a friend that you had a good connection with can be very painful, especially if we have known that person for a really long time and/or had history with them. While the ending of 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 give yourself time for your heart to heal. We all cope with things in different ways and at different speeds. Find what works for you, and always know that BLOOM365 and DVSSP Advocates are here to support you if needed!

Q: How do I find self love?

A: A lot of times our society focuses on the things we are insecure about and things we wish we could change about ourselves. You are not alone in feeling this way. Building good self-esteem and self-love can take a long time and is not always easy. Focusing on the things we like about ourselves or things that make us unique can be one helpful way to lift our self-esteem. We encourage you to take a moment to remember the things that make you, YOU! Reminding ourselves of things like our strengths, aspirations, personality, or even physical characteristics that make us unique can be helpful when working on loving ourselves more. 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 and self-love, also. You are not alone in feeling this way. Building good self-esteem and self-love can take a long time and is not always easy. But, knowing that you want to learn how to have better self-esteem and that you can improve is a great step toward more self-love. To talk more about this, we encourage you to reach out to a DVSSP or BLOOM365 Advocate at the numbers above for additional support. We are here for you!

Q: How do I work on not getting so jealous in my relationship.

A: Jealousy is a natural, human emotion. Most humans have felt or experienced jealousy. It is not necessarily a bad thing, unless we act out based on our jealousy. Jealousy becomes unhealthy or abusive when it is possessive, obsessive or controlling. The first step is recognizing our jealous tendencies and making an active effort to not act based on those feelings. It might be helpful to address when you're feeling jealous with your partner or friend so that they know how you feel. It might also be helpful to try communicating your feelings and concerns with your friend or partner by using "I" statements (I feel (emotion) when (situation) because (situation/reason), can we/you/I (resolution)?). Something you could both talk about is how you may be able to build up your trust and decrease your feelings of jealousy. Sometimes talking about our feelings with others or journaling can be helpful in processing our

jealousy, also. If you would like to talk more about this, please feel free to reach out to BLOOM365 or DVSSP advocates at the numbers above!

Q: How do I love my body more?

A: You are not alone in feeling this way. Building self-esteem and learning to love our bodies can be an ongoing process and is not always easy. But, knowing that you want to learn how to have better self-love is a great first step in improving self-esteem. A lot of times our society focuses on the things we are insecure about and things we wish we could change about ourselves. We encourage you to take a moment to remember the things that make you unique (your strengths, aspirations, personality/physical characteristics, etc.). It might also be helpful to remind yourself each day why you're grateful for your body (even if you're not ready to fully love it right away)-- this might look like writing a list of the different things your body allows you to do each day, like dreaming, laughing with your bestie, going to the different places you like to go, learning about topics you're interested in, and turning food into energy so that you can do all of these wonderful things! Trying to focus on the positive things our bodies do for us can sometimes help to navigate our feelings about the way our bodies look, or how society tells us they should look. 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, also. You are not alone in this process and if you would like to talk more, please feel free to reach out to BLOOM365 or DVSSP advocates at the numbers above!

Q: What do you do when someone harms themselves for leverage or to guilt trip you to stay? (asking for a friend)

A: Thank you for asking this important question. We are sorry to hear that your friend has experienced these things, and we want your friend to know that none of it is their fault. Your friend has the right to set boundaries and to leave a relationship, and it is not your friend's fault that this person self-harmed. However, when anyone makes threats or actually follows through with hurting themselves or others, it is very important to take these threats and actions seriously. Someone threatening to harm you or themselves if you end the relationship is one of the Top 5 Red Flags that increases a person's risk of being seriously hurt or even killed. In a situation where someone is threatening to or has already hurt themselves or someone else, the best thing to do is call 911. This is a serious situation that warrants a serious response. We encourage your friend to talk to a trusted adult such as a school counselor or social worker, or a parent or teacher. Our BLOOM365 and DVSSP advocates are here to provide additional support as well-- feel free to reach out to the numbers listed above for free, confidential support. We are here for you!

Q: A lot of the violence that has come in our generation is due to social and technology advancements. In the 80s and 90s boys and girls had less media to compare themselves to, social media causes a lot of jealousy, and I am guilty of jealousy as well, However I control my emotions very well, theres so many people that I could compare myself to The truth is I believe jealousy is a killer. It is something that you can't avoid with social media. I truly believe it causes problems when you can see everything negative on the media

A: Thank you for sharing your perspective with us! Media of all kinds can definitely have an impact on our perception of ourselves and others. Spending time doing the things that make us happy and creating healthy boundaries around social media can be helpful tools in building up our self-esteem and lessening the impact of negative media. If you want to talk more about this or any other questions you have, feel free to reach out to a BLOOM365 or DVSSP Advocate at the numbers listed above.

Q: What if two people both carry abusive and toxic traits

A: Abusive and toxic behaviors or traits are things that can be learned, which means it is also possible to unlearn abusive and toxic traits. If a person with abusive traits is 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 person is willing. Ultimately, it is up to each individual person to recognize their actions and to make the choice to change their behavior. If you would like to talk more about this, you can find our BLOOM365 and DVSSP advocates at the number above.

Q: Making a bullet journal or a regular journal may help coming into a positive mindset

A: Thank you for sharing this helpful tip with us! Journaling can be a helpful tool in helping us process our emotions and build strong relationships with ourselves. And journaling can be done in so many different ways! You can bullet journal, use a regular journal or even the Notes app on your phone.

Q: What should you do if your significant other is persistent on you not talking to someone?

A: You are the expert in your own life, so only you can make the decision of what the best response in this situation is. If we are ever concerned that a behavior or relationship might be unhealthy, it might be helpful 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 for support. If you would like to talk with a BLOOM365 or DVSSP advocate further, feel free to reach out to our numbers listed above!

Q: I love myself even though I don't like everything about me. I find a way to love my dislikes about myself

A: Building self-love and compassion for ourselves can be a process and is not always easy. Thank you for sharing your story with us, we are so glad that you are learning to love all the parts of yourself!

Q: No one speaks up for those who have no voice. When a really really bad thing happened to me, I had no voice and I had no advocate

A: We're sorry that you've felt this way. Please feel free to reach out to our HelpLine at the number above! Even if you simply are needing an empathetic ear. We are here for you!

Q: Being abused sucks when you are young but the older you get that abuse stays with you forever

A: We want you to know that you are not alone, and we are glad that you reached out for support. Healing from abuse can be an ongoing process. 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. Finding ways to cope can also 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 and DVSSP Advocates are here to support you if needed! If you need additional support and/or guidance on coping, please reach out to the numbers listed above.