



Elephant in The Room Q & A

Trinity High School
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 Peer Support 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 Helpline 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: One of my close friends is in an abusive relationship, and as time goes on it gets worse. She is missing all of the red flags, and it is concerning. Her mom does not even know that they are dating. Only her friends know. They have been dating for 5 months but only see each other in school. She will not listen to advice or any one else's opinions. The couple is abusive to each other, (not physically).

A: Thank you for sharing. We are sorry to hear that your friend is going through this in their relationship. However, these situations can be difficult because we cannot force anyone to accept the help or advice we offer. It sounds like you do your best to LEVEL with your friend, but that is all you can do, until your friend is ready to accept the help and advice. If you would like to discuss more about this please feel free to reach out to our HELPLINE **1.888.606.HOPE(4673)**

Q: Would it be considered a red flag/ bad behavior if you are always jealous of others because you have a hard time loving yourself, but don't show it or be negative to others about it.

A: Great question! As we discuss in Dose 4, jealousy is a very common and normal feeling. Jealousy becomes unhealthy when it crosses that line into possessiveness, or when power and control is being displayed. We are happy to hear that you are not negative to others about it! If you are struggling with self-love, we encourage you to practice some of our self-esteem boosting tips. This can look like positive self-talk and doing things that make you happy. Remember to always be kind to yourself because you are unique! We want you to know that you are not alone. If you need further support, we encourage you to reach out to our Helpline listed above.

Q: So I have a lot of trauma. The last relationship I was in was very abusive. And I believe that it stemmed from the mental/physical abuse from my bio-father. He was an alcoholic who was always drunk. I never really know what real love was supposed to look like. Because of that I was attracted to that type of person. Thinking that was the love I deserved. So I dated abusive guys until I took time to realize that the love I got wasn't the love I deserved. And in my relationship now (very healthy) I'm very happy.

A: Thank you so much for sharing this with us. Exposure to violence as a child can definitely be one of those root causes as to why someone may be more susceptible to experiencing teen dating violence. Because, as you said, you are not really shown what real love can look like. With that, we are so happy to hear that you were able to recognize that you deserve more than the love you received in the past and that you have found someone to share a happy and healthy relationship with.

Q: How can I efficiently tell my parents or an adult about friend or myself?

A: This usually depends on what you plan on telling that parent or adult and if it is safe to do so. It is important to consider your safety and your friend's safety when it comes to disclosing information. We

would be happy to assist you with a plan to communicate to your parents or an adult if you reach out to our Helpline number listed above.

Q: Can grown adults also be abusive and toxic just as teens in a relationship? Why do adults behave as teenagers in aspects of their life?

A: Great question! Adults can definitely be abusive within their own relationships. Some of those wilting characteristics we see in teen relationships can also be identified within an adult relationship, as well. It can be difficult to understand why other people act certain ways, and it is important to remember that it is not your responsibility to fix anyone else's behavior.

Like many people, sometimes adults do not recognize that what they are doing can be abusive or toxic. If you feel safe and if you are comfortable to do so, we encourage you to discuss how those behaviors make you feel. "I" statements are a very useful technique to efficiently express your feelings. (For example: I feel (emotion) when (problem/experience/behavior) can/could we (solution).") If you need more assistance in how to have that conversation with an adult please reach out to our helpline at **1.888.606.HOPE(4673)**. However, if this is a situation where you do not feel comfortable or safe, you can still reach out to our helpline, or the National Domestic Violence HOTLINE at **1-800-799-SAFE (7233)**.

Q: How do I tell if someone is being sarcastic or serious about their childhood trauma/ mental health?

A: This can be difficult to tell. However, we always want to ensure that we are LEVEL-ing with someone who discloses anything about their childhood trauma or mental health, even if we are unsure if they are being sarcastic or not. If you are unsure on how to respond because you are not sure if you believe them, you can always link them to our helpline, or other resources available that you may know of.

Q: I'm being bullied because I'm transgender and it's been going on for almost a year but every time I try to say something the bullying gets worse and now it's at a point people are telling me to kill myself and calling me a f/f***** and now it's starting to get to me. What should I do?**

A: We are so sorry that you are dealing with bullying. We encourage you to discuss this with a trusted adult or your school administration. You are not alone in this process either, you can ask your facilitator(s) to assist you with getting this information to the appropriate people.

If you are looking for support within your community here are some resources to look into. If you do decide to contact these agencies, an advocate can assist you in finding support and resources closer to you.

[Youth Pride Association](#)

[Trevor Project](#)

[Trans LifeLine](#)

Q: How do I comfort my best friend with a terrible home life?

A: Great question! The most you can do for your friend is to continue to be there for them when they need you. A great way to practice this is to LEVEL with them. This looks like: Listening, Empathize, Validate, Encourage, and Link to Resources. These are simple ways to comfort and be there for your

friend. However, we understand that sometimes it can be difficult to respond to some things, so you can always refer your friend to our Helpline at the number listed above. We are so glad your friend has someone like you to make the effort to support and comfort them.

Q: What if your dad has most red flags? Me and my are both bipolar. He mentally abused me and my mom but I still think he'll change. He puts me down a lot but he's my dad and I still love him.

A: Thank you so much for sharing this with us. It can be extremely difficult to witness and experience someone you love being the one to exert power and control over you and others. There is nothing wrong with thinking things can change. However, it is important to remember that while a perpetrator can definitely change, it is ultimately their choice to want to make that change. It is not your responsibility to ensure that change happens. We understand that these situations can be difficult to navigate and you definitely are not alone when it comes to this. We encourage you to reach out to our helpline using the number listed above. .

Q: How do I stop myself from being/showing abusive behaviors towards someone when that's what I've been around my whole life?

A: Thank you for reaching out with such an important question, we are so glad that you did. Making the choice to end abusive dynamics is a difficult but important choice in creating Blooming Relationships. However, it's also a choice that can be hard to make alone, and receiving support from those you trust can be really helpful in stopping these behaviors. Reaching out to a trusted adult - whether they be family or school counselors - can be a great source of support. It could also be helpful to talk to a licensed counselor who you can share your experiences of witnessing abusive behaviors with, and they could help you process that and support you in creating healthier behaviors. Please know that you are not alone in navigating these experiences. If you need support and access to these services or would like someone to talk to, you can always reach out to our Bloom365 advocates by phone, text, or web chat.

Q: Asking someone if their in a relationship

A: This is a little outside of our area of expertise, but we can try our best to answer this! Sometimes the best way to ask a question is to be straightforward. A simple "are you in a relationship" or "are you seeing someone" is the best way to go. We always want to ensure that we respect the response given to us.

Q: When me and my ex broke up, I told my cousin, who knows him and is the same age as me. She told me she was thrilled that we broke up because she didn't like him and he had a past with girls. I didn't know what to say next.

A: That is such a heavy and surprising thing to hear. It makes so much sense why you wouldn't know how to respond. We are so glad that you reached out about this experience. It can be very hard to process a relationship once we have new information that we didn't have before. If you would like to talk more about this experience with your cousin or your ex, please know that you can reach out to an advocate at Bloom365. We are available by text, phone, or web chat and we are more than happy to support you as you process this new revelation.

Q: My significant other verbal abuses me :(.

A: We are so sorry that you are experiencing this and we are so glad you shared this with us. If you are not receiving the type of love you would like, you can think about your deal breakers and whether or not this is a relationship you want to be in. We have learned about healthy qualities of relationships and how to communicate or 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. 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. 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. You are not alone!

Q: HA, G--. I'm gay and I'm scared.

A: Thank you for being brave enough to share this with us and reaching out for help. We understand that these conversations can be scary and we want to assure you that you are not alone. 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 receive more support, or you can reach out to your facilitator to provide you with that direct support. We've also provided a few resources below that are within your state- they might be able to assist you in finding community support near you. If you'd like additional support reaching out to these organizations, feel free to contact a BLOOM365 Advocate at our Helpline listed above and we will assist you.

[Youth Pride Association](#)

[The Attic Youth Center](#)

[Bradbury Sullivan Center](#)

Q: I've just got into the best relationship ever. It's completely different from any other relationship I've been in.

A: We are so happy to hear that! You deserve it!

Q: From 2001-2021 the number of people affected by domestic violence raised from 30% to 66%

A: Thank you for that statistic! Domestic Violence is definitely a problem which is why it is important to have this conversation so we can uproot abuse in our generation!

Q: It's not the victim's fault!

A: You are right! It never is the victim's fault! If someone is disclosing their personal experience of victimization it is important that they know that they are believed and they are not alone. We are here for them. Great advocacy skills!

Q: How do I stop myself from being/showing abusive behaviors towards someone when that's what I've been around my whole life?

A: Thank you for reaching out with such an important question, we are so glad that you did. Making the choice to end abusive dynamics is a hard but important choice in creating Blooming Relationships. However, it's a choice that can be hard to make alone and receiving support from those you trust can be

really helpful in stopping these behaviors. Reaching out to a trusted adult - whether they be family or school counselors - can be a great source of support. It could also be helpful to talk to a licensed counselor who you can share your experiences of witnessing abusive behaviors with and they could help you process that and support you in creating healthier behaviors. Please know that you are not alone in navigating these experiences. If you need support and access to these services or would like someone to talk to, you can always reach out to our Bloom365 advocates by phone, text, or web chat at our Helpline, or in person with your facilitator.

Q: I'm so sad

A: We are so sorry that you are feeling sad, we are glad that you reached out and shared your feelings with us. We are not here to diagnose but want to share some symptoms of depression just in case they resonate with you. Some 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. We do 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 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 the number above if you'd like additional support or resources. We are here for you!

Q: I need help coming out to my parents :(

A: Thank you for being brave enough to share this with us and reaching out for help. 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. If you do plan on coming out, we encourage you to find those peers you know will be accepting and supportive of you. 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 great 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. 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. You are not alone in this process!

Q: My mom hits me with random objects. My dad is an alcoholic. My mom tells me I'm a f* up. My dad told me he hopes I die.**

A: We are so sorry to hear this. Your safety is extremely important to us. If you feel like you are not safe, we encourage you to reach out to the National Domestic Violence Hotline at **1-800-799-SAFE(7233) or 911**. You can also reach out to our Helpline for support in creating a safety plan and navigating this situation. If you are comfortable talking to a trusted adult, we recommend doing so, as well. We understand that these situations can be difficult, but your safety is important! If you would like additional support, please reach out to our helpline number by calling/texting **1.888.606.HOPE(4673)**.

Q: Why do boys feel the need to not believe they are doing something wrong?

A: There are many reasons a person who is perpetrating interpersonal violence may not recognize they are doing something wrong. One reason could be they have been exposed to a lot of abusive behaviors growing up and that is all they know to be the norm. Another reason could be that they are afraid of how others may treat/respond to them if they were to come forward about displaying abusive tendencies. We talk about this during our “barriers to seeking help” conversation in Dose 2. We specifically discuss this in our conversation about why a teen who is perpetrating interpersonal violence may not reach out for help. If you'd like to chat more about this, please don't hesitate to reach out to our Helpline listed above.

Q: Self-esteem is good, but can it be bad? Is there a thing as too much self esteem?

A: Self-esteem is good, healthy self-esteem is even greater! Healthy self-esteem, as defined by the Mayo Clinic, is “grounded in reality and is hard to have too much of.” Having healthy self-esteem can support you in being confident in your ability to make decisions, creating secure relationships with others, and being more resilient through stress and adversity. Having those abilities doesn't sound like too much of a good thing! Having too much self-esteem can be a reflection of lower self-esteem and low regard of self, not that someone has too much of it. Building good self-esteem can take a long time and is not always easy. But we hope it is something that you'll continue to do!

Q: I can relate to the pressuring, saying “if you love me you'll do this” even if it's not what I wanted. Especially explosive temper, I was scared

A: Thank you so much for sharing. Experiencing coercion can definitely be scary. We know that those who feel the need to have power and control over others will often use scare tactics to get others to do what they want them to do. If you would like to talk through this past situation further, please reach out to a BLOOM365 Advocate at the Helpline number listed above.

Q: Why do some people find talking about sexual violence humorous???

A: A lot of the time, people turn to humor as a coping mechanism when they are feeling uncomfortable or overwhelmed. Our curriculum covers interpersonal violence which is a really tough topic for people to address or hear about, whether they have experienced/witnessed these things, or not. This doesn't necessarily mean that they are not taking what is being talked about seriously, they just might not be sure how to cope with what they are taking in. Though this can be frustrating to witness, this can be a

great opportunity to practice having some empathy and imagine what might be going through that person's head as they are receiving this content.

Q: Why do men get away with rape, sexual assault and abuse?

A: We know that the social acceptance of interpersonal violence is a root cause as to why those who perpetrate interpersonal violence often do not get held accountable for their actions. It is important that we talk about how interpersonal violence affects people and focus on the root solutions we can use to counteract interpersonal violence. Creating awareness, providing information, believing and providing support to victims is a way to move forward to prevent people from getting away with abusing others. It is important that victims know that they are not alone and we are here for them. This is how we can shift social norms and no longer be tolerant of interpersonal violence. If you would like to discuss this more, please feel free to reach out to our HELPLINE **by calling/texting 1.888.606.HOPE(4673).**

Q: I had a shy mentally abusive and draining relationship with *** and it was just awful. **** went through it too... I'm now in a loving, healthy, happy relationship w/ ****.**

A: Thank you for sharing this with us. We are very sorry that you had this unfortunate experience of being in an abusive relationship. No one deserves to be abused. It is great to know that now you are happy and your relationship is loving and healthy. If you'd like to talk more about this, we encourage you to reach out to our Helpline at the number listed above!

Q: Worried to talk to new people because you are scared they might be rude and not want to talk to you.

A: Thank you for sharing this with us. Talking and getting to meet new people can certainly be scary. If you would like to talk more about this, please feel free to reach out to our Helpline Mon-Fri, 3-9pm by calling/texting 888-606-4673. We are here for you!

Q: Women are scary, they are backstabbing h*, I'm tired of this I'm turning gay**

A: We are very sorry you feel this way. Please reach out to our helpline for additional support. You are not alone and we are here to help! You can contact us M-F 3-9 PM at **1.888.606.HOPE(4673).**

Q: I feel like my parents give off verbal and mental abuse, especially my mom, she mostly plays "victim" and tries to make me feel bad because she can't own up to her mistakes. She isn't physically abusive but it just sticks in my mind.

A: Thank you for reaching out to us. Emotional/verbal abuse is still abuse and should be taken very seriously. We know that emotional abuse sticks in our minds and can have a toll on our well-being. Healing from any type of abuse can be challenging, but you are not alone and support is available if you need it. You do not deserve to be abused in any way. If you would like to talk more about this, please feel free to reach out to our helpline M-F 3-9 PM at **1.888.606.HOPE(4673)** for free, confidential, non-judgmental support. We are here for you!

Q: Begged for nuded pictures after I say no, from a bunch of people. Receive unwanted pictures.

A: We are sorry you've experienced this. No one deserves to be forced or coerced into sending nudes or receiving unwanted images. Receiving unwanted pictures/videos is another form of harassment and abuse, too. We are really sorry you had to go through this, but you are not alone and we are here for you. We highly encourage you to talk to a trusted adult about what's going on. For free, confidential support, you can reach one of our advocates at our helpline M-F 3-9 PM by calling/texting 1.888.606.HOPE(4673).

Q: I work myself harder than I need to, physically and mentally because I feel like I deserve it. From the stress from school and at home to be the best I can I push my limits. What is a healthy way to relieve stress?

A: Thank you for reaching out and sharing this with us. Self-care is very important, and we are so glad you are asking about healthy ways to relieve some of that stress. Self-care can look different for each individual, so we encourage you to try a few things out to see what works for you. Maybe a good way to relieve stress could be taking some time to slow down and meditate, or even journaling. Journaling is writing down all of your thoughts, feelings and emotions to get them out of our system. It can also be kind of therapeutic. Another healthy way to relieve stress could be to catch up on some reading, or engaging in some kind of art, like drawing or painting. Another option is to talk to someone about the stress you're feeling. If you would like to further talk about this, or anything else you need support with, feel free to reach out to one of our advocates on our helpline by calling/texting **1.888.606.HOPE(4673)**. We are here for you!

Q: How can one work on their empathy? Specifically fighting gender stereotypes with men. How can we help them be more comfortable being themselves?

A: This is a great question, thank you for asking. Unfortunately, unhealthy gender norms are very common in our society, and we know that rigid beliefs in unhealthy gender norms can contribute to power and control in our relationships. Working on our empathy can be a process. One way to work on being more empathic is to try talking about our feelings in real-life situations, and encouraging men to do this, also. It's also important for men to support each other in being more empathic and navigating rigid gender norms. If you'd like to talk more about this or any other topics you might have questions on, feel free to reach out to our Helpline at the number listed above. We are here for you!

Q: Why do the boys of our grade refuse to acknowledge that their peers are the problem.

Related Submission: Q: Why do boys in our grade deny that they are the problem?

A: Acknowledging that there is a problem could be one of the first steps towards change. Some boys might feel influence from their peers and may very well deny that those same peers are the problem. Sometimes, it can take time to realize that our behavior is abusive or toxic, also. They might not know they're contributing to a problem, especially if they were taught abusive behavior while growing up. This doesn't excuse abusive behavior, but it could be a possible reason for why some people act out of power and control. If you would like to talk more about this, please feel free to reach out to our helpline M-F 3-9 PM at **1.888.606.HOPE(4673)**.

Q: Men shouldn't feel pressured to stay in an abusive relationship because they just need to "man up" or "be strong."

A: You are right, no one should be pressured into staying in any relationship. The "man up" & "be strong" comments are often based on unhealthy gender norms that are very harmful to all genders. Those same gender norms can prevent men from reaching out for help. Abuse has no bias, and anyone can be perpetrators and victims of abuse. If you or someone you know needs support, we encourage you to reach out to our helpline at **1.888.606.HOPE(4673)**.

Q: My dad broke my moms arm when I was a baby. He used to throw me against walls. He used to get drunk and leave me as a baby, not taken care of. It's ok now I see a therapist and he's not my dad any more.

A: Thank you for being so brave to share this with us, we know it can be hard to talk about these experiences. It sounds like you and your mom have been through a lot, and we're glad that you are seeing a therapist for support now. No one deserves to be abused in any way. Healing takes time, and we would like you to know that you are not alone and we are here to support you, too. If you would like to further talk about this, please feel free to reach out to our helpline by calling/texting **1.888.606.HOPE(4673) M-F 3-9 PM**.

Q: How do I get out of an emotionally abusive relationship if threats were made and you're too scared to leave because you don't want hurt and you don't want them hurting themselves?

A: We want you to know that you are not alone, and we are glad that you reached out for support. Leaving an abusive relationship is not easy, it may take several attempts and also may take some time. It's important to remember that the most dangerous time in an abusive relationship is when the survivor tries to leave. If you are concerned about you or your partner's safety, please contact a BLOOM365 advocate or another trusted adult so that you can create a [safety plan](#). If you do not fear for your safety, you may try to communicate how you feel using "I statements," letting them know that you believe this relationship isn't beneficial for you and you'd like to go your separate ways. If your partner is unwilling to let you leave and/or continues to make threats, we encourage you to reach out to a trusted adult or BLOOM365 advocate for assistance in safely exiting the relationship. For more information or support, please text/call our Helpline at **888-606-4673, M-F 3-9pm MST**. We are here for you!

Q: How do I stop a rumor if it was someone I thought I could trust when I told them I was sexually assaulted when I was 12 and now people know. I'm being called names like sl*t and it's slowly damaging my mental health and I can't say anything because I don't know who started it? I'm just stuck.

A: Thank you for being brave enough to share this with us and for reaching out for help. It is not your fault that your story of abuse has been shared with others. While stopping the rumor and gossip can be difficult to do, there are some things that you can do to take care of yourself. If you feel comfortable doing so, we encourage you to talk to a trusted adult in your life, such as family members, school teachers or counselors about what's going on. We know that this is affecting your mental health, and your emotional safety is very important to us. We also encourage you to practice self-care while coping with these experiences. Self-care can look different for everyone, but some examples that might be

helpful are: Spending time with the people you love, practicing yoga, taking a bath, joining a new sports team or club, or simply going for a walk. For additional support or information, we encourage you to reach out to our Helpline at the number listed above. We are here to support you!

Q: What if you like it? Let's say I've been depressed for a few years, been on meds and stuff. I have no friends, and nothing to do besides smoke on my own sometimes but then (did happen) I get into a relationship after about 2 weeks there starts to be some issues, yelling, throwing things, some forced sexual actions. And of course it makes me uncomfortable and angry, but I don't want it to stop? It's like we have this undivided focus on each other. It's also amusing. I mean I kinda enjoy this. I guess it makes me feel closer. I'm the only one who sees the real him, I don't want him to change. What's wrong with me?

A: Thank you for being so brave to share this with us. First and foremost we would like you to know that there is nothing wrong with you. You are the expert in your own life and have the power to choose who you are in a relationship with and what you want out of a relationship. However, you do not deserve to be abused in any way. It seems that you have been through a lot, and you are very brave and strong. Being in a healthy relationship requires that both people are cared for, respected, and feel equal. Yelling, screaming, throwing things and being forced into sexual actions are considered abuse and can become dangerous. We encourage you to consider your deal-makers and deal-breakers in a relationship, and also the qualities that you feel are essential in building a healthy relationship. Please feel free to reach out to our Helpline where one of our advocates could talk to you more about what you are going through. We can be reached at M-F 3-9PM at **1.888.606.HOPE(4673)**.

Q: I wish everything would get better. Why do I constantly feel not good enough? Why do people not ask for consent. I'm so tired. I wish that one thing never happened.

A: We want you to know that you are not alone, and we are glad that you reached out for support. Things can get better, but it may take some time. It can also take time to build our self-esteem and to change our thoughts and feelings of not being enough into the belief that we are wonderful just the way we are. When it comes to consent—some people might not know how to ask for consent, they might not know what consent is, or they might have other reasons altogether. That's why we're so passionate at BLOOM365 about teaching consent and how important it is. If you have additional questions or want to talk more about these topics, feel free to reach out to our Helpline at the number listed above for free, confidential, non-judgmental support.

Q: My gf keeps hurting me physically, she broke my finger.

A: We are sorry to hear this, thank you for reaching out for support. We want you to know that you are not alone. You deserve to be treated with respect in your relationships, and you deserve to feel safe in your relationships, also. Your safety is a priority— If you're concerned about your safety or your girlfriend's behavior, we encourage you to reach out to a BLOOM365 Advocate or a trusted adult for support. We are here for you!

Q: Why do I feel so worthless? Why do men suck? Why is everything so bad now? Why am I so damn ugly?

A: We are very sorry you are feeling that way and we would like you to know that you are not alone. Feeling worthless sometimes involves a feeling of hopelessness, which could be due to past trauma, abuse, neglect or low self-esteem. We believe that all of us, every single person, is beautiful in our own special ways. Society may try to impose certain standards that are unrealistic. Building up our self-esteem is a process that could take some time, but it can be done. One way to start building your self-esteem is to start focusing on yourself and the things that make you unique. Writing those things down and being reminded of them could have a positive effect on you over time. If you would like to talk more about this, please feel free to reach out to our helpline by calling/texting **1.888.606.HOPE(4673)**.

Q: I'm coming out and I need inspiration.

A: Thank you for reaching out and sharing this with us! By deciding to come out, you are already an inspiration to other people! You aren't alone if you're feeling worried, anxious, or afraid. There is no right or wrong way to come out. The most important thing is that you stay safe, physically and emotionally. Coming out may be a process and can take time. Some resources that you may find helpful are the Trevor Project's [Coming Out 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 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. We are here to support you!

Q: Why do boys typically believe emotional/mental abuse isn't real? Is it because of gender stereotypes pushed on them by family and peers?

A: This could have a lot to do with gender stereotypes and rigid gender norms. Those same unhealthy gender norms are very common in our society and sometimes passed on from generation to generation. As you've mentioned, there is also peer influence that could contribute to the disbelief of the seriousness of abuse. This is very serious because emotional/mental abuse affects all genders and can have lasting effects on our lives. If you would like to talk more about this important issue, please feel free to reach out to our Helpline at **1.888.606.HOPE(4673)**.

Q: Why does society try to have an excuse for everything if they do something offensive or discriminating?

A: This is such a great question, thank you for bringing this up. When we fail to hold offenders accountable for their actions, a message is sent that being offensive and discriminatory is acceptable. Offending people and discriminating is never ok. We know that being discriminated against could have a physical and emotional effect on us. By asking these questions and promoting conversations about diversity and discrimination, along with raising awareness when we see these types of injustices, we can change the patterns in society that have previously made excuses for discrimination and other offenses. If you would like to talk further about this, please feel free to reach out to our helpline at **1.888.606.HOPE(4673)**.

Q: How do I train myself to be okay with myself?

A: This is a very important question, and referring to it as “training” is really fitting! Being ok with our whole selves is a process that requires time and practice (training). Building our self-esteem can be challenging, but knowing what you want is the first step towards achieving it. Changing the way we think about ourselves can change the way we feel about ourselves. We want you to know that you are not alone feeling this way. We encourage you to focus on the qualities and characteristics that make you unique. We know that sometimes society focuses on the things that we are insecure about, which is why it is so important to remind ourselves of those things that we value in ourselves, such as our personality and our strengths. Another tool to build self-esteem is writing some of those qualities down and reading them on a regular basis, like affirmations that will serve as a reminder of those positive things. If you would like to talk further about this, please feel free to reach out to our helpline at **1.888.606.HOPE(4673)**. We are here for you!

Q: What happens if 2 toxic/abusive people are in a relationship with each other? Are they even more toxic than other relationships?

A: Unfortunately, in any relationship there is a possibility that both partners can contribute to abuse or toxicity, and the situation can potentially escalate. No one deserves to be abused in any way and people should feel safe and cared for when being in a relationship. It’s important to remember that people can change if they choose to. If those toxic/abusive behaviors are recognized and both people decide to do something about it, the relationship could evolve into a healthy relationship. If you would like to talk about this further, please feel free to reach out to our helpline at **1.888.606.HOPE(4673)** for free, confidential, non-judgmental support.

Q: People see me as annoying and I may laugh it off but it’s hard to be different? I have lost my confidence in debate because of peers what do I do?

A: We are so sorry to hear that you are having these experiences - especially in a space where you have felt comfortable before. It can be hard to feel misunderstood by your peers and to have peers make you feel uncomfortable at school. If you feel comfortable, you could reach out to a trusted adult that’s part of your school or debate club and talk with them about the experiences you’ve been having. They might have some helpful advice or ideas on how to make debate a safe place for everyone who joins.

Feeling that people see you as annoying can definitely impact your self esteem and how you see yourself. It might be a good idea to take some time to nurture your self-confidence. This could look like taking the time to remember the things you love about yourself and write them down so that you always have those reminders. Doing your own daily affirmations and spending time doing the things that make you happy can be helpful tools in building up our self-esteem. Please remember that you are not less than or inferior to anyone else because you’re different - those are the things that make you unique! You are deserving of feeling safe and comfortable while doing the things that make you happy! If you would like to talk further about this, please feel free to reach out to our helpline at **1.888.606.HOPE(4673)**.

Q: I'm tired of my girlfriend hurting me, she does things with me without consent, and hurts me when I don't do it.

A: We are very sorry your girlfriend is hurting you, you do not deserve to be hurt in any way. Consent is a very important part of being in a relationship. If you feel like you are unsafe, we encourage you to talk to a trusted adult about what's going on. Also, if you are not receiving the love you would like, you might want to consider if this is a relationship you want to be in. If the relationship is based on power and control, you might want to have a conversation in which you share what you are feeling and thinking. We suggest you do this by using "I" statements. For example, saying "I feel hurt when you do things without my consent, can you please ask me if something is OK before doing it to/with me?" It might be helpful to try explaining that when your boundaries are not being respected, you feel a certain way. Your physical and emotional safety is of most importance. If you'd like to talk more about this, please reach out to our Helpline M-F 3-9 PM by calling/texting **1.888.606.HOPE(4673)**.

Q: My girlfriend touches me inappropriately without my consent.

A: Thank you for bravely sharing an experience that is so vulnerable and can feel very scary. We are glad that you reached out to us and we are sorry that you are having an experience with your girlfriend where she does not respect your boundaries. 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. Healthy relationships involve respecting our partner's boundaries—and if your girlfriend pressures you or threatens you because you do not consent, or if you feel that she is not respecting your boundaries, those could be signs that you're in an unhealthy relationship. 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. Ultimately, it is up to you to decide if your relationship is unhealthy or if you want to continue, but we hope these tools are helpful to you as you navigate this relationship. You are deserving of healthy and safe relationships where your boundaries and "no's" are respected. If you would like to talk further about this, please feel free to reach out to our helpline at **1.888.606.HOPE(4673)**.

Q: I go to therapy and I'm working on my anxiety/dep/self love, but I just can't stop lowering my self-esteem. Any thoughts?

A: Thank you for reaching out for additional insight and support! It is great that you are able to recognize areas in your life where you may need extra support. It's also fantastic that you are meeting with a licensed therapist and that you have a space to safely explore your concerns of anxiety, depression, and self-love. Building healthy self-esteem is a process that 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 big step in creating that healthy self-esteem for yourself. A few tips that we can share to support you in building your self esteem include: taking time to remember the things you love about yourself (your strengths, aspirations, personality/physical characteristics, etc.) and writing them down, doing your own daily affirmations, and spending time doing the things that make you happy could be helpful in this process. We would also encourage you to talk with your therapist about this, as well, as they might have some additional helpful tips for building self-esteem. If you would like to talk further about this, please feel free to reach out to our helpline at **1.888.606.HOPE(4673)**.

Q: I beat my girl

A: Thank you for being honest and sharing this with us. BLOOM365 encourages healthy, safe relationships for all. We encourage you to reach out to a BLOOM365 Advocate or another trusted adult for support. Change is possible, and we would like to help you. Please feel free to reach out to our helpline, you can contact us at **1.888.606.HOPE(4673)** M-F 3-9pm MST for free, confidential, non-judgmental support.

Q: How do I get myself out of an abusive relationship if threats were made? Like threatening if I leave they'll kill themselves. Things like that. Like I don't want him to but I don't want to be in the relationship.

A: We want you to know that you are not alone, and we are here for you at BLOOM365. We are sorry to hear that you have experienced these things, and we want you to know that none of it is your fault. You have the right to set boundaries and to leave relationships, and it is not your fault that this person is making these threats. 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 kill you or themselves if you end the relationship is one of the [Top 5 Red Flags](#) that increases your 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. We encourage you to talk to a trusted adult, such as a school counselor or social worker, a parent or teacher, or a BLOOM365 advocate for additional support. We are here for you!

Q: Why are girls shamed for wearing what they feel confident in?

A: Thank you for asking this important question. There are a lot of complex reasons why girls may feel shamed for wearing certain clothes or for dressing in certain ways. Unhealthy gender norms and stereotypes in society about how different genders should dress and behave could have an impact on why this shame shows up. 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. These are unhealthy because people who do not follow norms may be ridiculed or made fun of - such as when girls decide to wear clothes they like that others may disagree with. The important thing to remember is that these norms and stereotypes are not facts but rather some people’s opinions. When we ask the questions that you’re asking and engage in productive conversations about these unhealthy gender stereotypes, we can begin to break those norms down. Once we know what the issue is, we can work together for justice and equity. We hope that you continue to ask these important questions and have these conversations with those around you. Together, we can break down these unhealthy gender assumptions and stereotypes!

Q: Really good topic to talk about! It's important that the struggles women have to face is mentioned, so thank you!

A: We are so glad that you enjoyed our conversation together about unhealthy gender norms, thank you for sharing your honest feedback! These conversations can feel uncomfortable at times, but the more we engage in productive conversations around these unhealthy and unfair gendered norms, the easier it will

be to break down these stereotypes and their impacts. Thank you for being open to having these conversations and we hope that you continue to have them with those around you!

Q: How do I control my anger?

A: Thank you for coming to us with such an important question. We are glad that you asked this! Having challenges controlling anger is a common experience, and you are not alone having this question or concern. Anger is a normal human emotion and with the right tools, it can be a healthy emotion to feel. The American Psychological Association has a [very helpful online brochure](#) to assist in understanding what anger is and how to control it. If controlling your anger feels like something you need extra support with, you could always reach out to a trusted adult or BLOOM365 Advocate who can help you navigate your anger and find tools that work for you. If you would like support in finding resources or would like to talk more about your concerns with anger, please feel free to reach out to one of our advocates online at bloom365.org or by call/text at 1.888.606.HOPE(4673). You are not alone in this journey!

Q: I'm gay why do I get ridiculed by most men when they like women too

A: Thank you for sharing such a vulnerable experience with us. We are sorry that you are being ridiculed for your sexuality. You deserve to feel safe and supported for who you are, not made to feel mistreated or misunderstood. Unfortunately the reasons why other people do not understand LGBTQ+ identities can be confusing, complicated, or hard to know and understand. There can be a lot of misunderstandings and unhealthy stereotypes of what it means to be LGBTQ+ in our society that can make it hard for others who are not a part of the LGBTQ+ community to understand those experiences. 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. 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. You are not alone and there are lots of people out there who are understanding and supportive of who you are!

Q: I liked this topic today. Very spot on with the expectations that society has for certain genders and the effect it has. It is very important to discuss this because so many young people have closed minds when it comes to gender norms, but it can help when these problems are recognized

A: Thank you for your insightful feedback! We are glad that you liked the topics that we discussed during our time together. We hope you continue to have these conversations with those around you! Together, we can break down these harmful gender norms!

Q: Here is my anonymous story. When I was 12 I was with my family. I had to use the bathroom and was trusted to go alone. Worst idea of my life. I got taken by this man that I didn't know and he took me to the bathroom and raped me. I felt so alone and uneasy, no one helped me, no one heard my cries and screams. I felt like no one cared and didn't tell anyone till a year later. I felt to blame. I never wish this upon anyone

A: Thank you for entrusting us with your experience. We are so glad that you felt comfortable in our time together to share an experience that has deeply impacted you. We are so sorry that you experienced

such a traumatic assault. What you experienced was not your fault and we understand how difficult it was to carry this experience on your own for a year. We're glad that you told someone, and that you are continuing to share your truth. We would like to take a moment to gently remind you that your assault was not your fault, that you were not to blame, that you did not deserve that and that you are deeply cared for. If you are open to receiving extra support as you navigate this traumatic experience, it could be helpful to talk to a trusted adult, counselor, or BLOOM365 Advocate, or you could reach out to an advocate at the Arizona Coalition To End Domestic and Sexual Violence at [\(602\) 279-2900](tel:6022792900). Our advocates at BLOOM365 are available if you would like to talk further or would like access to additional resources. You can reach us online at bloom365.org, or at our Helpline number at 1.888.606.HOPE(4673). You are deserving of healing and you are not alone!

Q: Why do the boys in front of me keep laughing at this?

A: It can feel very confusing when you are discussing serious topics and others' reactions do not seem to match the tone of the conversation. We want to acknowledge how uncomfortable that may feel to witness. Everyone reacts differently when tough topics are brought up and while someone's reaction may make us feel upset or confused, we cannot successfully guess or understand why someone else has the reaction that they do. It could be helpful to acknowledge our own reactions to tough topics and other people's reactions as it could help us better understand ourselves. The more we have these tough conversations, the easier they will become and the more we can create an equal and just world where everyone has the right to experience healthy and loving relationships. Thank you for sharing your observations!

Q: Why is (student name) so insensitive about important issues?

A: Thank you for sharing your concerns with us. It can feel frustrating and dismissive when we feel as though someone is being insensitive about important topics. There are a lot of complex reasons why someone may seem insensitive about intense topics. The information could be new to them and they don't know how to react, some people do not have the tools yet to approach heavy issues, or maybe someone has not had the chance to nurture their empathy for others or for intense topics. Whatever the reasons may be, we aren't able to read others' minds to know why they act in certain ways. It could be helpful to acknowledge our own internal reactions to tough topics or to other people's reactions as it could help us better understand ourselves. We can use that self-knowledge to become better within ourselves in being understanding and empathetic to important issues and how they may impact others. The more we have these tough conversations, the easier they will become and the more we can create a more equitable world where everyone has the right to experience healthy and loving relationships.

Q: My girlfriend talks to other men

A: Thank you for reaching out to us. If this bothers you, it might be helpful to have a conversation with your girlfriend about how this makes you feel. We encourage you to utilize "I statements" to facilitate healthy, clear communication. For example, using the framework "I feel _____ when _____, could you/we please _____" might be helpful in getting our point across without the other person feeling attacked. We should consider whether the relationships we have currently are built on trust and respect. If your girlfriend is unwilling to work it out, or if you're unable to make changes using

“I-statements,” it might be helpful to consider whether this is a relationship you want to continue or not. If you’d like to talk more about this, feel free to reach out to us at the number above for free, confidential support. We are here for you!