

# Elephant in The Room Q & A

Peoria Accelerated HS Fall 2018



\*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. Beginning January 7th, our advocacy line will be open for texts and calls Monday-Thursday from 3PM-9PM! To reach a specific advocate directly, visit <a href="http://www.bloom365.org/contact">www.bloom365.org/contact</a>.</p> <p><b>Text/Call: 1-888-606-HOPE (4673)</b></p> <p>Join us every Monday, Wednesday, and/or Thursday evening for one of our drop-in support groups (Holidays excluded)!</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. Peer/Teen Counselors answer the hotline from 3pm-9pm every day, including weekends and holidays.</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>National Human Trafficking Hotline</b></p>	<p>1-888-373-7888</p>
<p><b>Crisis and Suicide Prevention</b></p>	<p>Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)</p> <p>Crisis Text Line: Text TALK to 741741</p>

**Wondering how to reach out for help/support?**

Check out page 22 in your workbook or visit [www.bloom365.org/resources](http://www.bloom365.org/resources)

**Q: Student**

**A: BLOOM365 Advocate**

*\*Please note that any personally identifying information or details have been removed from questions\**

**DOSE 1 & 2**

**1) Q: Is there a way to help someone if their partner is disrespectful and raises their voice in anger?**

**A:** Anger is a natural human emotion. Most humans have felt or experienced anger. Healthy anger can prompt use to make positive changes and stand up for ourselves. However, anger can become unhealthy and is never an excuse to treat someone poorly. We all have the ability to choose how we are going to treat another person, even if we are angry. We all make a deliberate choice in whether we are going to treat someone with equality and freedom or power and control.

It sounds like this person may be exhibiting signs of power and control or unhealthy communication. If the situation is dangerous we should reach out to the trusted adults in our lives, the school social worker, and BLOOM365 advocates for help. If you have any concerns about your safety in this situation, we do not recommend confronting this person. If the situation is not dangerous and you feel comfortable and safe to do so, you can visit page 20 in your workbook for tips on how to start the conversation with this person.

It may also be helpful to utilize the communication technique we learned in Dose 6 to express how this person's actions make you feel. I statements allow us to take ownership of our own emotions and can help avoid defensive responses. For example, "I feel frustrated when you begin to yell at \_\_\_\_\_. It know you care about \_\_\_\_\_, and I don't think you mean to hurt them or make them feel bad about themselves. I know communicating can be difficult, but I feel communicating in a more healthy and respectful way could help resolve problems more efficiently and prevent \_\_\_\_\_ from feeling inadequate." Perhaps providing this person 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.

**2) Q: The one who is abusing, is there a way to change them?**

**A:** It can be difficult for someone to change unhealthy behaviors they have developed, but they certainly can change if they want to! It is much more likely that this person will be successful in changing their behavior if the problem is addressed early on, while they are still young. However, it's important to note that this is a decision that the person has to make for themselves. The first step is for them to recognize the problematic behavior and to decide that they want to change! BLOOM365 advocates are available for free, confidential support if you or someone you know would like to discuss this situation further. Feel free to text or call the number above, or chat with us online at [www.bloom365.org](http://www.bloom365.org)!

**3) Q: Why do people date people they don't like?**

**A:** There are a lot of barriers to leaving an abusive relationship, which is why it's important that we never blame the victim for staying in an abusive relationship. Additionally, people do not usually begin a relationship as overtly abusive or controlling. There is a gradual progression of power and control. It can first show up as possessive jealousy or even in comments about your choice of clothing or friends. Oftentimes if we were raised in an environment where abuse was

present, the early signs/actions can be really tough to spot because they could be viewed as okay or normal. Sometimes people mistake possessive jealousy as a sign that the person cares about you, but it's important to know that you have the right to choose who you hang out with, what you wear, what your boundaries are, etc.

**4) Q: How do unhealthy/abusive relationships develop? Why?**

**A:** People become abusive because they believe they have the right to gain and maintain power & control over another person. Choosing to have power and control over someone else or to have equality and freedom in our relationships is a deliberate choice that we all make. People do not usually begin a relationship as overtly abusive or controlling. There is a gradual progression of power and control. It can first show up as possessive jealousy or even in comments about your choice of clothing or friends. Oftentimes if we were raised in an environment where abuse was present, the early signs/actions can be really tough to spot because they could be viewed as okay or normal (taught abusive behavior). Sometimes it takes direct education, like the 7-Dose Bloom It Up curriculum or a friend's concern to notice what's really going on. In Doses 3 and 4, we explored additional root causes of abuse (patriarchy, oppression, unhealthy gender norms, insecurity, etc.)

**5) Q: How do you know you are in an unhealthy/abusive relationship?**

**A:** It might be useful to look at the blooming and wilting flowers to help you to determine whether a relationship is healthy or unhealthy. It's also important to remember your rights and responsibilities within relationships. In a relationship, you have the right to: Make decisions together (equality), have opinions, express your feelings, and choose activities (freedom), be yourself (individuality), and safety. You also have the responsibility of respecting these rights of your partner and your partner's boundaries. Healthy relationships are stemmed in equality and freedom and exhibit the words seen in the center of the blooming flower. The red flags checklist in your workbook is also a great resource to identify signs that a relationship may potentially be unhealthy or abusive. If you believe you may be in an unhealthy or abusive relationship, please know that support is available! Feel free to reach out to an advocate above for free, confidential support.

**6) Q: Are there more than 2 genders?**

**A:** Biological sex is different than gender identity. Biological sex is the sex we are assigned at birth, which is generally male or female. There are cases, however, where people are born intersex which is that their biological sex is not as clear cut as male or female.

Gender identity is different than sex in that gender is how we identify regardless of the sex we are assigned at birth. People can feel male or female or they can feel like they do not identify on the gender binary. They can identify as neither male or female or both male and female. Gender identity is on an infinite spectrum. For more information about gender identity please visit the GLAAD resource page about being transgender or gender nonconforming.

**7) Q: Why does Alex act the way he does? He's probably going through something at home.**

**A:** There are a number of root causes that we explored during Doses 3 and 4 for why someone might choose to use power and control over someone else. Some people may be abusive to their partners because they were exposed to violence in their homes as a child and taught that this behavior was normal or okay. Rigid belief in gender norms can also play a role. Insecurity is another root cause. If someone lacks confidence, they may try to gain power or control over

their partner in an attempt to feel better. Remember, though, that even though these root causes may increase one's risk of becoming a perpetrator, they still can make the deliberate choice to have relationships based in equality and freedom. Even if Alex had stuff going on at home, he is still the one who made the choice to treat Natalie that way and nobody deserves to be abused.

**8) Q: How many people call this number on the daily?**

**A:** It varies, depending on how many schools and events we are at where people learn about us! However, teens typically reach out via text much more often than they do by calling the hotline! Most of our hotline calls are actually from adults; parents requesting support for their teens, victims of Domestic Violence who are looking for resources and support, and community partners and school personnel wondering about our program!

**9) Q: I had a good time learning today.**

**A:** We are so happy to hear that! If you are interested in getting involved and helping create change, we encourage you to join our Peer Advocate Crew (PAC!). Check out page 8 in your workbook or visit [bloom365.org/peeradvocatecrew](http://bloom365.org/peeradvocatecrew) for more info! You can also email at [marli@bloom365.org](mailto:marli@bloom365.org) to learn more about opportunities to get involved!

**10) Q: Abuse is a difficult subject to solve, so I'm glad we are talking about it.**

**A:** We agree. Sometimes it's hard to have these conversations, but they are so important! Knowing that one in three teens (33%) experiences dating abuse before their 18th birthday, our goal is to decrease this statistic and work towards a healthier, safer society. Our goal is to provide you all with tips and tools to help you have healthier friendships and relationships both now and in the future!

**11) Q: Did you and other members of BLOOM365 know each other before this program?**

**A:** For the most part, no! All of us at BLOOM365 have different reasons for why we chose to be involved with BLOOM365. However, we all share a passion for promoting healthy relationships and preventing power-based violence!

**12) Q: Is it bad if you and your partner don't have anything in common?**

**A:** Not necessarily! Healthy relationships are stemmed in equality and freedom and exhibit the characteristics and words you see in the center of the blooming flower! It may be helpful to consider your deal breakers that we talked about during Dose 5. If you haven't already, we encourage you to take a moment to think about and write down what your own deal breakers are. We should also consider our deal makers and why these things are important to us. You should always remember why it's important to you that your partner doesn't have/do "X" and why he/she/they does have/do "Y." Let's say my deal breaker was if someone doesn't have goals/isn't ambitious and my deal maker was someone who enjoys spending time outdoors. If I start to date someone who isn't ambitious and who doesn't enjoy spending time outdoors, I'm probably going to constantly be nagging them to set goals/work towards bettering themselves and I'm not going to be able to enjoy doing what I love with them (spending time outdoors). If I held true to my deal breakers, my relationship would likely be much healthier and happier.

So, taking time to identify and reflect on your own deal makers/deal breakers and remembering WHY they are important is a great starting point. This is not to say that you and your partner need to have things in common, but rather for you to make the decision on your own of what is

important to you in your relationships based on your own personal deal breakers and deal-makers!

**13) Q: Why do people get so aggressive?**

**A:** Anger is a natural emotion with a wide range of intensity, from mild irritation and frustration to rage. Everyone experiences anger and it can be healthy or unhealthy. Anger can be caused by rejection, frustration, abandonment, guilt, humiliation, betrayal, fear, or even pain.

We all have the ability to control how we treat other people, no matter how angry we are. People become abusive because they believe they have the right to gain and maintain power & control over another person. Choosing to have power and control over someone else or to have equality and freedom in our relationships is a deliberate choice that we all make. Some people may choose to exert power and control over their partner because they were exposed to violence in their homes as a child and taught that this behavior was normal or okay. Rigid belief in gender norms can also play a role. Insecurity is another root cause. If someone lacks confidence, they may try to gain power or control over their partner in an attempt to feel better. Remember, though, that even though these root causes may increase one's risk of becoming a perpetrator, they still can make the deliberate choice to have relationships based in equality and freedom.

**14) Q: My aunt has been going through dating abuse, her boyfriend whom she has kids with no longer allows her to have a phone or have contact with anyone of her family. She doesn't want to admit that she needs help, she sometimes comes to me with bruises where he has hit her.**

**A:** First off, we want to thank you for sharing and reaching out for support. It can be very difficult to watch a family member as a victim in an abusive relationship, and we understand wanting to help them. Please know that it is not your responsibility to “rescue” your aunt, but there are some ways you can help if you so choose. For one, you can serve as a supportive person in your aunt’s life. Let them know that you are there for them. It might be helpful to find ways to spend time alone with them doing activities you both enjoy, to help them recognize that they are loved and cared for.

If you feel comfortable, you can give them the number to the National Domestic Violence Hotline (1-800-799-SAFE(7233)). Don't be discouraged if they are not ready to make the call. Remember the importance of not blaming the victim and understand there are a lot of barriers to leaving an abusive relationship. We should also remember that the most dangerous time in an abusive relationship is when the survivor tries to leave. You can continue to let them know you are there for them, and that the hotline is available whenever they are ready to make the call. You can also reach out to a BLOOM365 advocate by calling or texting the number above. We can provide you with local resources and talk with you more about helping a family member in this situation.

**15) Q: Are you guys hiring? How can I help get the word out?**

**A:** Thank you so much for offering to help! We are not currently hiring for any paid-positions, however we have a huge need for volunteers! Please text, call, or chat with us online to discuss how you can help us in getting the word out! You can also email our Volunteer Coordinator, Marli, at [marli@bloom365.org](mailto:marli@bloom365.org) to talk more about how you can help! Feel free to check out our

website [www.bloom365.org/volunteer](http://www.bloom365.org/volunteer) to learn about some of the volunteer opportunities with have available for both teens and adults!

**16) Q: My mom was abused along with me when I was a tween. And also I had a very bad abusive relationship. Seeing videos about it makes me have flashbacks and I need to leave. I left my abusive relationship.**

**A:** First off, we want to thank you so much for being brave enough to share and want you to know that you are not alone. We recognize that this material can be difficult to talk about and can be triggering if you have experienced this stuff. We encourage you to do whatever you need to do to take care of yourself- Whether that being stepping out of the classroom, putting your head down, or another form of self-care. Please know that our advocates are always available to talk and we'd be happy to meet or talk with you if you need to talk to someone. Additionally, we encourage you to get involved in one of our weekly support groups. Our support group provides teens with the opportunity to walk through the healing process alongside others. Finding ways to cope can be really helpful. For example: spending time with the people you love, yoga, joining a new sports team or club, or simply going for a walk. 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 guidance on coping, please reach out to a Bloom Advocate at the number listed above.

#### **DOSE 3 & 4**

**17) Q: I am having problems at home with my mother and her abusive boyfriend. What should I do?**

**A:** We highly encourage you to reach out to a BLOOM365 advocate to discuss this situation further. You can text or call us at the number above or chat with us online for free, confidential support. Our advocates would be happy to help you create a safety plan and identify and discuss potential steps that can be taken to address your situation.

**18) Q: Where did the gender norms come from? Why did they start and how can we stop them?**

**A:** As we talked about in Dose 3, gender norms are ingrained into our culture. Historically we have seen these gender norms perpetuated through a system (and the root cause you learned about) called patriarchy. Patriarchy is a system that is designed to benefit men and masculine folks so that they can hold power in society. To make change around this issue we must first begin to break down the stereotypes that perpetuate the idea that men and women should not be treated as equals. BLOOM365 exists to help create change around issues like this through education, advocacy, and activism! If you are interested in getting involved in helping create change, we encourage you to join our Peer Advocate Crew (PAC!) Check out page 8 in your workbook or visit [bloom365.org/peeradvocatecrew](http://bloom365.org/peeradvocatecrew) for more info! You can also email at [marli@bloom365.org](mailto:marli@bloom365.org) to learn more about opportunities to get involved!

**19) I had fun today.**

We are so happy to hear that! If you are interested in getting involved and helping create change, we encourage you to join our Peer Advocate Crew (PAC!). Check out page 8 in your workbook or visit [bloom365.org/peeradvocatecrew](http://bloom365.org/peeradvocatecrew) for more info! You can also email at [marli@bloom365.org](mailto:marli@bloom365.org) to learn more about opportunities to get involved!

#### **DOSE 5 & 6**

**20) Q: I don't love myself. I hide behind a smile that hurts every time it forms and I'm okay with it, I really am. I feel like maybe you can love someone even if you don't care for yourself. I choose to love others how I want to love myself and I'm not sure if that's necessarily healthy. What did I do?**

**A:** We want you to know that you are not alone, and are so glad you reached out for support. A lot of times our society focuses on the things we are insecure about and things we wish we could change about ourselves. Focusing on the things we love about ourselves can be one helpful way to build your confidence. We 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. We recommend watching the following video on daily affirmations: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cgw8OFVHzd4>. 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. Our Instagram (@bloom365) also has a section under "Tips Tues" that has some additional tips for self-esteem and self-care. You can also check out page 32 in your workbook for some more tips on developing a healthy self-esteem. Our Monday night support group might also be a great option for you to begin building your self-esteem alongside others.

**21) Q: Why are people so negative? And why is it easy to be negative?**

**A:** It is not uncommon in our society for people to focus on the negative, and sometimes it's impossible to avoid hearing negative things. If someone is putting you down and you can't avoid being around them, it's important to make sure that the voice in your head is being kind since those around you are not. If you still have it, take your Hello I Am sheet and orange Post It note (three things you like about yourself) and keep them somewhere that you see everyday to remind yourself of the things that you like about yourself. Remind yourself that the negative things others say about you are not true and keep yourself busy doing things you enjoy! Additionally, a BLOOM365 advocate is always willing to provide a listening ear and support, please feel free to text/call the number above!

**22) Q: Why is it so hard to find things you like about yourself?**

**A:** Often society focuses on the things we are insecure about and things we wish we could change about ourselves more than the things that we love about ourselves, so please know you are not the only one feeling this way or having a difficult time with self-love. Try going back to the sticky-note activity we did during Dose 5. Focusing on the things that make us cool, special, and unique is a great way to start to develop love for ourselves. If you're having a difficult time thinking about these things, try and think about the things your friends or family have said they love and appreciate about you. Sometimes it can feel like an uncomfortable activity at first, but we encourage you to push past those uncomfortable feelings to discover all of the awesome things that make you, you! Writing these things down and having them easily accessible can help build your confidence and can be especially helpful on the days when you might be feeling down. We also recommend watching the following video on daily affirmations: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cgw8OFVHzd4>. 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. Our Instagram (@bloom365) also has a section under "Tips Tues" that has some additional tips for self-esteem and self-care. You can also check out page 32 in your workbook for some more tips on developing a healthy self-esteem, or join us for our Monday night support group to help build up your self-esteem alongside others.

**23) Q: Why is it so hard to love myself?**

**A:** We appreciate your willingness to open and be vulnerable. Focusing on the things we love about ourselves can be one helpful way to lift your 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. 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. I recommend watching the following video on daily affirmations: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cgw8OFVHzd4>. 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. Our Instagram (@bloom365) also has a section under “Tips Tues” that has some additional tips for self-esteem and self-care. Please know that you are not alone, and additional support is available if needed. Please reach out to BLOOM365 for a non-judgmental listening ear and information about available resources.

**DOSE 7**

**24) Q: I was so confident a couple of years ago, so why am I not now?**

**A:** It’s important to remember that developing a healthy self-esteem can take time. Self-love and self-confidence can be a life-long journey! You aren’t going to wake up everyday and feel 100%, but knowing that you are worthy of love and respect can help you to bounce back. Focusing on the things we love about ourselves can be one helpful way to lift your 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. 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. I recommend watching the following video on daily affirmations: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cgw8OFVHzd4>. 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. Our Instagram (@bloom365) also has a section under “Tips Tues” that has some additional tips for self-esteem and self-care. Please know that you are not alone, and additional support is available if needed. Please reach out to BLOOM365 for a non-judgmental listening ear and information about available resources.

**25) Q: Why am I just now struggling with self-esteem? How can I fix this?**

**A:** We want you to know that you are not alone, and are so glad you reached out for support. A lot of times our society focuses on the things we are insecure about and things we wish we could change about ourselves. Focusing on the things we love about ourselves can be one helpful way to build your confidence. Self-love and self-confidence can be a life-long journey! You aren’t going to wake up everyday and feel 100%, but knowing that you are worthy of love and respect can help you to bounce back. We 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. We recommend watching the following video on daily affirmations: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cgw8OFVHzd4>. 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. You can also check out page 32 in your workbook for some more tips on developing a healthy self-esteem. Our Monday night support group might also be a great option for you to



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