

# Elephant in The Room Q & A

Irene Lopez 7th Grade Spring 2019



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

## Resources:

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

<p><b>BLOOM365 Advocacy Line and Support Groups</b></p> <p>Peer Connection Mondays bloomMen Tuesdays LGBTQ+ Support Thursdays</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>. Text/Call: 1-888-606-HOPE (4673)</p> <p>Join us on Monday, Wednesday, and/or Thursday evening for one of our drop-in groups (Holidays excluded)!</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. Peer/Teen Counselors answer the hotline from 3pm-9pm every day, including weekends and holidays.</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>National Human Trafficking Hotline</p>	<p>1-888-373-7888</p>
<p>Crisis and Suicide Prevention</p>	<p>Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)</p> <p>Crisis Text Line: Text HOME 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)

### Video Resources:

- BLOOM365 Story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j0IgBIUfUZ4>
- Red Flags/Alex & Natalie Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lp2eljXWzgw>
- Gender Norms/Redefining Masculinity Video: <https://youtu.be/IJqwvgLtJyU>
- Jessica's Daily Affirmation Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XfEEbhcyEvE>
- Kid President's Leadership Lessons Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pWmxgYwcrLE>
- Tipping Point Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fW8amMCVAJQ&t=1s>

**Q: Student**

**A: BLOOM365 Advocate**

*\*Please note that any potentially identifying information has been modified or removed\**

### Sprouting Dose

**1) Q: What is the meaning of life?**

**A:** We encourage to think about what is important to you and what the meaning of life is for you personally. We can not truly answer this question, as it is a bit outside our speciality and the meaning of life is often different for every person. BLOOM365 and the Bloom It Up program exists so that all people have the skills and knowledge to build and grow healthy friendships and relationships! Our mission is to prevent teen dating abuse before it starts, in addition to other forms of power-based violence (domestic violence, sexual violence, bullying, etc.) We believe that by equipping you with the tools and knowledge on what healthy relationships look like and how to get help/help a friend if you are experiencing or witness an unhealthy relationship, we can start to see a change in our society around these issues.

**2) Q: Is manipulating bad in a relationship?**

**A:** No one should ever feel pressured to do something that they do not want to do. Manipulation

is a tactic often used by the abusive person in an unhealthy friendship or dating relationship. Healthy relationships are stemmed in caring and helpful behaviors, and exhibit the words in the center of the blooming flower- Love, respect, communication, fairness, etc.

**3) Q: Why do people take advantage of women?**

**A:** It all comes down to power and control and the root causes we explored in the Rooting Dose. When someone believes they have (or wants to have) power over another person or control them in some way, this often causes them to choose to engage in unhealthy or abusive behaviors. For some people, this might be because they feel insecure and try to bring others down as a way to feel better about themselves. For others, they might have been taught this behavior is normal or okay, either by witnessing in their own life or in the media. However, everyone has the choice to either treat people in caring and helpful ways or in controlling and hurtful ways. There is no excuse for abuse or violence. Unhealthy gender norms also play a role. Hyper-masculinity is, "The exaggeration of stereotypical male behavior with an emphasis on

strength, sexuality, and aggression.” While there is nothing wrong with being masculine, hyper masculinity becomes an issue when it causes the hyper-masculine partner to hold an unequal amount of power in the relationship, which can lead to unhealthy relationship stemmed in power and control.

### **Rooting Dose**

#### **4) Q: Girls and boys are able to do the same thing**

**A:** Gender roles can be a tricky subject sometimes. Our goal with Dose 3 is to shed light on unhealthy gender norms and how rigid beliefs in these norms is something that puts someone at a higher risk for having power and control in their relationship. Remember, though, that the definition of hyper-masculinity is, “The exaggeration of stereotypical male behavior with an emphasis on strength, sexuality, and aggression.” While there is nothing wrong with being masculine, hyper masculinity becomes an issue when it causes the hyper-masculine partner to hold an unequal amount of power in the relationship, which can lead to unhealthy relationship stemmed in power and control. As long as one person does not hold more power than the other because of their gender and both people feel free to be themselves, then that relationship can Bloom. We highly encourage you to watch our video that discusses the impact unhealthy gender norms can have on masculine-identified folks: <https://youtu.be/IJqwvgLtJyU>. Additionally, “Miss Representation” is a great documentary that explores how unhealthy gender norms impact feminine-identified folks.

#### **5) Q: Why is there homework?**

**A:** Our goal with the Bloom It Up program is provide you with the skills, tools, and knowledge to build and grow health friendships and dating relationships, free from abuse and violence. The homework is designed to help you reflect on what you’ve learned and how it applies to your own life!

### **Growing Dose**

#### **6) Q: Thank you for encouraging us**

**A:** You are very welcome! Thank you for your participation!

#### **7) Q: Have you ever gone through a lot of stuff and had a rough time?**

**A:** All of us at BLOOM365 have had different experiences and different reasons for why we chose to be involved with BLOOM365. Some of us have experienced or witnessed dating abuse or domestic violence in our own lives or the lives of our friends, while others have not. You can read more about BLOOM365 and our history by visiting [www.bloom365.org/story](http://www.bloom365.org/story).

#### **8) Q: One time I broke my skull and it hurt a lot**

**A:** We are sorry to hear that. We hope that everything turned out okay!

#### **9) Q: If I’m dating someone how can I have a good relationship?**

**A:** The Bloom It Up program was designed to equip you with the skills, tools, and knowledge to

build and grow healthy relationships! All of the information we discussed during the program is applicable to both friendships and dating relationships! Blooming relationships are stemmed in equality and freedom and exhibit the words in the center of the blooming flower (love, honesty, respect, kindness, encouragement, etc.) Healthy relationships also involve effective communication. We encourage you to use I-statements whenever possible, as they can be an effective tool for communication and conflict resolution! 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.

It can also be helpful to consider your deal breakers that we talked about during the Growing Dose. If you haven't already, we encourage you to take a moment to think about and write down

what our 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. Finding someone who is right for you is worth the wait to ensure you can maintain a happy, healthy relationship. This is not to say that you can't or shouldn't get to know this person, but rather for you to make that decision on your own based on your own personal deal breakers and deal-makers!

**10) Q: What do you like about yourself?**

**A:** I actually still have my orange sticky note from one of the first times I participated in the self-esteem dose saved in my planner! I wrote down that I love my smile, my sense of humor, and how I care about other people, which I still think are true. I hope you all hold onto your orange sticky notes and use them as a reminder of what you love about yourselves! -Meghan

**11) Q: Is it wrong to say man up to a boy if they are scared?**

**A:** Phrases like "man up" can be harmful, as it can make someone feel like their feelings aren't valid and perpetuates the stereotype that men always have been tough and can't show emotion.

It can also make masculine-identified folks less likely to reach out for help. We highly encourage you to watch our video that discusses this further: <https://youtu.be/IJqwvgLtJyU>.

**12) Q: Meghan, do you have insecurities?**

**A:** Self-esteem is something a lot of different people struggle with, including myself! Working for

BLOOM365, and being an advocate for healthy self-esteem, I've realized that I need to make sure

I'm practicing this in my own life. So although I sometimes do have insecurities that bother me, I make a conscious effort to follow the self-esteem tips we talked about in the Growing Dose. Some of my favorites are making sure that I am surrounded by positive supportive people as often as I can, and reframing my negative self-thoughts to positive ones when I find myself focusing on the negative things. Another thing that I found really helpful was following body positive Instagram accounts! -Meghan

**13) Q: How can I maintain friendships with friends who are fighting with each other?**

**A:** It may be helpful to utilize the communication techniques we learned in the Sprouting Dose to express how you are feeling and how you would like to see this issue resolved. I-statements allow us to take ownership of our own emotions and can help avoid defensive responses. For example, "I feel concerned that the issues you two are having will impact my friendships with you both, and it hurts me to see you two not get along. I don't want to see this come between us, can we all sit down and talk about things? Perhaps talking with your friends about tips for communicating effectively (such as those you learned during the Sprouting Dose) could be a good first step. 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.

**Rooting Dose**

**14) Q: Why do bullies bully**

**A:** People bully for many reasons but it all boils down to trying to gain or maintain power and control over someone else. Some people may bully others because they were exposed to unhealthy or abusive behaviors 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 someone else in an attempt to feel better. Remember, though, that even though these root causes may increase one's risk of becoming a bully, they still can make the deliberate choice to treat people in a caring way instead of in a controlling way. If someone is being bullied and we are witnesses to that, the best thing we can do is speak up and speak out. This can look like confronting the bully directly (if it is safe to do so) or telling a teacher or trusted adult. The most important thing to understand is that we must do SOMETHING."

