



**Elephant in The Room Q & A
Maryvale HS
Spring 2017**

Resources:

BLOOM365 Advocate	Text or call 602-799-7017 for free, confidential support. Please allow up to 24 hours to receive an initial response.
BLOOM365 Hotline	Call 1-888-606-HOPE (4673)
BLOOM365 Weekly Drop-In Support Group	Every Monday (Holidays excluded). Please email teens@bloom365.org for more information.
Teen Lifeline	Text or call 602-248-TEEN (8336) for free, confidential support 24/7 relating to suicide, depression, bullying, or relationships
National Domestic Violence Hotline	1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
National Sexual Assault Hotline	1-800.656.HOPE (4673)

Q: Student

A: BLOOM365 Advocate

1) Why does it hurt so much to leave someone?

Separation is a very difficult part of life whether it is the loss of a loved one because of death or the loss of a loved one by breaking ties. Once we develop love for someone it become difficult to let go naturally because of the emotional attachment. The barriers to leaving are many such as love, helplessness, dependency, or security. As the saying goes it is never easy to say goodbye, but with the coping mechanisms we discuss in the classroom we can help ourselves heal and move past painful moments in life.

2) Is it normal for people that are depressed to think of self-harm?

Sometimes depression can lead to self-harm. The important thing is that we recognize what we are doing can put us in harm and substitute it with the things that make us happy. We can spend more time with our friends and do activities that make us happy so that we are not thinking about self-harm. We can reach out to the trusted adults, school social worker, and BLOOM365 advocates. We can also get therapy and counseling that will help us heal.

3) How do you tell someone you're being abused?

Engaging in these conversations is not easy. The best thing we can do is be honest and open about the situation with a trusted adult in our life. The most important thing to do is reach out in a way, and to the person, that makes you feel most comfortable. Telling your someone about an abusive relationship can be hard, but your parents can help provide support during this difficult time and help you determine the best way to stay safe. If you don't feel comfortable telling parents everything, you can just let them know how you feel. For example, you can tell them that you're scared of your partner because of things that have happened. You can come together to talk about ways to keep you safe and if you want to take any legal action (i.e. protective order). You also have the option to reach out to someone who is not your parent for instance the school social worker or your BLOOM365 advocate. Some resources include: the National Teen Dating Violence Hotline (24/7 support: 1-866-331-9474 or text "loveis" to 22522), email teens@bloom365.org, local support: 1-888-606-HOPE (4673).

4) Have you yourselves been in an abusive relationship?

Our founder, Donna, was in an abusive relationship growing up and this is the reason why BLOOM365 was created because she had a passion for helping others who may be dealing with abuse in their relationships. We have all experience or witnessed some type of abuse in relationships growing up so we understand the detrimental impact they have on everyone. This is why we are all inspired to make sure every teen learns the difference between unhealthy and healthy relationships and how to develop the best relationships possible.

5) What happens if you are trying to help a friend and they push you away?

We should first understand the barriers to leaving an abusive relationship (fear, love, dependency, and insecurity). It's also important that we don't blame the victim. In your packet, you can reference the "5 Ways to Help a Friend Going Through Dating Abuse" to a start a conversation with the survivor. We cannot make people get help if they do not want to, but we can do everything in our power to help our friends feel supported. Sometimes our friends are not ready to accept the help we would like to offer them. The most important thing we can do is let our friends know that we are there for them when they are ready, make sure they are safe, and let them know that they are not alone. You can also reference the five ways to talk to a friend who is a victim page in your Bloom packet in order to get the conversation started. Especially if you recognize the top 5 risk factors on the red flags list, it's important to tell an adult you trust because this means that your friend could be at risk of getting injured or even killed.

6) How can you tell if someone loves you?

When someone loves us they treat us with kindness, respect, empathy, affection, and so many more great qualities that make us feel cherished. When someone loves us they are willing to treat us with equality and freedom and not power and control. It is also important to realize the we receive and give love in different manners; some people like hugging and kissing to show love, others might appreciate gifts and actions more. We should understand how we like to receive and how we show love to others.

7) What if you like someone, but you aren't sure if you are ready for a relationship. What do you do?

You should never feel pressured into dating if you do not feel you are ready or comfortable. One of the ways we gain confidence is by learning more about healthy relationships and how to avoid unhealthy relationships. We hope that by the time we are done with the program you have the confidence to know that relationships are a choice and that healthy relationships are possible for everyone.

8) Is it an abusive relationship if they make you feel guilty when you don't send pictures, and touches you when you don't wanna be touched?

Yes, these are some of the red flags discussed in the packet. If the pictures are nudes, we should know that this is against the law and that we can be charged for child pornography for sending such photos along with being labeled a sex offender. With regards to unwanted touching, that is definitely abusive behavior because there is no consent. Again consent is mandatory for any type of physical or sexual contact and if we don't want to be touched than no one has the right to do so. Some resources include: the National Teen Dating Violence Hotline (24/7 support: 1-866-331-9474 or text "loveis" to 22522), email teens@bloom365.org, local support: 1-888-606-HOPE (4673).

9) Where can I get sources to help with depression?

School social workers and counselors are a great source for information on dealing with depression. You can always contact BLOOM365 at 1-888-606-HOPE (4673). You can schedule an appointment with your primary care provider to get a referral for therapy. You can contact Teen Lifeline at 602-248-8336 or 800-248-8336 for support. You can contact Terros at 602-685-6000 for support. We want you to know that there is always someone available.

10) Why are guys so dumb?

As we learned in dose 3 about gender norms this might be due to the way boys are raised. The saying "boys will be boys" is another example of how boys are raised with lower expectations on etiquette compared to girls in various cultures. The more we learn about the gender norms, we can try to change this.

11) Have you guys thought about suicide?

Suicide is very prevalent issue and there are many situations that can lead people to suicidal ideation, such as bullying or abusive relationships. There are many times in our lives that we feel down and these are the moments we need our good friends and family the most. If we are ever feeling depressed or suicidal, we need to reach out to the trusted adults in our lives; the school social worker or a BLOOM365 advocate (602-799-7017). We want you to know that you are never alone, there are many people who care and want the best for you.

12) Does sex affect your relationship, besides pregnancy?

Sex can be a healthy part of relationships, as long as it is consensual and agreed upon by both partners. Sex can be a part of affection and intimacy between partners that strengthens the love between individuals. When someone is forced, coerced, or threatened into having sex that is rape and against the law. We need to make sure that there is consent before any type of physical or sexual affection can be shared.

13) What if someone is in an abusive relationship and they don't wanna leave them because they're in love with them, what should they do?

We should first understand the barriers to leaving an abusive relationship (fear, love, dependency, and insecurity). It's also important that we don't blame the victim. In your packet, you can reference the "5 Ways to Help a Friend Going Through Dating Abuse" to start a conversation with the survivor.

14) If a person was in an abusive relationship years ago, is there anything they could do about it now?

Yes, there are some legal measures we can take if any type of physical or sexual abuse has taken place in the past. Please reach out to the trusted adults in your life that can help to direct you to the proper resources.

15) What should you do if the other person threatens to kill themselves if the relationship ends?

This is one of the 5 signs we discussed in the classroom that put us or others at risk for being seriously hurt or killed. We need to take this type of threat seriously at all times. We need to reach out to the trusted adults in our lives. This may be the school social worker or even a BLOOM365 advocate (602-799-7017). If the danger is imminent, we need to call 911 to make sure everyone is safe. Some additional resources include: The National Teen Dating Violence Hotline (24/7 support: 1-866-331-9474 or text "loveis" to 22522), email teens@bloom365.org, local support: 1-888-606-HOPE (4673).

16) Should I breakup with someone who makes me feel ignored but absolutely happy most of the time?

This is a difficult decision to make. If you feel that your partner is not changing their behavior after you have discussed how you feel and what you want them to do, it may be necessary at that point to consider if you would like the relationship to continue or not. No one is perfect and we should all strive to improve our communication skills and the way we treat each other. If the relationship we have is not full of growth and improvement, we can consider if that is what we want or if we would like change.

17) Is it bad to be in a relationship at age 15, is it dangerous?

We hope you feel confident after the 7-dose program that you can develop healthy relationships and avoid the unhealthy abusive relationships by recognizing the red flags. It is not bad to be in a relationship at the age of 15, as long as it is not an unhealthy abusive relationship. When you have a healthy relationship and you develop on the skills we learned about in the program such as communication using "I statements" and using the conflict resolution techniques we learned.

18) What is abusive actually?

The red flags we discussed in class are some of the signs of abusive relationships build off of power and control. There are many forms of abuse: verbal, emotional, physical/sexual.

19) Why are some people so judgemental?

'To be judgemental is part of life and it is something that everybody does to some degree or another', according to Oliver Jr. Cooper in *Judgemental: Why Are Some People So Judgemental?* (2017). Oliver believes judging is either a survival mechanism or by choice. Judging as a survival mechanism, could be for example, a defense for an intellectual or an emotional compromise in anyway. Judging can also be a personal choice. What people like or do not like is up to them. It is when the judgements are causing harm to others, that it becomes negative. This might lead to the judgmental person to gain power and control over others.

20) How do you know if someone is worth it? If you should go for someone or be with someone?

Relationships should not be abusive. Blooming relationships are built off equality and freedom, where both parties feel equal. If you are not receiving the type of love you would like you can think about

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. This can help you figure out what type of relationship you currently have. 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.

21) Why do we just expect these stereotypes from guys and girls?

Stereotypes are created in many forms. Media and advertisements place many stereotypes. As a society we are exposed to these stereotypes or norms and expectations from the day we are born and this influences everyone.

22) What would it be like if the female was dominant in a straight relationship?

All abusive relationships are built off of the power and control tendencies, regardless of who is being abusive. A lot of times males who are in abusive relationships feel afraid to come out and report that they have been abused due to the societal norms/expectations that masculine people should be strong and not emotional. Female dominant relationships do happen but we as a society are not accepting of this so the men who are abused do not receive the help that they need. The same red flags are involved and the same risks/dangers are also involved for the victim.

23) Why do guys like women who have big boobs or a big butt? Why do they want a girl with that?

As we learned in class this may be due to the media, societal norms and expectations that dictate what the beauty standards are for both masculine and feminine identified people. Most of the magazines or advertisements we see push the “ideal body” image and we are all influenced by this. It is important to know that this is not everyone as we all have different likes and dislikes. It is also important to know that we cannot be forced to fit a body image that we do not want to. We have the freedom to be who we are at all times. If our partner is pushing us to be a certain way this is an indication that power & control is what our relationship is built off of.

24) If you get jealous and your partner doesn't like when you do, how do you become less jealous?

Jealousy is a part of human nature. It is not necessarily a bad thing, unless we act out based on our jealousy. We should consider whether the relationships we have currently are built on trust and respect. If we don't have a trustworthy partner or friend, that could lead us to be jealous. The first step is recognizing our jealous tendencies and addressing them with our partner or friend so that they know how we feel. Try using an I statement, such as “I feel [jealous] when you _____ can you please _____.” It's important to take ownership of our own feelings, and this gives your partner the opportunity to acknowledge how you feel and a potential solution.

25) Why are there so many stereotypes, that some of us believe are true?

Stereotypes are made by society and over time they can be used to support a certain propaganda. Sometimes stereotypes or norms are in place because society wants to limit the rights of a certain group of people. The important thing to know is that these norms and stereotypes are not facts but rather some people's opinions. We always have the ability to pursue the exceptions and be brave by pursuing the things that make us stand out, becoming innovators and creators.

26) Can there be a couple that the woman is being the “man”?

If you mean by being the “man” they are being the leader in the relationship then yes this is possible. There are various types of relationships and power and control can be used by anyone in an abusive

relationship regardless of their gender. Masculine people can be abused in the same manner that feminine people can.

27) Can Dating Abuse become a hazard? Like can it put you in a life or death situation?

As we learned in class the most dangerous time in an abusive relationship is when the victim tries to break off and leave. As the unfortunate examples we learned about in class there can be times when abuse can lead to life threatening or life ending situations. We need to reach out to the trusted adults or a BLOOM365 advocate (602-799-7017) when we suspect that we are at risk. Some resources include: The National Teen Dating Violence Hotline (24/7 support: 1-866-331-9474 or text "loveis" to 22522), email teens@bloom365.org, local support: 1-888-606-HOPE (4673).

28) How do I love myself?

You can develop a healthy self esteem by telling yourself the positive things in your life. You can do the daily affirmations which take about a minute in the mornings to develop self love and confidence. You can also surround yourself with positive friends and family who remind you of the great qualities you have and don't put you down.

29) Is there a way for me to develop a relationship with my dad if he isn't with me?

Developing a relationship with your father is possible. The relationship should not be harmful in any way. If you are worried about any negative impact due to the development of this relationship, you should communicate this to the trusted adults in your life. Both partners should feel equal within the relationship. There should be also an atmosphere of respect towards one another.

30) Why do people believe there are more than 2 genders when there are only 2 genders?

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. <http://www.glaad.org/reference/transgender>

31) What if both girls were norms, or both partners were the norm?

If both girls or both guys were the norms you may see a change in some of those norms into an exception accordingly to the situation. If a male and female in a relationship are both the norms, there is a good chance that this relationship would be stemmed in power and control rather than equality and freedom.

32) How exactly can I get rid of my anxiety to date?

When it comes to dating, the fear to date is very common. A healthy relationship is built with a positive Self-Esteem. Accepting whom you are and being comfortable with yourself is essential. Sometimes dating is nerve-wrecking and could lead to one judging themselves negatively. Communication with your partner could lead to a lower anxiety level. Knowing how they feel or them knowing how you feel will create an atmosphere of a fostering relationship.

33) What if both girls were the exceptions in the relationship?

If both girls were the exceptions within a relationship, we see equality. In most cases the workload of both partners are separated equally. Housework, financial duties, and the emotional duties split in half. It is more difficult and brave to be in the exception because you will stand out in comparison to the societal norms. Being the first female president would be an example of this.

34) Next time talk more about the parent being the abuser and what should we do.

If the parent is the abuser, and if you feel in immediate danger call 9-1-1. If your parent has physically abused you in the past, contact BLOOM365 at 1-888-606-HOPE(4673) and we will connect you with someone who can assist you in taking the necessary steps in your situation. If the parent is not a threat to you, communication is very important. If you refer to the 'I feel...' statements in Dose 6, it is a great way to communicate to express the power and control within the relationship. This can help take away the confrontational stance and allow the parent to empathize with you.