



**Elephant in The Room Q & A
Metro Tech High School
Fall 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)
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

Doses 1&2

What can we do if our friends are the ones abusing their bf/gf?

If you recognize the signs of abusive behavior in a friend, telling a trusted adult about it is often one of the best options. Speaking up could potentially save a life. This can be a hard topic to talk about with a friend, but if you do feel comfortable doing so, you can visit page 16 in your workbook for tips on how to start the conversation. You can also text or call a BLOOM 365 advocate at 602-799-7017 if you feel like you need additional support.

Do the perpetrators usually kill themselves after killing their partner?

Power based violence, no question, can lead to serious injury or even death. Abuse has no bias, so every case of domestic violence looks a bit different, however, 72% of all murder-suicides in the United States are domestic violence related.

Why do they abuse their partners? What causes that? (Like mentally)

There are a number of root causes for abuse that we explored during doses 3&4. 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 this root causes increase one's risk of becoming a perpetrator, they still can make the deliberate choice to have relationships based in equality and freedom.

Is leading someone on making sure they don't stop liking you emotional abuse?

Emotional abuse is defined as continuous intimidation or brainwashing to control. It's important to consider why you are leading someone on and why you don't want them to stop liking you. Is it about having power or control over them? Or, does it help increase your self-esteem or feel better about yourself? It's important to recognize that leading someone on can be harmful to the other person and their emotions. There are lots of ways to increase your self esteem that won't negatively impact others! 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 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.

How do you get someone to understand they are being abused?

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 your friend. You can also tear out the extra red flag checklist on page 41 in your workbook and talk to your friend about why you are concerned. The National Teen Dating Hotline and BLOOM365 advocates are also resources available to you for additional advice and/or support.

I want to know much more about teen abuse.

Great! Since this elephant card was submitted on the first day, I hope the rest of the doses taught you even more about this topic and how to prevent this social disease. If you'd like to learn more, I encourage you to join BLOOM Crew! You can also visit our website at www.bloom365.org or email us at teens@bloom365.org for more information and ways to get involved!

*****In the past, I was sexually forced multiple times and thus I feel like I need help to recover from it because I feel sexually addicted. How do I get it to stop (help to stop the addiction)? P.s. I went to a sex addict group before.**

All people develop different coping skills when recovering from trauma. Sometimes we have to learn new skills if we are coping using self comfort rather than self care techniques. BLOOM365 is here to provide advocacy services to any youth who has experienced any kind of power based violence including sexual assault. These services can help you discover new coping skills. You can text or call a BLOOM 365 advocate at 602-799-7017 if you feel like you need any support or would like to access these services.

Why are females treated different?

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.

Is that you on the cover of the textbook?

Sarah: No, actually this is one of BLOOM365's peer educators, Lauren! After going through the Bloom It Up (7 dose) program, Lauren was fired up about this cause and decided she wanted to help deliver this program to other teens! She is now a trained peer educator who facilitates these conversations with her own peers! If you are interested in becoming a peer educator yourself, please feel free to email us at teens@bloom365.org!

How can I help my mom and dad for a better relationship?

If the parent is not a threat to you, effective communication can be a useful tool. If you refer to the 'I feel...' statements in Dose 6, it is a great way to communicate how you're feeling and offer any solutions. It takes away the confrontational stance and allows the parent to empathize. For example, "I feel upset when I see/hear you and dad (or mom) fighting, can we please look into better ways to work through conflicts and disagreements?" Introducing your parents to the concept of "I-statements" may help them to avoid or better resolve conflicts within their relationship. If you'd like to discuss your situation with an advocate, please feel free to text or call 602-799-7017.

Have you had an abusive relationship and if you did can you share the story? Similar question: Were you ever a victim of an abusive relationship?

On page 5, you can read more about Donna Bartos, the founder and executive director of BLOOM365, and her experience with dating abuse.

How did BLOOM365 start? Similar question: How long has the BLOOM program existed?

BLOOM started out in 2006 when Donna Bartos found her voice after her own experiences with teen dating abuse and decided to turn that voice into action. She founded the Purple Ribbon Council to Cut Out Domestic Abuse (now BLOOM365) as a way to mobilize the stories voices,

and potential of everyday people to help “uproot abuse.” You can read more about Donna’s story and how BLOOM365 came to be on page 5 of your workbook!

What if the things you talk about don't relate to me?

If you aren't currently in a dating relationship, this program is still relevant to you! Unhealthy relationships can still occur within friendships. This program applies to dating relationships and friendships in regards to dating abuse, sexual assault, gender-based violence, and even bullying. The goal of this program is to help provide you with tools so that you can have healthier friendships and relationships both now and in the future!

Is jealousy always considered abusive, and why?

Jealousy is a natural, human emotion. Most humans have felt or experienced jealousy. It is not necessarily a bad thing, unless we act out based on our jealousy. When jealousy becomes unhealthy or abusive is when it is possessive, obsessive or controlling. 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. You can communicate your feelings and concerns with your partner by using “I” statements. “I feel _____ when you get jealous, could you please _____.” If communicating your feelings does not change your partner’s behavior, and you are experiencing persistent jealousy, it is a warning sign of power and control and could lead to an abusive relationship. If you are the one experiencing jealousy, you can also communicate with your partner using “I statements”. Something you could both talk about is how you may be able to build up your trust and decrease your feelings of jealousy.

Dose 3

Who is the creator of bloom?

BLOOM365 was founded by Donna Bartos. You can read more about her story on page 5 of your workbook.

What if a feminine exception was to be with a masculine norm? What will it mean or happen relationship wise?

A lot of people are often a mixture of both norms and exceptions and not just strictly all the norms or all the exceptions. Norms are basically the stereotypes for how feminine or masculine identified people should look/act/etc. It is a rigid belief in unhealthy gender norms that typically creates issues and where we might see relationships where one partner holds more power over the other. If a masculine-identified person was all of the norms and believed he could only be those norms (i.e. aggressive, not show his emotions) and he was with a feminine-identified person who was all of the exceptions (i.e. strong, career in politics), do you think one partner might hold more power or would there be an equal balance of power?

Dose 4

What is foot binding?

Formely in China, girls feet were often compressed with tight bandages so as to keep the feet from growing over three or four inches long. Having small feet was seen as a beauty ideal during this time. Although this is no longer a common practice, it was once a socially accepted behavior and seen as a norm. While it's often hard to understand why people in other societies do these types of things to fit beauty ideals, we often don't realize these same types of things happen in our own society as well. Some examples of this in our society include: waist training, plastic surgery, and gauges.

What is the most common abuse in a relationship?

One in three teens will experience physical, emotional, or verbal abuse before their 18th birthday. These are three most common forms of abuse in teen dating relationships.

What is the suicide hotline?

The national suicide prevention hotline number is 1-800-273-8255. There is someone available 24/7 for free and confidential support! If you need someone to talk to or are looking for mental health resources for yourself or a friend/family member, please make the call! You are never alone and we encourage you to reach out if you are experiencing suicidal or depressive thoughts. Teen Lifeline is also a great local organization that specifically works with youth experiencing depression. You can reach them at 602-248-8336.

Doses 5&6

How did you get interested in BLOOM?

Sarah: About a year ago, I was searching for an internship as a requirement for my last semester as a Public Health student at NAU. As I scrolled through various internship postings, I came across BLOOM365. After spending some time looking through the internship description, exploring the website, and watching some of their youtube videos, I decided this was something I had to be involved in. I've always had a passion for working with teens and children, and I am a strong believer in prevention education. A couple of years ago, I had a friend experience a physically and emotionally abusive relationship. I had no idea how to help her and I often found myself wondering, "Why doesn't she just leave?" After learning more about BLOOM365 and going through the program myself, I was able to understand the various barriers to leaving and ways to help a friend in this situation. Fortunately, my friend was able to escape that relationship, but the effects of the abuse are long-lasting and her life was forever changed. Because of my own experiences and my increased awareness about how common this issue is, I am very passionate about this cause. If we had gone through this program in high school, I strongly believe this situation would've had a better outcome. I am passionate about this cause because I know it can help to prevent teen dating abuse as well as help activate teens to change unhealthy societal norms.

Is it really bad if your mom screams at you for no reason and when you ask her something?

Something you might find useful is communicating with your mother using "I" statements ("I feel...when you...Could you please..?"). You can use this to explain how she makes you feel

during an argument, allowing her to feel empathy and the freedom to make a blooming or wilting choice. You may also want to let her know that her screaming at you isn't the best way that you receive criticism. Letting her know best way that you receive constructive criticism will give her a chance to understand the best way to communicate with you without raising her voice.

How did BLOOM originate?

BLOOM365 really started as an idea on the back of a napkin in 2006. Donna Bartos, our executive director, finally found her voice after twelve years of hiding the shame and embarrassment she felt from the verbal and emotional abuse she had experienced with her "first love." With that voice, she founded the Purple Ribbon Council to Cut Out Domestic Abuse (now BLOOM365). Since then, BLOOM365 has grown into a research-based, data-driven, and youth-centered three-step approach to the causes of power based personal violence (bullying, teen dating abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault/rape, stalking, gender based violence) among future generations. You can read more about Donna's story and how BLOOM365 came to be on page 5 of your workbook. You can also visit www.bloom365.org for more information.

How could you talk to someone or a friend when they are seriously talking about suicide or maybe even myself? What can I do?

First of all, we want you to know that you are not alone. Teen Lifeline is a great local organization that specifically works with youth experiencing depression. You can reach them at 602-248-8336. You can also reach out to or provide your friend with the national suicide prevention hotline number: 1-800-273-8255. You can call this hotline for free and confidential support, which is available 24/7. If you need someone to talk to or are looking for mental health resources for yourself or a friend/family member, please make the call! You can also text or call a BLOOM365 advocate who can provide you with additional information and resources (602-799-7017).

How do we help? Can I volunteer?

Yes! BLOOM Crew is one great way to get involved in helping create change. If you are also interested in volunteering with BLOOM365, please feel free to send us an email at teens@bloom365.org to learn more about volunteer opportunities!

How can we stop dating abuse if all we're able to do is watch and listen? I can't keep watching. I feel as if I should be doing something to stop it.

I highly encourage you to join Bloom crew to help promote healthy relationships and increase awareness on your school's campus. Bloom crew meets every other Friday in Mr.Dillon's room. Becoming trained as a peer advocate can also help provide you with the tools to provide peer to peer advocacy and support to teen victims. Please email us at teens@bloom365.org for more information about our next peer advocacy training!

What is considered sexual assault? What is the difference between sexual assault and sexual harassment?

Any sexual act in which a person is coerced or forced to engage in against their will or non-consensual sexual touching of a person is considered sexual assault. Sexual harassment

involves unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of sexual nature. Sexual harassment and sexual assault can both cause harm to an individual.

Does long distance relationships ever work?

That is entirely up to the two partners. Long distance relationships can be successful if both partners are willing to make the commitment and put in the effort.

Would this information you giving us, help us in life?

The information we provided throughout the 7 doses can help you to have healthy, blooming relationships and friendships throughout your life. Some important life-skills you also hopefully were able to build on during the doses are: Effective communication/"I" statements, conflict resolution, and how to be an upstander for social change.

Where can I get help with depression? Do you guys help with depression? How can you end depression?

First off, we want you to know that you are not alone. Although we do not specifically work with teens with depression, we are always here to listen! We do work alongside a few organizations that specifically help youth experiencing depression, including Teen Lifeline. You can contact them at 602-248-TEEN (8336). You can always reach a BLOOM365 advocate by texting or calling the number above for a listening ear or if you would like additional resources.