



**Elephant in The Room Q & A
Peoria Accelerated 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)
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. If your partner threatens you with suicide, what do you do? If you leave them, they might hurt themselves, and if you stay, you are forced to stay in the bad, unhealthy relationship.**

This is one of the 5 signs we discussed during dose 2 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 highly encourage you to reach out

to a trusted adults, the school social worker, and/or a BLOOM365 advocate. If the danger is imminent, please call 911 to make sure everyone is safe. You can also call the National Teen Dating Violence Hotline listed above.

2. I feel like everything is always my fault. I have had someone verbally abuse me, they would call me names and say everything was my fault and would make me cry. Now I'm talking to this one dude and the previous abuse makes me think I'm not good enough for him. He would threaten me and say I'm not worth anything. He would take pills and smoke and every time he was high the abuse was worse. He would later say he loves me and wouldn't do it again, but he did. I'm not with him anymore but I'm still affected by it. I have to take antidepressant medicine.

You are brave and strong. It is not easy getting over a previous abusive relationship. Blame is a common tactic a perpetrator uses to gain power and control. Self-esteem is really important in establishing a healthy relationship. We believe you have to feel comfortable with yourself before you can feel comfortable with someone else. We encourage you to embrace those things you love or love to do. If you wish to speak with someone about your experiences, you may reach out to a BLOOM365 Advocate at the number above.

3. My boyfriend and I are taking a "break" in our relationship. My ex asked for one too and we never got back together. I'm afraid I'll lose my current boyfriend too. I found out he was cheating on me with my best friend. I'm hurt and pissed but he keeps telling me that I'm acting like a child. How should I react?

Communicating your feelings with your partner may be helpful in this situation. Using "I" statements can be useful in helping them to understand why you are afraid of losing them. This will also give you the opportunity to offer a solution and for both of you to come to an agreement about where you stand.

4. Why do boys think it's okay to put their hands on a girl?

We see oppression of women/feminine people across history and religion. Men/Masculine people are not born superior to other genders, but it is an Abusive Taught Behavior. Masculine people are taught to be physically and verbally aggressive and to have power and control in the relationship. They could also have seen domestic violence throughout their lives, leading them to believe it is okay to abuse or that's how a relationship is. Although this is never an excuse for abusive behavior, as we know that everyone has a choice to either treat someone with equality and freedom or exert power and control.

5. My ex that would verbally abuse me, texted me yesterday and said he missed me and that he never meant to hurt me. He said he was sorry and I forgave him but I don't know if I should talk to him again. He told me he has bipolar disorder and that he takes medicine. Should I talk to him again?

Referring back to Dose 2, there are three common tactics a perpetrator uses to gain power and control; minimize, deny, and blame. These tactics could become a cycle of Power and Control. It is not your fault for them verbally abusing you. Communicating your feelings to your ex about the experiences in the past could lead to a possible conversation of the boundaries crossed. If this person does care for you, let them know you deserve respect. Using "I" statements can communicate your feelings without being confrontational. Communicate the boundaries you have set now to assure your happiness and comfort.

6. Why is it that guys can hit girls, but if it is vice-versa girls are wrong for that?

We see oppression of women/feminine people all across history and religion. Men/Masculine people are not born superior to other genders, but it is an Abusive Taught Behavior. Masculine people are taught to be physically and verbally aggressive and to have power and control in the relationship. The

Unhealthy Gender Norm of girls/women/feminine people is that they have to be submissive to their masculine partner.

- 8. I normally have a low self-esteem but i feel a lot better with today's class. How can I take this feeling and get it without having to ask people what they think? Similar question: Why do I have low self esteem? What can I do to get self esteem?**

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.