



**Elephant in The Room Q & A
Wilson College Prep- STUGO
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

Dose 1-

1) How do I help someone who is in an abusive relationship?

First, let them know that you're there for them and support them! Then, ease into the topic of the relationship by saying "It's not your fault" and "You deserve respect." You can also tell the person about BLOOM365 by saying, "Here's a great organization you can reach out to if you ever want to talk about

your relationship or feel you need help or support.” It’s important to not force them/persuade them to leave the relationship, otherwise, they may close off to you.

2) Can you give common examples of power and control in teen relationships?

The abusive partner may lower their partner’s self esteem by humiliating them through name calling and put downs. Ex. “you’re dressed like a slut” or “I see you’ve put on some weight.” The abusive partner becomes jealous when their partner spends time with family or friends by saying, “You need to spend more time with me” or “You never show that much affection/attention towards me.” The abusive partner constantly accuses their partner of cheating; therefore, demanding that they give him/her the usernames and passwords to all social media accounts and text messages.

Dose 2 -

1) Can you tell us a real story about an abusive relationship/whole story?

I had a friend who met this guy over Facebook. They hit it off almost immediately and began talking non stop! The guy was very talkative and insisted that she tell him EVERYTHING. He made it sound like she was the most fascinating person that he’d ever met. Two weeks later, they were dating and he soon became the only person she talked to. Wherever she went, he went. If she didn’t answer his message within the hour, he freaked out and started questioning her: “Where have you been? I was so worried!” “You have to always tell me where you go so I don’t worry.” Everything was always based on “we” and “us,” thus, whatever she did in her life, always affected the relationship in some way. Some things he approved of, such as when she went to the store with her father. However, whenever she went to her friend’s house he began accusing her of anything he could come up with: “You weren’t really at your friend’s house, you were probably at some other guy’s house. Send me pictures whenever you’re at your friend’s so I know you’re not lying” or “Your friends are a bad influence, you need to stay away from them or else you’re going to end up like them.” A couple months later, the accusations became even worse, which mainly consisted him of constantly accusing her of cheating (which was ironic because he was cheating on her). In response, she gave him access to all her accounts because she wanted to prove that she was loyal and just to make the accusations stop. Didn’t work. He was always upset when she didn’t spend every single minute with him. About six months into the relationship, she came to realize that what he was saying and manipulating her to do was not okay. After that realization, it took her six attempts before she was able to truly leave because he always found a way to make her feel guilty and come back.

2) Is it okay for a boy that like you and you don’t feel the same way, what's a good way to tell them?

Of course it’s okay! Here’s some suggestions:

- “You’re a nice guy, just not the guy for me.”
- “Your interest in me is flattering, but I’m not looking for a relationship right now.”
- “I’m not interested in having a relationship.”

3) Why didn’t I see the signs before it got really abusive?

First, an abusive partner does not usually begin a relationship as overtly abusive or controlling. The early warning signs of abuse are often hard to catch because they are usually masked as “caring” and not “controlling.” For instance, “I kept asking you who you were with because I want to make sure you are safe.” 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 it takes direct education, like the 7-Dose Bloom It Up

curriculum or a friend's concern to notice what's really going on. Remember, perpetrators are usually very good at putting on an 'act' when around other people, so other people may assume everything is fine.

4) Why does an abuser abuse innocent people?

Abuse has no bias. Abusers target individuals of all races, genders, and ages. BLOOM365 exists so that future generations can live in a better world where this is not the case.

5) What can you do if both get into arguments in the first week of dating but then get through them and the guy keeps on doing pranks?

In this case, it may be useful to use an "I statement" such as using the form: "I feel _____ when you play these pranks on me. Could you please not do this anymore?" If this person continues to make you feel this way, then you may want to consider whether or not this is a healthy relationship for you.

6) If your boyfriend doesn't want you to talk to this one guy you are just friends with and in one of the arguments he tells you to shut up and talks to you disrespectfully but later says "I was just playing," should I believe that or should I just leave?

This sounds like it could be a red flag for a potentially unhealthy relationship. If you would like to reach out to a BLOOM365 advocate at 602-799-7017, we'd be happy to talk with you more about this.

7) What if it is verbal abuse?

Regardless of how the abuse is done, it's still abuse! No one deserves it and it's not the victim's fault when it does happen. Verbal abuse can take many forms such as put downs, humiliation and threats. If you or a friend is in a verbally abusive relationship, 24/7 non-judgemental support is just a phone call/text away at the National Teen Dating Violence Hotline: 1-866-331-9474 or text "loveis" to 22522. You can also reach out to a BLOOM365 advocate at 602-799-7017.

Dose 6-

1) Can a girl in a relationship have guy friends?

Regardless of gender, having friends is both a normal and healthy part of life. If a girl has guy friends before she begins dating someone, there's no reason she can't continue to have these friends after beginning a romantic relationship. If a dating partner tries to isolate you from your friends or tells you who you can and can not hang out with, this could be a red flag of a potentially unhealthy relationship and/or a controlling or abusive dating partner.