



**Elephant in The Room Q & A
Camelback 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. Why do people blame the victim and not the other person?

Unfortunately victim blaming is a significant issue in our society. One reason for why people may blame the victim is to convince themselves that this could not happen to them. Often times we like to believe that the world is a just place, and bad things don't happen to good people. By placing the blame on the

victim, people reassure themselves that this could never happen to them if they are good people and that the victim must have somehow deserved it. Truthfully, though, the victim never ever deserves to be abused. It's important that we show empathy for the victim and recognize that the one and only person at fault is the perpetrator themselves.

2. The founders story is my life...But I got out of the relationship when he told me I couldn't hang out with my guy friends or wear skirts or shorts.

That is so great to hear. The red flags can be very easy to miss, especially when you've never learned about them. One of our goals is to increase awareness about this red flags! Thank you for sharing!

3. What if they didn't have anybody to trust?

During the doses, we encouraged you to identify 3 trusted adults in your life that you could turn to if you were ever experiencing teen dating abuse. If you feel that you don't have any trusted adults in your life, please know that BLOOM365 is a resource to you in addition to your school counselor or social worker! You are not alone! BLOOM365 is also going to be launching our first support groups in December at Blooming Point! You can email teens@bloom365.org to get involved!

4. Why were there no men in that video? Is Bloom365 only for women? Should I have no interest in this program?

Unfortunately, the teens that were able to go to the video shoot on that day all happened to be women. BLOOM365 encourages people of all genders to be apart of our social movement! We will have opportunities coming up within the new year to film again, and it is our goal to include the masculine perspective. If you or your friends are interested in being part of the film, like us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/uprootabuse>, follow us on twitter @uprootabuse, and/or follow us on instagram @BLOOM365 to keep an eye out for when the opportunities appear! If you'd like to join our interest list, you can also email teens@bloom365.org!

5. I know a friend who has a boyfriend who is controlling but don't want to break up with him. What do I 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 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.

6. Is it dangerous to date under the age of 15?

We hope you feel confident after the 7-dose program that you can develop healthy relationships and make use of the skills you learned (i.e. communication with "I-statements" and effective conflict resolution). It is not dangerous to be in relationship under the age of 15, as long as it is a healthy relationship stemmed in equality and freedom.

7. Is it dating abuse when someone pressures you into sex?

When someone pressures or forces you to have sex, it is considered sexual abuse or sexual assault (a form of dating abuse). If you feel that you were sexually assaulted and would like support or someone to talk to, please feel free to reach out a BLOOM365 advocate or the Sexual Assault Hotline (listed above).

8. How do you know that you, yourself won't become abusive?

Remember how choice is in the roots of both the blooming and wilting flowers? You always have a choice in whether you choose to have power and control over another person or whether you choose to treat them with equality and freedom!

9. Why did she decide to kill the one she loved and herself?

The act of killing someone can be seen as a final act of total control. We know the most dangerous part of a relationship is when the relationship ends. The perpetrator starts to lose control of the other person. In this unfortunate situation, Dorothy exerted power and control over May by murdering her.

10. How are we supposed to trust you if you are going to end up reporting it? That isn't trust.

If you are at risk for being hurt or for hurting yourself, or if there is a report of child abuse, neglect or sexual assault, we are required by law to report this to proper authorities. This in no way means you cannot come to us or trust in us. We want to be here for you and we will work with you to determine the best and safest way to make the report if it does come to that. If you do not feel comfortable talking to an advocate because you are not yet ready for a report to be made, you can text an advocate at 602-799-7017 for confidential support and choose to withhold your name until you are ready and comfortable to make the report. You can also reach out to the national hotline (listed above).

11. What would you do if your friend talks to someone but tries to break up with that person but they won't let them leave?

It's important to remember that the most dangerous time in an abusive relationship is when the survivor tries to leave. If you are concerned about your safety, please contact a BLOOM365 advocate so that you can create a safety plan. Otherwise, talking to your friends to make sure someone can walk with you to and from class can be helpful if they are bothering you at school. If you continue to have issues at school, you may want to reach out to a trusted school staff member about additional steps you can take. If you are experiencing issues online, you may choose to block their number and social media accounts to keep them from contacting you online.

12. How many Teen Dating Abuse suicides happen a year?

According to Love is Respect (2017), 50% of youth who have been victims of dating abuse and/or rape attempt suicide.

13. Is it bad to love someone but them not to love you back?

If the relationship is new, it may take time for both partners to develop those feelings. 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. Having a partner that shows love in the same way you like to receive love can be an important aspect of a healthy relationship.

14. How many suffer from suicide?

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP, 2016), thousands of teens within the U.S. commit suicide each year. Among 15 to 24 year old, suicide is the third leading cause of death. If you are experiencing depression or having suicidal thoughts, please know that you are not alone. Please reach out to a BLOOM365 advocate or Teen Lifeline at the numbers listed above for free, confidential support.

15. What is the cause of teen dating abuse?

We explored some of the root causes of teen dating abuse in doses 3 and 4. These include: Social acceptance (or the tolerance of abusive behavior), abusive taught behavior, rigid beliefs in unhealthy gender norms, insecurity, patriarchy, oppression, and choice.

16. How can someone get over the person that was abusive to them?

Everyone copes with abuse in different ways. Some things you may find helpful include: Spending time with the people you love and doing the things you love. You may also explore new hobbies to find something you enjoy. BLOOM365 is going to be offering support groups beginning in December, please email us at teens@bloom365 for more information and to get involved. If you would like to talk through additional options or just need a listening ear, please feel free to text or call a BLOOM365 advocate at the number listed above.

17. What to do if someone is talking about getting abused?

If you turn to page 17 in your workbook, you can find the top 5 ways to help someone who is experiencing abuse. In the back of your workbook, you can also find 2 extra advocacy flyers. These list several resources that you can give to your friend. You or your friend can also reach out to a BLOOM365 advocate or the national hotline at the numbers listed above for more information on what to do and additional resources.

18. How do you handle being made fun of over gender norm?

We understand some of the norms and exceptions are not seen as the “cool” thing to do. Some people fear change and sometimes that is the reason why they ridicule an idea or thought. Comparison of oneself to others might lead to a decrease in self-esteem. We encourage you to be the best you can be! Daily affirmations are proven to boost your self-esteem! Also embrace those things you love or love to do. We believe in equality for everyone and freedom to be themselves. Remember the shirtless dancing guy video? Sometimes it takes someone like yourself to stand up against the norm and encourage others to join in and be themselves. If you need a listening ear, please feel free to reach out to a BLOOM365 advocate at the number listed above. We will also be offering support groups beginning in December! Please email teens@bloom365.org to learn more and to get involved!

19. Is grabbing a girl's butt abusive when they are in a relationship?

This is where consent comes into play. It is okay to show physical affection when in a relationship as long as both parties consent. Consent is needed for any kind of physical action whether it is a kiss, holding hands, etc.. Communicating your boundaries with your partner early-on in the relationship is crucial. It's important that both partners are aware of what the other partner is comfortable with to ensure that all actions taken are mutually consented to. As the relationship develops and grows, continuous communication about boundaries is super important! Healthy relationships involve respecting our partner's boundaries!

20. How would you stand up to someone using gender norms against you?

Communicating your feelings on how that is not okay with you can open the door for discussion and a chance for change. Going back to Dose 6 and using "I" statements allows a chance for the other person to empathize with you without feeling attacked.

21. Can you be the norm and exception at the same time?

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.

22. Why is it called a "Dose" rather than "Day"?

In order to prevent or treat a disease, sometimes it takes more than one "dose" of vaccine or medicine to fix the problem. The same goes with preventing teen dating abuse. Research shows that it takes "multiple doses" of education to have a positive impact. This is why there are 7 "doses" to Bloom It Up!

23. When someone is in dating abuse, why don't they tell anybody or a trusted friend?

After experiencing dating abuse, it can be scary to reach out and tell someone. The victim could be scared that their partner could find out, or might feel embarrassed reaching out to others and sharing what happened. Oftentimes the perpetrator will isolate the victim from their friends and/or family, so the victim may also not even know who to reach out to and may feel extremely vulnerable.

24. How do you report abuse if you are the victim?

If you have been a victim or survivor of abuse, please reach out to a BLOOM365 advocate by texting or calling the number listed above. They will work with you to determine the best and safest way to report the abuse.

25. How do you know if you are abusive?

You can see some traits of abusive relationships in the center of the wilting flower. Some examples include: Intimidation, threats, jealousy, isolation, verbal or emotional abuse, humiliation, and dominance. If you feel that you are exhibiting some of these "symptoms" of an abusive partner, we highly encourage you to reach out to a BLOOM365 advocate at the number listed above to talk about resources or ways you may be able to deal with these issues. Remember that you always have a choice in whether or not you choose to have power and control over your partner or friends.

26. Can illnesses be caused by an abusive relationships?

Illnesses can be caused by an abusive relationship. According to Practical Recovery's Unhealthy Relationships cause Unhealthy Bodies by Erinn Hutkin, unhealthy relationships cause physical and emotional damage. An abusive relationship leads to stress and in turn, it could disturb your sleep cycle. A disturbed sleep schedule may also influence depression. Physical and emotional stress in the abusive relationship may also lead to some heart complications.

27. Is it ok to feel helpless?

Many things may happen that aren't always in our control, which can cause a sense of helplessness for some people. You are not alone, and a BLOOM365 advocate is always available to listen if you text or call the number above. In Dose 5, we focused on self-esteem, which plays a huge role in our over confidence and well-being. If your inner self seems to focus on the negatives more than the positives, feelings of helplessness may develop. It can be helpful to recognize and remind yourself that you are able to overcome the challenging things in life. Just think of all the obstacles you've faced so far and how far you've come! Something that may also be helpful is doing daily affirmations!

28. How can I help others that are suffering Dating Abuse?

You can reference the "top 5 ways to help a friend" list on page 17 of your workbook (or online at bloom365.org). Joining BLOOM Crew can also be a great way to get involved in helping create change to prevent dating abuse. If you interested in becoming trained as a peer educator or peer advocate with BLOOM365, please feel free to send us an email at teens@bloom365.org. As a peer advocate, you can be the "go-to" person for your peers if they ever experience these issues. The training will equip you with the tools and resources you need to be an advocate for those experiencing these issues.

29. How do you get out of an abusive relationship?

We know the most dangerous time in an abusive relationship is when you are trying to exit the relationship. If you feel as if your life is at risk immediately, call 9-1-1. If you are not in any immediate danger and you would like assistance in creating a safety plan, please text or call at BLOOM365 advocate at the number above. A safety plan is a personalized plan that will helps you determine practical ways to remain safe.

30. Do you help anyone at any age?

BLOOM365 focuses on teenagers, but we are also piloting programs with middle-school students and in the works for creating a puppet theatre program for younger generations. Our advocates are able to provide more information about available resources for people of all ages.

31. How do you plan on getting the programs elsewhere?

We are bringing our programs to other counties and states by training others as "certified facilitators." Through this training, organizations and individuals become trained on how to deliver this program. We provide them with all the necessary materials and information, and they are able to bring it to the youth within their community! Currently, we have trained facilitators and peer educators in the City of

Maricopa and the City of Surprise. We are also going to be opening our second Blooming Point Headquarters in Brooklyn, NY in the near future! We are blooming!

32. What should I do if there is an older abusive couple right in front of me?

There are resources available for adults experiencing domestic violence including the National Domestic Violence Hotline, 1-800-799-7233. The most important thing, like if we had a friend experiencing this, is to show them support. We can use the phrases and tools from the How to Help a Friend section of the workbook (pg 17) by saying things like “You deserve respect” or “ Do you feel safe?”. If you do not know the couple, it may not always be safe to intervene. At times, the safest option may be to report the abuse or to tell a trusted adult. Please feel free to text or call a BLOOM365 advocate at 602-799-7017 for more information or resources.

33. How do you know you’re in toxic relationship?

It can be useful to look at the blooming and wilting flowers to help you to determine whether a relationship is healthy or unhealthy. 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. Healthy relationships are stemmed in equality and freedom and exhibit the words seen in the center of the blooming flower.

34. I think that by trying to uproot “hypermasculinity” you are in turn alienating a group of people because of their beliefs. Although neither masculinity or femininity to extremes are not good. I think that the root cause is not the emotions or characteristics but the perception of the relationship. You can be hyper-masculine in a relationship and still show respect.

Gender roles can be a tricky subject sometimes. It is never our intention to alienate a group of people. 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.

35. What if it happens without consent but it was slowly gestured but you were afraid to say no?

If you were touched in a sexual way that you did not want and did not consent to, it is sexual assault. Consent is required each and every single time a sexual act is initiated. If you have any concerns about this matter please reach out to a trusted adult, school social worker, or a BLOOM365 advocate at the number above.

36. **I just saw it on 13 Reasons Why If you were raped and you didn’t say anything or do anything to stop it because you were afraid, does that mean you can not file a report? Like**

even if you didn't say stop or no but you just let it happen even though you DID NOT want it because you're scared?

If you believe you were sexually assaulted, you absolutely can report it! Additionally, you can call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at the number above for free, confidential support, someone to help you talk through what happened, and/or information about local resources and support. You can also text/call a BLOOM365 advocate at the number above.

37. How do I know if she is the one or if she likes me? Or how to ask her out?

You are the expert in your own life, so only you can truly know the answer to that question. It can be helpful, though, to look back at the "deal-breakers" and "deal-makers" you identified for yourself during Dose 2. It's important that you find someone who does not exhibit any of your deal breakers to avoid trying to change this person to fit your ideals. You may find it helpful to have a conversation with her to determine if she's interested in you or if she believes you are more suitable as friends. You can ask her out in whatever way feels most comfortable to you, whether that be asking her out on a date, asking her to be your girlfriend, or another alternative that best suits you.

38. What is unhealthy blaming?

Victim blaming is putting the focus on the victim instead of on the problem and the abuser. For example asking, "Why doesn't she/he (the victim) just leave?" What we should be asking is, "Why is she/he (the perpetrator) so possessive, controlling, or abusive?" We should never place the blame on the victim as it is never their fault and they nobody deserves to be abused.

39. What can I do if I feel like my girlfriend is my only source of happiness?

We encourage you to identify additional things that make you happy. You can try exploring new hobbies to find something you enjoy doing. You can also set aside time to spend with friends or family.

40. If a person does some of those unhealthy things while in a relationship is it still an abusive relationship?

It depends on what those things are. For example: Jealousy is a natural, human emotion. When jealousy becomes unhealthy or abusive is when it is possessive, obsessive or controlling. We advocate for healthy, blooming relationships and friendships. If you are experiencing some of the symptoms of an unhealthy or potentially abusive relationship, we encourage you to text or call an advocate at the number above.

41. Why is being jealous time to time a bad thing? And why do men have to be the one with the most responsibility?

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. 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. In healthy relationships, both partners have an equal balance of power and responsibility.

42. What if you say no and they keep implying, but you can’t do anything about it and you’re stuck?

As we learned during the program, consent is required each and every single time an act of sex is initiated. This means an act is deemed as rape if a person is physically forced to have sex, if a person is threatened or manipulated into having sex, and if the person is unable to give consent (under the influence of drugs or alcohol). Consent also applies to all aspects of relationships and not just sex. If you have any concerns about this matter or would like additional support please reach out to a trusted adult, school social worker, or a BLOOM365 advocate at the number above.

43. Is it an abusive relationship if you are dating someone for the \$?

We would likely not define this as an abusive relationship unless physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual abuse were present. It is important to consider, though, whether this is a healthy or unhealthy relationship. Healthy relationships are stemmed in equality and freedom and exhibit emotional respect, affection, honesty, communication, and consent. Unhealthy relationships are stemmed in power and control and may exhibit intimidation, dominance, threats, put-downs, humiliation, and/or financial control. If you are experiencing any of the “symptoms” of an unhealthy relationship, it is up to you to determine what you would like to do. Feel free to reach out to a BLOOM365 advocate by texting or calling the number above for support or additional resources or information.

44. What do I do if my attempt at conflict resolution doesn’t work and the person only gets angrier at me?

If using “I-statements” does not change your partner’s behavior or help them to show empathy, you may consider whether this a healthy relationship for you. Please feel free to text or call a BLOOM365 advocate, we are always here to listen!

45. If two people in a relationship have power and control, how would that work out?

It’s important to recognize that while it sometimes might seem like both partners are abusive, typically there is one partner that holds much more power and control over the other. Often the victim is taking on their perpetrator’s tactics as a way to try and defend themselves and gain back their own power, but not as a way of trying to exert power and control over their partner who is the primary aggressor. In healthy relationships, both partners hold an equal amount of power. With that being said, sometimes two partners can try to control each other. We recommend reaching out to a BLOOM365 advocate at the number above.

46. I’ve been abusive and have been the abused. I’ve had a lot more happen. I am able to not even flinch with a gun at my head. Is it okay to not be scared of death?

When your lack of fear of death affects your goals and daily life, that is when it could be dangerous or unhealthy. It is healthy to have goals, dreams, and something you want to work towards. If your lack of fear causes you to engage in dangerous actions or behaviors, this could also be concerning. BLOOM365 advocates are always here to listen and provide support. Please text or call the number above to talk through this with an advocate.

47. My friend has been slapped by her boyfriend and raped but she still doesn't want to break up with him. What should I tell her? I already gave her Bloom's number.

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. Let her know that rape/sexual assault is one of the Top 5 Red Flags that seriously increase her risk for being seriously hurt or even killed. You can encourage her to reach out to the National Sexual Assault Hotline, but recognize that we can not force someone to seek help or leave if they are not yet ready. If you are seriously concerned for her safety, we encourage you to tell a trusted adult or BLOOM365 advocate.

48. 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.