

Elephant in The Room Q & A

Barry Goldwater High School
Spring 2018



This document can also be accessed at <https://www.bloom365.org/faqs>

Resources:

For additional resources, please visit bloom365.com/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 Drop-In Support Groups	Every Monday (Holidays excluded). Please email teens@bloom365.org or text 602-799-6096 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 Teen Dating Violence Hotline	Text "LOVEIS" to 22522 24/7
National Domestic Violence Hotline	1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
National Sexual Assault Hotline	1-800.656.HOPE (4673)

Suicide Prevention Lifeline	1-800-273-TALK (8255)
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Q: Student

A: BLOOM365 Advocate

DOSE 1

Q: My best friend get emotionally and verbally abused and no matter what any of us tells her she goes back to him and “loves” him. She’s so much better than that but I don’t know what to do.

A: 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. 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. 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.

Q: If you don’t wanna do something and they keep asking you to do it. What do I do?

A: If someone is trying to convince or force you to do something you do not want to do, this is known as coercion. You have the right to say no, and it is their responsibility to respect that. Communicating this using “I statements” may help. If they don’t respect your boundaries, we encourage you to consider whether or not this is a healthy relationship/friendship for you. If you feel unsafe, please reach out to a trusted adult. You can also reach out to a BLOOM365 advocate by texting/calling the number above for free, confidential help and support.

Q: How do I help?

A: If you are interested in getting involved, we have lots of ways to do so! If you turn to page 38 in your workbook, you can read more about “Bloom Crew” which is a club that meets during lunch every Wednesday at your school. To sign up, just fill out the sign up sheet on page 39 in your workbook and turn into your advocate! You can also email sarah@bloom365.org for more information! There are also opportunities to become trained as a peer advocate or peer educator! To get involved or for more information, visit <https://www.bloom365.org/advocates> or email marli@bloom365.org.

Q: Will we also talk about adult abuse or other kinds than teenage abuse?

A: While the focus of the 7 doses is on teen dating abuse, a lot of this information is also applicable to other forms of power-based abuse and violence (i.e. domestic violence, bullying, gender-based violence, etc.). Our advocates are also available to talk about domestic violence issues!

Q: My name is _____ and I have well I'm not good at being myself when I was little I got bullied and hated myself because of who I was. But now I have a really bad problem I have gotten so deep in the fact that I have tried to kill myself several times for about five years I cried so much and I wanted to, just not be here no more it was hard, I was so upset and I hated myself didn't care about myself which I still do I hate the way I look, talk, walk, act, and now fat and ugly I am. **

A: 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. Please know that you are not alone, and additional support is available if needed. Please reach out to BLOOM365 for a non-judgmental listening ear and information about available resources.

Q: What would you do if someone you knew is in a emotional abusive relationship and they know they are in but won't leave?

A: We cannot force people to get help; that decision is ultimately up to them to make. What we can do is be there to listen to them and provide support. They may not feel comfortable talking to an adult, and would rather talk to you. If you look in your packet, you can find a list of the "Top 5 Ways to Help a Friend Going through Dating Abuse". This list can provide some helpful tips on how to start a conversation with the survivor. We cannot make people get help if they do not want to, but we can 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 in these situations 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. If you believe your friend is in serious danger, it's important that you reach out to a trusted adult to ensure the safety of your friend.

Q: I've been verbally abused for 4-5 years, by my mom, and she controls many aspects of my life. She's caused me a lot of pain, and I can't do anything about it. She doesn't let me leave the house. She took the phone I bought. The worst part is, I had to run from home in my socks the other day because whenever my mom cries, my stepdad holds the urge to beat me down. I have no escape. I hate being home, and my only sanctuary is school. What do I do? What CAN I do?

A: Please text/call our advocate at the number above for individual advocacy.

Q: This whole conversation is almost pointless. There will always be violence and people who continue do these things.

A: If these things are not talked about and the root causes are not addressed, then these things WILL continue to happen. Change cannot happen if the issues are not talked about and addressed. BLOOM365 believes that your generation and future generations have the ability to change the culture and create a culture where blooming, healthy relationships are the norm. We understand that it can be

disheartening to see violence and unhealthy relationships as the norm, but that doesn't mean it HAS to be this way. If you think about it, all social change movements started with someone/a group of people standing up against the norm and breaking the silence. Social change cannot happen if we ignore the problem and refuse to talk about it. It's not always easy to talk about, but we truly believe that this isn't how things have to be. Starting the conversation is the first step in creating change

Q: If you are in a relationship, the other person has a low self-esteem it leads to some unhealthy characteristics of a relationship (ex. jealousy), how do you help them gain confidence in themselves?

A: Encouraging your partner to focusing on the things they love about themselves (their strengths, aspirations, personality/physical characteristics, etc.) can be one helpful way to lift their 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 Writing down the things they love about themselves and having them easily accessible can be a helpful tool in building up their confidence. We recommend having them watch the following video on daily affirmations: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cgw8OFVHzd4>. Doing their own daily affirmation and spending time doing the things that make them happy are helpful tools in building self-esteem. It's important to remember, though, that your partner's insecurity is something that they themselves have to work on. It is not your responsibility to make them have a healthy self-esteem, but you can certainly help them recognize the great qualities about themselves and support them in their self-love and self-acceptance journey!

Q: How can you stop loving someone but they are your ex and he hurts you really bad abuse **

A: Love is a huge barrier to leaving and moving on from abusive relationships. We want you to know that BLOOM365 is here to support you. You can reach out to our Lead Advocate at the number above for a listening ear and free, confidential support. We also highly encourage you to get involved in our free support group! Our support group provides teens with the opportunity to walk through the healing process alongside others. Finding ways to cope can be really helpful. For example: spending time with the people you love, yoga, joining a new sports team or club, or simply going for a walk. Giving yourself time to process feelings and emotions is important. We all cope with things in different ways and at different speeds. Find what works for you, and always know BLOOM365 is here to support you if needed!

DOSE 2

Q: Why must we talk about "teen" dating abuse? Abuse is abuse.

A: We are talking about teen dating abuse because it is a significant issue for people your age. The red flags for teen dating abuse also are often different than the red flags for say, domestic violence. In teen dating relationships, there are a lot of red flags that students don't always recognize or even realize is unhealthy/abusive. For example, your partner constantly putting you down or blaming you for their behavior. Domestic violence often plays out in different ways because the two partners often live together, share finances, etc. "Teen" dating abuse is relevant to you and your peers, so that is why we focus specifically on teen dating abuse. Although, a lot of this information is still applicable for other relationships (unhealthy friendships, bullying, gender-based violence, etc.)

Q: I really like what we are talking about. I think most teens need to hear this stuff.

A: That's so great to hear! Knowing that 1 in 3 teens will experience some form of dating abuse before they turn 18, this is clearly such important information for us to talk about. Based on our research, this statistic is actually closer to 1 in 2 teens within Arizona, which just goes to show how necessary these conversations are.

Q: I wanted to talk to you about my experience with having a toxic relationship. I was friends with Lexi, she is transgender, she loved me more than a friend, I didn't, and well things got out of hand.

A: We encourage you to reach out to our Lead Advocate at the number above to speak about this situation.

If you do not feel comfortable, you do not have to share your name!

Q: I'm very protective over people even the ones I don't know. I always wanna help and put a stop to all the bad things and inspire people. It breaks my heart to hear these things. I wanna help. How can I get my voice out there?

A: That is so great to hear! Joining BLOOM Crew is one great way for you to get your voice out there and to help others! Crew meets every Wednesday during lunch in Room 625! We hope to see you there! There are additional opportunities to be trained as a Peer Advocate and to be the go-to person for your peers who are experiencing these issues. Please email marli@bloom365.org or visit www.bloom365.org/advocates to learn more!

Q: Will BLOOM365 help adults too?

A: Yes. Although we focus on teens and most of our services are for teens, a BLOOM365 advocate can help provide information and resources to adults as well. There are additional resources available for adults including the National Domestic Violence Hotline at the number above.

Q: If you share something that's happened in the past that's abusive, will you report it?

A: As mandated reporters, we are required to report any disclosure of abuse, neglect, or sexual assault. If you do choose to share that you have experienced abuse or sexual assault, we will work with you to determine the best and safest way to report it. If you do not feel comfortable reaching out because of this, feel free to text/call 602-799-7017 for free, confidential support.

Q: This guy I was dating for 1 year and 11 months, he is my ex now, we were just messing around but then he grabbed me really hard and I should have seen the red signs because he would tell me not to wear my favorite shirt. He has been grabbing me lot lately. **

A: It's important to know that it is not your fault and you do not deserve to be treated this way. The early warning signs can be difficult to spot, especially if you aren't aware of what they are. We highly encourage you to reach out to a trusted adult or a BLOOM365 advocate at the number above. We want to ensure that you are safe and will work with you to determine what you would like to do.

Q: I have depression and I think I need to go to quail run (mental health hospital). What do I do? **

A: Depression can be an extremely difficult health issue, and we are glad that you are reaching out for support. We highly encourage you to reach out to a trusted adult or a BLOOM365 advocate at the number above. An advocate can help connect you to the proper resources and help you come up with a plan. Teen Lifeline is also a great organization to reach out to for resources and support. You can find their number listed above as well.

Q: What can someone do if a friend is in an abusive relationship but the friend doesn't want to listen to you or seek help?

A: 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. 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. 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.

Q: If the other doesn't see their significant other's actions as abusive, how do you convince them?

A: 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. You can encourage them to reach out to BLOOM365, 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 their safety, we encourage you to tell a trusted adult or BLOOM365 advocate.

Q: What are you supposed to do when you get called dirty names because you didn't want to be sexual with someone?

A: If someone is putting you down and you can't avoid spending time with them, it's important to make sure that the voice in your head is being kind since those around you are not. If you still have it, take your Hello I Am sheet and orange Post It note (three things you like about yourself) and keep them somewhere that you see everyday to remind yourself of the things that you like about yourself. Remind yourself that the negative things others say about you are not true and keep yourself busy doing things you enjoy! Nobody should ever put you down for not doing something you don't want to do or aren't ready for. But, if someone does, you can make the choice to ignore what they say and know that what they say isn't true! If you are being bullied or called names continuously, we encourage you to tell a trusted adult/teacher.

Q: In an abusive relationship, why would you get charged with domestic violence for self defense?

A: Any person can claim self-defense as a defendant in a domestic violence case, but each state handles these cases differently. Different states have different qualifications for what it means to protect or

defend oneself. The victim certainly has the right to defend themselves in domestic violence cases, but that doesn't necessarily mean that it's always okay for them to inflict substantial harm upon their attacker. It's a sticky situation and really varies case-by-case, but we'd be happy to discuss this more with you if you want to text/call an advocate at the number above.

Q: What if there was a scenario where a girl's parents used to hit her, but not anymore, but the girl doesn't know if her parents are capable of hitting her ever again? **

A: In this situation, it's important to remember that the abuse was not your fault. Experiencing abuse can emotionally and physically impact a person, and it's important that this is dealt with properly to help the survivor move forward. It's also important that you feel safe in your own home. If you do not feel safe or fear that the abuse may occur again in the future, we encourage you to reach out to a BLOOM365 advocate or a trusted adult to discuss this situation. A BLOOM365 advocate can help you determine what steps you'd like to take to help ensure you are safe and that you feel safe. If you already feel safe and need some assistance in beginning the healing process, we also encourage you to reach out to a BLOOM365 advocate for available resources and/or to get involved in our weekly support group. Please text or call the number above to speak with a BLOOM365 advocate about your situation or reach out to another trusted adult in your life.

Q: What if the victim push you away but you still want to help them; How can you help them? How do I make the victim trust me to tell me what is happening?

A: 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. 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. 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.

Q: On the red flags, my boyfriends updates me of where he is because I want to make sure he is safe.

A: If this is something you and your partner both agreed to and he is doing willingly, then that is perfectly okay. When it becomes unhealthy is when one partner forces the other to constantly check-in with them as a means of maintaining power/control over them.

Q: Is there anything that teenagers can do to try and join BLOOM365? I would love to join!

A: Yes! One way to get involved is by joining BLOOM Crew, which meets every Wednesday during lunch in Room 625! Turn to page 38 in your workbook for more information about Crew! Another way to get involved is as Peer Advocate. Through peer advocacy training, you will learn how to help others experiencing these issues and become the go-to person for your peers. Please email marli@bloom365.org or visit www.bloom365.org/advocates to learn more!

Dose 3

Q: Instead of Equality, try using Equity.

A: Thank you for the suggestion! While equity is defined by fairness, equality is more applicable in this situation as it can be defined as a balance of power in a relationship.

Q: This whole conversation of gender norms is pointless. We all know that men have an advantage which is very sad. Its so stupid and upsetting.

A: This is exactly why this conversation of gender norms is so necessary!! 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. In addition, due to the stigmas surrounding gender norms, young boys and men often don't feel comfortable reaching out for support if they're experiencing abuse because they fear they're be told to "tough it out" or "be a man." Abuse DOES NOT make any person less of a man or a human being. It's crucial that we talk about these things, otherwise nothing is ever going to change!

Q: Genders are equal.

A: Although we have made some progress in recent years, we still have a ways to go. For one, the statistics continue to show differences in how men and women are paid. In the past, the differences in pay between men and women were often justified by the fact that men were typically more educated and qualified. This is no longer a valid justification as this gap still exists today when comparing pay among men and women with the same qualifications and education who hold the same job. Men continue to get paid more than women, often due to sex discrimination.

Q: I have a low self-esteem and people bring me down without knowing can you help? Similar question: I don't have a good self-esteem. Can you help me bring that up?

A: If someone is putting you down and you can't avoid spending time with them, it's important to make sure that the voice in your head is being kind since those around you are not. If you still have it, take your Hello I Am sheet and orange Post It note (three things you like about yourself) and keep them somewhere that you see everyday to remind yourself of the things that you like about yourself. Remind yourself that the negative things others say about you are not true and keep yourself busy doing things you enjoy! 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. We are here to support you as well, please feel free to text/call the number above!

Q: Why do men think that women are just a small weak people? (I know not all men do that.)

A: 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 and unhealthy gender norms.

Q: If you love someone who hurt you physically and mentally, how can you get out of it?

A: As we discussed during Dose 2, love can be a huge barrier to leaving abusive relationships. It's important to note that the abuse is NOT your fault and that you deserve a healthy, blooming relationship. If you would like to talk through your options or just need a listening ear, please feel free to text or call a BLOOM365 advocate at the number above. We highly encourage you to get involved in our weekly Monday night support group. This is a place to help you in healing process. Ending any relationship is not easy, but we encourage you to spend time doing the things that make you happy and with the people you love to help cope with the situation.

Q: I don't get the gender thing because my sister is a girl and she don't like girls stuff.

A: While we have seen a shift in recent years, unhealthy gender norms still exist in our society. Girls and boys should be encouraged to be who they want to be, and we shouldn't have to classify specific things/toys as "boys" stuff or "girls" stuff. It's great that your sister feels free to enjoy whatever she likes regardless of her gender. We strive to create a society where everyone feels safe and free to be who they are, and where nobody feels like they have the "stereotype" of what it means to be a "man" or a "woman."

Q: How do you limit gender norms.

A: Creating change around unhealthy gender norms starts with YOU and YOUR generation! You all have the power to promote social change and create a society where everyone feels free to be who they are. Supporting the "exceptions" and encouraging people to recognize how unhealthy gender norms affect people and relationships is a great place to start!

Q: I'm honestly scared to share too much about myself because I'm scared to get made fun of or picked on.

A: We are so sorry you feel this way. You should never feel uncomfortable or unsafe at school. We highly encourage you to speak to your teacher or a trusted adult on your campus to see how they might be able to support you and address this situation. If you would like an advocate to assist you, please feel free to text/call the number above.

Dose 4

Q: I'm thankful for you guys. You helped me friend get out of a problem.

A: That is so great to hear. That is what we are here for! If you or someone you know ever needs additional support, please feel free to text/call the number above for free, confidential support.

Dose 5

Q: You can't just magically get an amazing self-esteem.

A: You are absolutely right. Developing a healthy self-esteem can take time. Self-love and self-confidence can be a life-long journey! You aren't going to wake up everyday and feel 100%, but knowing that you are worthy of love and respect can help you to bounce back. 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.

Q: What's your social media names?

A: You can follow us on twitter @UprootAbuse, and find us on facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/uprootabuse>. You can also follow us on Snapchat and Instagram @bloom365

Q: Sometimes, even though we all know our "deal breakers", when we are confronted with a loved one or gf/bf, we think it's not a big deal but it affects us. How do we realize it's not okay and how do we break the cycle?

A: Remember how we had you identify your deal breakers and then think about your celebrity crush? The purpose of this activity was to identify whether or not you would hold true to your deal breakers if your celebrity crush had one of these qualities/habits/etc. Oftentimes when you begin to really like someone, that attraction and those feelings are going to be just as strong or stronger than the attraction you have to your celebrity crush. The most important thing for us to do is to take a moment to think about and write down what our own deal breakers are. We should also consider our deal makers and why these things are important to us. You should always remember why it's important to you that your partner doesn't have/do "X" and why he/she does have/do "Y." Let's say my deal breaker was if someone doesn't have goals/isn't ambitious and my deal maker was someone who enjoys spending time outdoors. If I start to date someone who isn't ambitious and who doesn't enjoy spending time outdoors, I'm probably going to constantly be nagging them to set goals/work towards bettering themselves and I'm not going to be able to enjoy doing what I love with them (spending time outdoors). If I held true to my deal breakers, my relationship would likely be much healthier and happier. So taking time to identify and reflect on your own deal makers/deal breakers and remembering WHY they are important is a great way to break the cycle!

Q: What should you do if your sister hits you/used to? Is it normal since it's between siblings? **

A: While some siblings get into arguments and play fight with one another at times, it is not okay for someone to ever intentionally try to hurt you to maintain power/control over you or to make you feel unsafe in your home. If you do not feel safe or fear that this may occur again in the future, we encourage you to reach out to a BLOOM365 advocate or a trusted adult to discuss this situation. A BLOOM365 advocate can help you determine what steps you'd like to take to help ensure you are safe

and that you feel safe. If you already feel safe and need some assistance in beginning the healing process, we also encourage you to reach out to a BLOOM365 advocate for available resources and/or to get involved in our weekly support group. Please text or call the number above to speak with a BLOOM365 advocate about your situation or reach out to another trusted adult in your life.

Q: Can physical abuse cause depression? If so, how?

A: Physical abuse can be traumatic and have a lasting impact on the survivor. According to the Association for Psychological Science, suffering trauma as a child greatly increases one's risk of developing depression later on. The reasoning behind this is that experiencing physical or sexual abuse early on in life can cause changes to occur in the brain that result in both physiological and behavioral changes. These traumatic events can completely alter the neurobiological systems and contribute to depression. If you believe you may be suffering from depression or other effects of trauma, we highly encourage you to reach out to a BLOOM365 advocate or Teen Lifeline for resources and support.

Q: Is it a form of rape if the guy your dating forces you into sex so he don't leave?

A: When someone forces another person to have sex, this is known as coercion. This is an act of manipulation and can be considered a form of rape. Remember that consent is freely given and not coerced. That means, if you were coerced/forced into having sex, then it was rape. If you have any questions about this matter or would like to talk to an advocate, please feel free to text/call the number above for free, confidential support.

Dose 6

Q: If I get jealous when my boyfriend talks to other girls friendly or not, would that be abuse?

A: 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. Something you could both talk about is how you may be able to build up your trust and decrease your feelings of jealousy.

Q: If you are in a healthy relationship but date rape happens, and you worked it out with them but it's affecting your sexual/ physical life, how do you explain it without hurting them; They are not happy about it either? **

A: This question is difficult to answer without knowing the context or specifics. Please text/call an advocate at the number above, and we'd be happy to discuss this more with you.

Q: If you say no how do you help them understand you still love them?

A: In a relationship, you have the right to set your own boundaries. You also have the right to: Make decisions together (equality), have your own opinions, express your feelings, choose activities

(freedom), be yourself (individuality), and safety. Your partner also has the responsibility of respecting these rights and your boundaries. If you set a boundary and communicate that boundary by telling your partner “no”, they should respect this. Letting them know that you just aren’t ready yet or aren’t comfortable with something may help them to understand. You can let them know that you love them, but that doesn’t automatically mean you are ready for something or that you have to do what they want to do. Communicating your boundaries early on in a relationship can definitely be helpful.

Q: Do you have any tips for conflict resolution?

A: Communication is key when it comes to conflict resolution. We highly encourage you to use “I-statements” to communicate your feelings, allow your partner to understand where you are coming from, and offer a solution to the issue. It’s also important to think about the true reason for why you and your partner/friend/etc. are arguing. For example, maybe you got into an argument because your partner didn’t reply to your text the day before. The real issue in this situation may be that you don’t feel appreciated. You might communicate to your partner by saying, “It makes me feel unimportant when you don’t talk to me, can we maybe set aside time each week for each other?” This helps to address the real issue and can help your partner empathize with how you are feeling. In some situations, you might have to agree to disagree on specific things to avoid arguing about things that aren’t really that important. Although not always easy, sometimes you will also have to compromise to resolve conflict. Finding a happy medium that will leave you both satisfied is sometimes the best outcome. It’s important to always consider whether the issue you are arguing about is really that important and to always consider your partner’s point of view and feelings as well.

Q: How do you communicate consent?

A: Loveisrespect.org has some great tips regarding consent. To determine if you have consent from your partner you might ask: “Are you comfortable?”, “Is this okay?”, “Do you want to slow down?”, or “Do you want to go any further?” Some ways you may communicate consent are: “I feel/do not feel comfortable with this”, “I want to slow down”, or “I want to/do not want to go any further.” Remember that consent is a clear and enthusiastic yes. The response “maybe”, the lack of a yes, and silence are NOT consent! Remember that consent must be freely given and not coerced, meaning that it is NOT consent if the partner feels pressured/afraid to say no or are threatened to say yes. Consent can also NOT be given under the influence of alcohol or drugs.