

Elephant in The Room Q & A

North 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)

Q: Student

A: BLOOM365 Advocate

Dose 1

Q: When is a good time to date?

A: We cannot tell you at what age to start dating, because it is different for every person. However, we would suggest to start dating when you feel ready, and you are able to handle the responsibilities that go along with a dating relationship. Check out page 12 of your workbook for a list of your rights and responsibilities within a relationship.

Q: If you have gone through abuse, sexual assault and an abusive relationship for years how do you get over it after the fact?

A: If you have experienced abuse, 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. Email teens@bloom365.org or text 602-799-6096 to get involved. Other methods of coping include: Talking to trusted friends or family members or healing arts like painting or yoga. 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!

Q: Why are boys so overprotective?

A: As we talked about in Dose 3, gender norms are ingrained into our culture. Boys may sometimes feel like they need to “protect” their partner. However, it can lead to jealousy. 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. 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.

Q: What made you guys concern of teen dating?

A: All of us at BLOOM365 have different reasons for why we chose to be involved with BLOOM365. Some of us have experienced or witnessed dating abuse or domestic violence in our own lives or the lives of our friends. We are all extremely passionate about this cause because we recognize that is a significant issue that can be prevented.

Dose 2

Q: Do you think women are more likely to be the victims of teen dating abuse. If so, why? If not, why not?

A: While dating abuse is experienced by girls/women at higher rates, abuse knows no bias and

boys/men do experience abuse as well. Almost 50% of Arizona teens who have experienced dating abuse have said that they never reported it. Due to stigmas surrounding gender norms, guys are often treated differently because they are expected to “tough it out” or “be a man.” Unfortunately, due to these stigmas, male victims are much less likely to reach out for help. Being abused does NOT make any person less of a man or human being. If you are experiencing abuse in a relationship or if you are a sexual assault survivor, we encourage you to reach out to a trusted adult or a BLOOM365 advocate who can help you determine what steps you might want to take next.

Q: Is it bad if your partner texts you while you're busy but it's not mean or rude it's just really extra. Like sometimes to a point where it's like bruh, chill.

A: Having good communication in your relationship is key. If you feel they are texting you too much while you are spending time with others, or alone, it is best to communicate that with your partner. You can communicate your feelings and concerns with your partner by using “I” statements. “I feel _____ when _____, could you please _____.” If communicating your feelings does not change your partner’s behavior or make them respect your boundaries, this could be a warning sign that this relationship is unhealthy.

Q: How can you try to talk to the perpetrator without putting yourself or your friend in danger?

A: If you recognize the signs of abusive behavior in a friend or peer, telling a trusted adult about it is often one of the best options, especially if you do not feel safe directly confronting the person. 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 the number above if you feel like you need additional support.

Q: If someone is abusing me and I throw hot water at them and bum them, will I get in trouble?

A: If you are being abused, you are allowed to protect yourself through self-defense. The answer to this question is difficult, though, because it really would depend on the specifics of the situation. However, if you feel that you are in any danger, we encourage you to share this situation with a trusted adult in your life, a school social worker, or a BLOOM365 advocate.

Q: How do you get an abuser to see that what they're doing wrong? They don't want help and think it's “normal” or “okay”.

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 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. Try to uplift your friend by telling them positive things and spending time with them doing activities together that will take their mind away from the negatives. You can let your friend know that they deserve to be treated with equality and

respect and that they deserves to have healthy, blooming relationships. 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: Have you been or have a friend who's a victim of dating abuse?

A: All of us at BLOOM365 have different reasons for why we chose to be involved with BLOOM365. Some of us have experienced or witnessed dating abuse or domestic violence in our own lives or the lives of our friends, while others have not. On page 5 of your workbook, you can read more about Donna Bartos, the founder and executive director of BLOOM365, and her experience with dating abuse.

Q: Would a person that constantly argues with you over small things in a relationship everyday or every other day be considered as a person who's abusive? And they're trying to make you cut people off because they don't like them be considered as an abusive relationship?

A: Arguments are a natural occurrence in relationships/friendships. Constant arguments, though, may be a sign that a relationship is unhealthy. Equality and freedom are rights that you have as an individual. Your partner telling you who you can/can't hang out with and isolating you from people you love is a warning sign for a healthy or potentially abusive relationship. When someone does not respect your rights, feelings, and opinions and/or the relationship does not have an equal balance of power, it is up to you to decide what you would like to do. 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.

Q: Is being emotionally manipulated, letting someone get to you by what they tell you, considered abuse?

A: Emotional and verbal abuse are just as serious as physical abuse, and can leave a lasting impact on a survivor. Emotional abuse is the continuous intimidation or brainwashing of a person to control them. Verbal abuse includes yelling, screaming, rampaging or refusing to talk.

Q: How do you feel of a pregnant lady getting abused by her husband?

A: We believe everyone deserves healthy relationships stemmed in equality and freedom and that nobody deserves to be abused. There are a lot of barriers to leaving an abusive relationship, which is why it's so important to never blame the victim. If you know someone who is being abused, we highly encourage you to tell you a trusted adult or a BLOOM365 advocate. If you feel comfortable, you can also provide this person with resources (such as the Domestic Violence Hotline listed above). A BLOOM365 advocate can also provide you with additional support and resources.

Dose 3

Q: What is L.G.B.T.?

A: L.G.B.T.Q stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer. The acronym LGBTQ is often used to account for all people who identify within this community.

Q: Should your partner be able to tell you not to experience things you wanna experience?

A: We advocate for relationships stemmed in equality and freedom. In a healthy relationship, you have

the freedom to your own opinions, feelings, and choice of activities. If your partner does not respect your right to your own experiences and your freedom to choose these experiences, this is a red flag that the relationship may be stemmed in power and control. We encourage you to reach out to a BLOOM365 advocate at the number above to discuss your situation and determine what steps you'd like to take.

Q: How do you feel for the norms and exceptions of females and males?

A: We believe everyone should feel comfortable being who they are, regardless of their gender identity. Having a rigid belief in unhealthy gender norms is something that can be a risk factor for having power and control over our partner. If someone believes that they should have power over someone because of their gender and their understanding over gender roles, that can lead to an unhealthy/abusive relationship. Additionally, rigid beliefs in gender norms can prevent male victims from reaching out if they are experiencing abuse and violence in their relationships.

Q: Do you like Trump?

A: Our organization does not affiliate with any particular political party. We are made up of a collection of individuals with different experiences, likes/dislikes, and ideas.

Q: If a person is constantly getting mad about the people you're hanging out with and they text you saying things like "If you don't stop hanging out with such and such I'm going to break up with you". Does that mean that person is abusive?

Does that mean that person is abusive?

A: One red flag of a potentially abusive relationship is if your partner gets overly jealous when you spend time with friends and family. Additionally, it can be a red flag for a potentially unhealthy or abusive relationship if your partner tries to tell you who to hang out with/not to hang out with or isolates you from your friends or family. Remember the "what makes you happy" activity? We had you all identify what makes you happy and encouraged you to always remember what makes you happy, because it can be a red flag when someone tries to take these things away from you. If you notice any of these red flags within your relationship, it is up to you to decide what you would like to do. We highly encourage you to reach out to a BLOOM365 advocate for free, confidential support and to discuss this situation further.

Dose 5

Q: How do you feel about yourself?

A: Everyone here at BLOOM365 is on their own self-esteem journey. We are always trying to promote healthy self-esteem, positive thinking, and self-care!

Q: Why did you choose an elephant instead of another animal?

A: The phrase "elephant in the room" is commonly used to refer to a topic or question that people may feel uncomfortable talking about or asking. Urban dictionary describes this phrase as a big issue that everyone is aware of, but that nobody really wants to talk about. An elephant in a room would be a pretty big issue to not be aware of, right? We used this phrase, because this is a serious issue that many teens have questions about but often don't feel comfortable asking out loud!

Q: What if your partner wants you to maintain distance from your ‘friends’ whom are bad influences on us but we still want to be friends with those people. What if they tell us to stay away because they know that when those friends talk we will get hurt and they don’t want to see us hurt. Is that a red flag?

A: It really comes down to the intention of your partner. Are they forcing you to maintain distance from your friends because they want to gain power and control over you? Or, are they encouraging you to distance yourself from them because they genuinely care about your well-being? Healthy relationships exhibit equality and freedom as well as respect and encouragement. Your partner isolating you from what makes you happy is absolutely a red flag, but your partner encouraging you to surround yourself with positive people is likely not.

Q: What if holding true to your deal breakers and trying to change someone for their own good like drug abuse. Is that still power and control? Does that make you the manipulator?

A: Just like we cannot force people to leave abusive relationships if they are not ready, we cannot force people to stop abusing drugs. We cannot make people get help if they do not want to, but we can help our friends or partners feel supported. Sometimes our friends or partners are not ready to accept the help we would like to offer them. The most important thing we can do is let them 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 drug use is one of your deal breakers, it is up to you to decide what you’d like to do. But we do encourage you to hold true to your deal breakers because, again, we cannot force people to change.

Q: Do you deal with very low self-esteem?

A: Dealing with low self-esteem is very difficult, and we assure you that you are not alone in feeling this way. 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 if you’re too sensitive about the simplest things?

A: Being sensitive is nothing to be ashamed of. We assure you that you are not alone. If you feel that you need additional support or a listening ear, feel free to contact a BLOOM365 advocate at the number above. If you’d like additional information about available resources or our weekly support group, one of our advocates would be happy to help you access this information!

DOSE 6

Q: Can it (teen dating abuse) lead to death?

A: 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 some situations, such as with Dorothy and May, the perpetrator exerts power and control

over killing themselves and/or their partner. This is why it is so crucial that we take these types of threats seriously and tell a trusted adult or a BLOOM365 advocate.

Q: What do you do when your relationship is kinda messed up and it's tough to communicate?

A: Communication is an important part of healthy relationships. Using “I” statements can be helpful in communicating our feelings and allowing the other person to empathize with us. This also can help prevent them from feeling like they are being attacked, which often results in a negative reaction. We recommend using the format: I feel ____ (emotion) when _____, can we please _____ (resolution)? Offering a resolution to the situation can be beneficial in helping you to come to a compromise and a solution to the issue. If you’d like further support, please text/call the number above.

Q: Is coercion still coercion if they convince you?

A: The definition of coercion is forcing someone to do something against their will. Remember that consent is free of pressure and it is not consent if you have to convince them. So, if you do not do something and someone tries to make you without your consent, that is coercion.

Q: Is having ‘hoes’ after a breakup coping?

A: Coping with a break up or loss of a friend can be extremely difficult. While there are some healthy ways of coping, there are also ways of coping that aren’t always healthy or beneficial for us. We encourage you to make use of healthy coping methods that work for you. For example, spending time with people you love and doing things that make you happy. Some people find exercising or spending time outdoors to be helpful, while others cope by trying new things (like joining a new club or sports team). Taking a minute to think about whether your methods of coping are helping you to truly heal and benefitting you can be helpful. The most important thing is to give yourself time to heal, and find healthy methods of coping that work for you!

Q: What about after a break up? Like how can we get over it easily? Can you guys speak more on how we can end a relationship that was not abusive?

A: How a person moves on after a break up will vary from person to person. Some people take longer than others to move on. Sometimes doing self-care activities helps clear your mind and move forward. Communication is an important tool that can help you to end a relationship. We recommend communicating with your partner honestly using “I” statements about how you feel and why you want to end the relationship.

Q: If you and your partner have NEVER fought before, are you still in a healthy relationship?

A: There are many different components to have a healthy relationship. If you have a open and honest line of communication with you partner, and you never fight, that is great. In healthy relationships, both partners should feel free to express themselves and their feelings openly, and they should also respect these rights of their partner. If you relationship is stemmed in equality and freedom and both partners are happy, then it is likely a healthy relationship!

Does 7

Q: How do you feel about teaching teens these topics?

A: This topics are not easy to talk about, and at times it can be difficult. Although it's not always easy, each everyone one of our staff and interns at BLOOM365 is extremely passionate about this issue and we all find this work to be very rewarding. We wouldn't be involved if we didn't find joy in helping teens learn about how to have healthy and safe relationships!

Q: Can you give us an example or red flags of having a bad relationship with yourself?

A: Having a high self-esteem, or confidence in your self-worth, is really important to your overall mental health. It also helps you to have healthier, more blooming relationships with others. If you are constantly putting yourself down, this may be a red flag for low self-esteem. Dealing with low self-esteem is very difficult, and we assure you that you are not alone in feeling this way. 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.