



**Elephant in The Room Q & A
Upward Bound- Gateway
Summer 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) For abuse, does their have to be an age difference?

Large age differences can certainly lead to one partner, generally the older partner, having power and control over the other partner. However, this won't always be the case. Abuse can happen between anyone, whether they are the same age or not. One of the root causes for abuse that we have been

talking about is choice and this applies to any relationship. Someone can always make the choice to not abuse.

2) So are you allowed to party when you're in a relationship if there's freedom?

It depends! This is a topic that might take some negotiation between the people in the relationship. Sometimes one partner might not feel comfortable with their partner partying if their partner parties in a way that might be harmful to them (ie. drinking too much, making unsafe choices), in which case, there needs to be open communication to make sure that each partner is expressing their wants and needs. However, if one partner is trying to limit the types of activities their partner engages in or the people that their partner hangs out with, this can be controlling and potentially abusive. Both people need to have open communication with each other so that they can negotiate an outcome that makes them both comfortable. "I statements" can come in handy here! If, after trying to compromise, a solution can't be found, it might be time to evaluate whether or not the relationship is blooming for both partners.

3) How to break up with someone?

A: Communication is key! We hear a lot about "ghosting" (suddenly cutting off contact with someone you had established a relationship with) in the media these days but this really isn't the best option. It can be hurtful and leaves the other person wondering what they did wrong. Sitting down in a quiet place and having a conversation might be difficult, but it shows that you still respect the other person. "I statements" are awesome for break-ups because they help you explain why you are choosing to end the relationship without placing blame on the other person. For example, you could say "I don't feel like I have enough time to commit to our relationship, so I think it would be best for both of us if we are just friends." Or "I feel like I am not able to give you what you want in a relationship. I think we should go our separate ways." This can also apply to friendships!

4) Do you know what love is? How do you know you're in love?

Love is awesome! Love might feel different for everyone but it should always feel good. Losing love might hurt and loving someone that doesn't love you back might hurt, but having someone love you should never hurt and your love should never hurt someone else. Love is happy, warm, comforting, and exciting! It's the kind of thing that you know it when you feel it.

5) Do you think that gender exceptions are becoming more prominent because of the breaking of gender barriers? Are we at a risk of falling into those stereotypical power roles again?

Great question! There's a lot of evidence telling us that younger generations are throwing off strict gender roles and embracing differences in gender expression. But we also know that people of all ages are still being bullied, harassed, and attacked for daring to be an exception. Stereotypes are still being reinforced in many aspects of our life so we must continue to be voices for change and support our friends who break gender roles.

6) Why is it common to get abused as a teen than an adult?

It's not that it is more or less common to be in an abusive relationship as a teen, but instead that many adults who are/ were in abusive relationships didn't know the tools as adults. Our goal at Bloom 365 is to prevent dating abuse before it starts, because many people have their first relationship as teens we want to give the tools and resources before it starts so that they can use it if they or a friend are ever in a abusive relationship.

7) Is Bloom365 only for dating violence or do you guys help teens struggling with other things?

While Bloom's main goal is teen dating violence we do focus on other areas, like domestic violence, sexual violence/assault, self harm and other abusive relationships. We do focus on teens but have resources for anyone who may need them.

8) How can we change the media?

One way to create change is through conversation with family, friends and our community. This creates the idea that something in our society needs to change and we the people have the power to change it. We can change the media by changing the types of media we watch, read or listen to. If we as a society no longer tolerate media that portrays abusive behavior/relationships then that will no longer be portrayed in the media.

9) What if your friend doesn't see that they are in a abusive relationship? Or doesn't want your help?

This is a common problem in abusive relationships, many time they aren't aware that they are in an abusive relationship or are not ready to leave. The best thing to do as a friend or someone close to them is to listen to them and offer them support and services to get help if/when they are ready.

10) What are the first signs of abuse?

There are many times of signs that a relationship is or might become abusive, it stems from power and control. If one person in the relationship is trying to have power and control over the other. This could vary from not letting you spend time with other people, calling or texting all the time to see where you are or what you are doing. The best way to know if a relationship might/is abusive is to listen to your gut.