

# Elephant in The Room Q & A

Bioscience 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](https://www.bloom365.com/resources)\**

<b>BLOOM365 Advocate</b>	Text or call 602-799-7017 for free, confidential support. Please allow up to 24 hours to receive an initial response.
<b>BLOOM365 Hotline</b>	Call 1-888-606-HOPE (4673)
<b>BLOOM365 Drop-In Support Groups</b>	Every Monday (Holidays excluded). Please email <a href="mailto:teens@bloom365.org">teens@bloom365.org</a> or text 602-799-6096 for more information.
<b>Teen Lifeline</b>	Text or call 602-248-TEEN (8336) for free, confidential support 24/7 relating to suicide, depression, bullying, or relationships.
<b>National Teen Dating Violence Hotline</b>	Text "LOVEIS" to 22522 24/7
<b>National Domestic Violence Hotline</b>	1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
<b>National Sexual Assault Hotline</b>	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: Does sexual assault happen to men?**

A: Abuse knows no bias, and men can also be victims/survivors of sexual assault and teen dating abuse. 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. 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: What do I do if I know some people in this school who are in school who are in an abusive relationship?**

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 peers, if you are feeling empowered. You can also tear out the extra red flag checklist on page 41 in your workbook and talk to your peer 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: Say a person in this room is going through this with someone else in this room, and they are scared to bring it up. What do they do?**

A: 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. If this person attends school with you and it is happening on campus or 24/7 via texts or social media, it is important for you to share this situation with your school social worker or another adult on campus that you can trust.

**Q: How do I know if my relationship will turn abusive?**

A: 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. If you turn to page 17 in your packet, you will find the Red Flags

Checklist. We encourage you to use and evaluate it in case you feel your relationship is unhealthy or abusive. If you checked off one or more red flags, your relationship is possibly unhealthy or abusive.

## **DOSE 2**

### **Q: Can abuse only happen in teen relationships or can it happen in adult relationships too?**

A: Abuse has no bias, it can happen to anyone regardless of gender, age, sexual orientation, or ethnicity. 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: What if it is a 50 shades of grey situation and they like the abuse?**

A: This is where consent comes into play. 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!

### **Q: What if they like the daddy kink but you don't and they force you?**

A: Consent is so important because no one should ever be forced to do anything that they do not want to do. Consent is a huge part of freedom and all the rights that we have as individuals. If you have been forced to do something you do not want to do, then that is a red flag of power and control. You can reference the "Red Flags Checklist" on page 17 of your workbook. 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 you could be at risk of getting injured or even killed. 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.

### **Q: What if the person you are with doesn't show any red flags at all, and one day shows up with a weapon. What can we do?**

A: If you or someone you know is in danger, a weapon is involved, or if ANY of the top 5 abusive behaviors are present, it is very important that you reach out to a trusted adult as soon as possible. If you've managed to get away, or they have left, you have a few options that you can do. First and foremost it is important to look out after yourself. Make sure you're okay. Have a seat somewhere, go for a walk, or text a trusted friend or adult. It is important to report something like this to a trusted adult.

### **Q: Once you are done with the abusive relationship but still love them. How can you move on/forget?**

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!

**Q: If you feel like taking every pill in your cabinet. Even though you won't but you feel like it. How do I fix this before it goes to hell?**

A: We highly encourage you to reach out to a trusted adult such as the school social or a BLOOM365 Advocate as soon as possible. Our advocates are always here to lend a free, confidential listening ear whenever you need it. Also, if you'd like some resources for suicide and depression, we encourage you to contact Teen Lifeline and/or the National Suicide Prevention Hotline listed above.

#### **DOSE 3 & 4**

**Q: Can we discuss the fact that what someone is wearing does not condone any form of assault?**

A: Although we did not specifically talk about this in the 7 Doses, it is a great point to be made and very relevant to the conversation we had on victim blaming. It is common in our society to blame the victim and put the responsibility of their assault or harassment on them, rather than holding the perpetrator accountable for their actions. Instead of blaming the abuser, we blame the person getting hurt. We absolutely agree that what someone is wearing should never condone any form of assault. We should remember that it is never anyone's fault if they were assaulted or harassed, regardless of what they were wearing at that time.

**Q: What if both people from a couple are aggressive?**

A: 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. With that being said, sometimes two partners can try to control each other. We recommend reaching out to an advocate (602-799-7017).

**Q: Have you ever been in a abusive/unhealthy relationship?**

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 BLOOM36, and her experience with dating abuse.

**Q: I don't have a phone. And I don't know how I can call a suicide prevention hotline without my parents knowing. Is there an email address I can email for suicide prevention?**

A: The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline website has an online chat line , if you are able to view that site. Your school social worker and counselor are also great sources for information on dealing with depression and suicide. You can always reach out to a BLOOM365 advocate at [sebastian@bloom365.org](mailto:sebastian@bloom365.org)

or [teens@bloom365.org](mailto:teens@bloom365.org) for free, confidential support. We want you to know there is always someone available here at BLOOM.

### **DOSE 5**

**Q: What if the things that make someone happy are bad things, like drinking and smoking every night?**

A: Sometimes people begin to use drugs or alcohol as a way to try and deal with or cope with trauma or stress. It is important to differentiate between the definitions of self care and self comfort. When caring for yourself turns into distracting or numbing or avoiding, it may be time to pause and check in with yourself. Ask yourself, what are you really needing in those moments? Here at BLOOM, we love to encourage teens to invest their time in healthy coping mechanisms. We encourage you to take care of yourself and making sure that you are sleeping, drinking, eating, and exercising properly. If you or a friend is experiencing issues with drugs or alcohol, we encourage you to reach out to Terros at the number above. If you'd like more healthy coping tips, please don't hesitate to call or text a BLOOM advocate at the number above.

**Q: Is abuse only limited to taking power?**

A: The backbone of unhealthy relationships is power and control. There are a number of root causes of power and control for abuse that we explored during doses 3&4. Some people may be abusive to their partners because they were exposed to violence in their homes as a child and taught that this behavior was normal or okay. Rigid belief in gender norms can also play a role. Insecurity is another root cause. If someone lacks confidence, they may try to gain power or control over their partner in an attempt to feel better. Remember, though, that even though this root causes increase one's risk of becoming a perpetrator, they still can make the deliberate choice to have relationships based in equality and freedom.

### **DOSE 6 & 7**

**Q: When having an argument with your partner would it be better to talk in person, phone, or text?**

A: Communication is how we share ideas, but it's also how we get our needs met. Basically, when we communicate we are sending and receiving messages. There are many different ways we send and receive messages. If you're talking on the phone, sometimes it can be more difficult to communicate because you aren't able to express your emotions through your body language or recognize your partner's body language. While some conflicts can be resolved over the phone or text, sometimes it is better to communicate and address certain issues in person. There are a lot of ways that we can communicate in person and express our feelings, thoughts, and emotions that can't be expressed or recognized over text. While a quick text can seem efficient, it may create additional work to clear up misunderstandings. Depending on each situation, we encourage you to think about what the best way to address and resolve the conflict will be. While texting may work in some cases, in other cases it may not be as effective.

**Q: I broke up an old friendship that I had, because I realized she is not who I thought she was. My other friends do not know what happened, since I refused to tell them. But now I am worried that she could hurt them like she hurt me. What should I do?**

A: Communication would be very important in a situation like this. It sounds like your friends do not know what happened and how to be there for you. Letting your friends know what happened may be helpful, especially if you're concerned with their safety or something potentially happening. If you'd like to speak to an Advocate on how to have that conversation with your friends, please text or call the number listed above.

**Q: What do I do if someone says I'm "low standards" for someone?**

A: Sometimes people put others down when they are dealing with their own insecurities, as a way to try and feel better about themselves. If someone is putting you down, 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! If you are continuously being picked on, we encourage you to tell a teacher or school social worker to ensure that the situation is addressed appropriately.