



**Elephant in The Room Q & A
Fountain Hills 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

Doses 1&2-

- 1. "I don't particularly have a question on abusive dating. But, what if you know your girlfriend or boyfriend was being abused and they're moving away?"**

Please text or call a BLOOM365 advocate at 602-799-7017 and we can connect you with someone who will assist you in taking the necessary steps in this situation.

- 2. "What do you do if you feel embarrassed?"**

One thing that's important to remember is that everyone makes mistakes and that nobody is perfect. Another thing to note is that we are often our own biggest critics. You may think that other people are judging you in certain circumstances, which can cause embarrassment. In reality, most of the time most people don't even notice the flaws we can see within ourselves. This is all to say that a lot of our embarrassment often comes from us being critical of our own selves, rather than other people actually being critical of us. It may be helpful for you to try to work on tuning-out that negative inner voice in your head to help boost your confidence and reduce those feelings of embarrassment.

3. "Do you think boys are more abusive than girls?"

Abuse has no bias, and both boys and girls can be perpetrators and victims of abuse. However, women are vastly more likely to be seriously hurt or killed in these scenarios, which is why a lot of the examples we chose show women as the survivors and men as the perpetrators. While dating abuse is experienced by girls and young women at higher rates, boys and young men do experience abuse as well. Almost 50% of Arizona teens who have experienced dating abuse have said that they never reported it. Sometimes due to the stigmas surrounding gender norms, young boys and men don't feel comfortable reaching out for support 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, and we encourage all victims of abuse to seek support from a trusted adult or BLOOM365 advocate. Legally both men and women are treated equally when they are victims of these crimes.

4. "Well so see my friend here has a dilemma with her other thing/half partner. And one of her best friends likes the boy she is with. And she has told him and her to stop talking but talk to each other secretly without no one telling. What should she do? Please help ASAP"

In this situation, it may be helpful for both friends to sit down and talk about how they are feeling. One thing that you may want to discuss is how you both will work to prevent this guy from coming in between your friendship. Honesty is a huge component of healthy relationships and healthy friendships. Being honest and open with one another about how you are both feeling and coming to an agreed upon solution between the two of you may help to avoid additional conflict. Using I-statements can be an effective way for each friend to take ownership of their own feelings and help you each to communicate your feelings and potential solutions without the other person feeling like they are being attacked.

Doses 3&4

1. What about LGBT? What are your opinions on their gender norms?

This is certainly something that's important to think about. I encourage you to explore the norms and exceptions associated with these groups and identify where you may see more power (financial, social, physical, etc.). Any relationship where one partner holds more power over the other can be a red flag for an unhealthy or potentially abusive relationship. A lot of times most people don't fit all the norms or all the exceptions, but rather fall somewhere in the middle. Healthy relationships are stemmed in equality and freedom! We encourage all relationships and friendships to be based in these two things and for both partners to share an equal balance of power within the relationship.

2. Is violent behavior mostly caused by parent behavior? Are parents one of the biggest causes for abusive behavior in a teen?

When children are exposed to domestic violence and taught that violent behavior is normal or okay (abusive taught behavior), their risk for perpetrating or becoming a victim of abuse later on in life is increased. However, even if we see abuse growing up it does not mean we are destined to be abusive/abused. Remember how choice is in the roots of both the blooming and wilting flowers? While those who are exposed to violence are at an increased risk, they still have a choice to have their relationships be stemming from equality and freedom rather than power and control.

3. What are some effective ways of preventing an abusive relationship?

Some important things that can help ensure our relationships are healthy are to always remember our rights and responsibilities. In a relationship, you have the right to:

- 1) Equality: To make decisions together
- 2) Freedom: To have opinions, express your feelings, and choose activities
- 3) Individuality: To be yourself
- 4) Safety: To feel safe and take steps to be safe
- 5) Boundaries: To set boundaries about your actions, possessions, and body.

In a relationship, you also have the responsibility of respecting the balance of power in the relationship, respecting the rights/feelings/opinions of your partner, accepting your partner for who they are, and honoring your partner's boundaries. Knowing your rights and responsibilities within your relationships and friendships can help ensure your relationships are stemmed in equality and freedom and display the healthy characteristics seen in the blooming flower. It is also helpful to be able to recognize the red flags (pg. 17 in your workbook) to recognize the signs of an unhealthy or potentially abusive relationship early on.

Dose 5-

1. Any tips for lifting up your self-esteem?

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.

Dose 7-

1. Is all you've shown us, everything all of bloom crew?

Bloom crew was briefly described in class during Dose 7, but there's so much more to Bloom Crew. We have teens in various schools working as peer ambassadors to raise awareness and to promote healthy, blooming relationships and better communities. As a part of crew, you can get involved in BLOOM365 challenges, tabling events, assemblies, videos, social media campaigns, community service activities, and

more. The goal with crew is for teens to take what they have learned throughout the 7 doses and work towards creating a better, blooming society for their generation and future generations to come. We discussed in dose 5 how so many of us struggle with insecurity due to the media's unrealistic standards of beauty. Through Bloom crew, you all have the opportunity to help bring this to light and create social change. There are additional opportunities to become trained as a peer educator (to facilitate the 7-doses to your peers or younger generations) or peer advocate (to provide peer to peer advocacy and support to teen victims). We also have a National Teen Advisory Board which meets once a month (either virtually or in-person) to provide focus group advice, create peer to peer communications, and plan an annual teen-led event. If you interested in joining crew or getting involved with BLOOM365, please email teens@bloom365.org for more information!