



Elephant in The Room Q & A

Maryvale HS
Spring 2023

****This document can also be accessed at www.bloom365.org/faqs**

Resources:

For additional resources, please visit bloom365.org/resources

<p>BLOOM365 HelpLine</p>	<p>For free, confidential support: Text/Call: 1-888-606-HOPE (4673) Monday-Friday from 5PM-9PM (MST)</p> <p>To reach a specific advocate directly, please feel free to contact our HelpLine and tell us who you would like to speak to.</p>
<p>Teen Lifeline</p>	<p>Text or call 602-248-TEEN (8336) for free, confidential support 24/7 relating to suicide, depression, bullying, or relationships.</p>
<p>National Teen Dating Violence Hotline</p>	<p>Text "LOVEIS" to 22522 24/7</p>
<p>National Domestic Violence Hotline</p>	<p>1-800-799-SAFE (7233)</p>
<p>National Sexual Assault Hotline</p>	<p>1-800.656.HOPE (4673)</p>
<p>Suicide Prevention Lifeline</p>	<p>1-800-273-TALK (8255)</p>

***Content Warning:** For some, Elephant in the Room Cards are places where they might disclose trauma, violence, or harm. We encourage you to proceed with caution if you have experienced power-based violence or abuse of any kind. If you need support, you can reach out to the Hotlines listed above.

Q: Student

A: BLOOM365 Advocate

Q: I learned alot in these lessons. Thank you.

A: We are so happy to hear that our doses have been beneficial to you! Thank you for sharing this blooming feedback with us. :)

Q: If family member smoked or still smoking would their kid do the same thing?

A: Smoking is not a genetic behavior which means that it is not a trait that is passed down between families. While smoking can be a learned behavior that can be normalized within families, that does not mean that a child or other family members will engage in smoking. Smoking can be an addictive behavior that can be hard for some to quit but there are resources and support available. To learn more or explore these resources, we recommend checking out [Smokefree](#) website (there is also a site specifically for teens at [Smokefree Teen](#)).

Q: Wish I was a girl

A: Thank you for being comfortable enough to share a part of this deeply vulnerable journey with us. Coming to terms with gender identity can be a complex and scary process for many people. You aren't alone if you're feeling worried, anxious, or afraid. Your gender identity is valid and you deserve to live in a world where your identity is celebrated and where you can express it safely. If you'd like to come to a space where everyone is welcome and safe, we encourage you to reach out to organizations like [onenten.org](#) or the Trevor Project (by phone at 1-866-488-7386 or text TREVOR to 1-202-304-1200). You can also always reach out to a BLOOM365 Advocate at the number above to discuss this situation or chat online at [bloom365.org](#) for more support. You are not alone and there are people here to support you!

Q: "If your gay you should expect abuse from guy" - something a teacher told me

A: We are so sorry that you had to hear such a harmful statement. That statement that the teacher shared has said is an example of unhealthy gender stereotypes regarding gay men which unfortunately can be very common in society. These ideas go back many years and historically it has been passed from generation to generation. Sometimes these stereotypes or norms are in place because society wants to limit the rights of certain groups of people. The truth is that abuse has no bias and any person regardless of gender or sexuality can be perpetrators and victims of abuse. Another impact of these harmful stereotypes is that they can prevent men of all sexualities who are experiencing abuse or violence in their relationships from reaching out for the support they need and deserve. But when we engage in productive conversations that break down some of these unhealthy gender stereotypes to work together for justice, equity, and break down barriers for all survivors of abuse.

Q: I love the work bloom365 is doing. I hope students find what you do lovely.

A: Thank you so much for this blooming compliment, we appreciate it so much!

Q: How do you deal with anxiety? Or how to get ur mind off bad thoughts?

A: There are a few coping strategies that can be helpful when feelings of anxiety arise. One is the “5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique”— you do this by identifying 5 things you can see, 4 things you can feel, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, and 1 thing you can taste. The idea is to ground ourselves and become more present when we feel our bodies starting to panic or feel anxious. Another helpful way to cope is [Starfish Breathing](#)— tracing the shape of your hand with your other hand, inhaling as your finger traces up and exhaling as your finger traces down. We encourage you to try some different methods and see if any help you feel less anxious. However if you find that your feelings of anxiety are too intense to handle on your own even with the help of coping strategies, we encourage you to seek out the support of a mental health professional such as a counselor or school social worker to receive more intensive support. If you need additional support and/or want to explore other resources for coping with anxiety, please feel free to reach out to a BLOOM365 advocate at the number listed above.

Q: Thank you

A: You are so welcome! :)

Q: Why does my friends always get mad when I overthink like when I tell them if they mad everyday. ldk I just always think people are mad. I can't help it then they get mad at me for overthinking then asking everyday I know it can get annoying but I really can't thinking about that

A: We are sorry to hear that you are experiencing conflict with your friends when it comes to overthinking. Addressing overthinking is a bit outside of our expertise but we will try our best to provide you with resources that may be helpful to you. Overthinking can sometimes exist alongside feelings of anxiety. Finding ways to cope with these feelings and thoughts using tools such as writing your thoughts down in a journal or even in your phone’s notes app, sharing your thoughts and concerns with someone close to you, or engaging in self-care activities that help you to feel mentally and physically refreshed can be supportive. If you find that your overthinking is difficult to stop even with the use of self-care skills, we encourage you to reach out for additional support from mental health professionals such as a school counselor/social worker or therapist.

With regards to your friends, it could be helpful to use healthy communication skills to share your thoughts and feelings with them. Using “I” statements can be great in these situations as they allow you to take ownership of your own feelings while also allowing the other person to understand your perspective of the situation without feeling directly attacked. The format of “I feel (emotion) when (situation), can you/we (solution or compromise)?” can be beneficial in sharing how you’re feeling without directly placing the blame on the other person and asking directly for your desired outcome.

Q: My dad is a narcissist. I'm scared I might turn out like him. I'm already showing signs of narcissism. My mother told me to go to counseling, so that i don't end up like my dad. I DO NOT WANT TO BE A NARCISSIST. Plz keep anonymous

A: Narcissistic and other harmful behaviors can be changed. If a person is willing to see their behavior as harmful, they can make the choice to change that behavior. Being self-aware of your behaviors and

seeking the support of a counselor, social worker, advocate, or other trusted adult can be extremely helpful in the journey of changing toxic or abusive behavior. Coping strategies such as journaling, talking with trusted people about your feelings, and using healthy conflict resolution skills along with additional support from a professional can be useful tools in changing harmful behavior. Our advocates are here to help as well, we encourage you to reach out to us at the LEVEL Line information above if you'd like to talk more about this. You are not alone. With commitment, intention, and additional support - it is possible to change wilting behaviors into blooming ones!

Q: Why do i feel like I shouldn't live my life? But the same time I want to live and live my life. I feel like no one understands how I feel

A: We are so sorry to hear that you are feeling these intense and painful emotions. We're so glad that you reached out and shared with another person what you are going through. We highly encourage you to talk to a trusted adult such as a school social worker, family member, or BLOOM365 Advocate as soon as possible. There are amazing advocates at organizations such as Teen Lifeline and the Suicide Prevention Lifeline who provide support for youth who are feeling depressed or suicidal - you can contact them at the help line numbers listed above for additional support. We want you to know that you are never alone and there are people out there who are ready to offer you support. We are here for you!

Q: I want to better myself, communicating being less toxic, I would appreciate a text

A: Being self aware of the behaviors that you want to change can be an important first step in addressing and changing the behavior. Accessing professional support from a counselor, social worker, or other trusted adult and using coping strategies that are helpful in managing emotions and conflicts can be useful tools in this journey. If you've left your number on an EITR card one of our advocates will reach out to you soon and/or you can always reach out to us via our LEVEL Line listed above!

Q: Someone I know went through an abusive and wilting relationship. I've seen them being abused mentally, emotional, physically. Day by day. None stop abusing to the someone I know. So one night I called the police because I got caught in the problem. The police of course came for one night we had peace. Sadly they went back together and for months the cycle began again. One night the breaking point to the relationship was hurting someone in my family. Finally he was sent home to his family. Now that person doesn't have contact anymore. The someone is now free after 4 years.

A: We are so sorry to hear what this person has gone through and that you witnessed the harm this person experienced. Thank you for sharing this experience with us and we are so glad to hear that this person has been able to be away from the abuse and be in a safer place. Experiencing and witnessing abuse can be a traumatic experience. If you and this person that you are close to would like to talk more about this or access resources or support for processing what has happened, we encourage you to reach out to advocates at bloom365 or the National Domestic Violence Hotline at the numbers above. We are here for you!

Q: I was sexually assaulted by my cousin and I don't know how to feel because me and them still talk but we act like it didn't happen.

A: We are so sorry that you've had this experience. What you went through was not your fault, and we're glad that you reached out to get this off your chest. Healing from an experience like sexual assault can take some time, and we understand if you are still feeling hurt, confused, or a mix of other emotions even today. Everyone's journey with healing is different, and we want you to know that you are not alone while you navigate this. If you would like to talk to a trusted advocate to access non judgemental emotional support or resources like therapy or support groups, we encourage you to reach bloom365 or RAINN. You do not have to process this alone and there are people here to support you!

Q: Is it abuse if your family is telling you to lose weight in an unhealthy way

A: If your family is using put downs, humiliation and threats and/or says hurtful comments when talking about your weight or weight loss, those can be signs that they are engaging in verbal or emotional abuse. Being at home with a family member who is abusive or engaging in other harmful behaviors can be a very stressful and sometimes isolating experience. We encourage anyone in this position to reach out for support and to take some time to find healthy coping skills or strategies that work for you. This could look like reaching out to a supportive person such as a trusted family member, friend, or school counselor. Sharing what you're going through with those you trust can make you feel more supported and less alone. They may also be able to share resources and other tools with you. Our advocates are also here to offer support. Please feel free to reach out to us at the information above!

Q: I am looking forward for the other lessons or doses. It is really educating me more about what is happening in unhealthy relationships.

A: Thank you for sharing this with us, we are so happy to hear that our doses are helpful to you!

Q: What to do when your parents try to force you to live with one guardian cause of something you do in school?

A: This sounds like a very conflicting situation to be in. If it feels safe to do, it could be helpful to have an open and honest conversation with your parents about how you're feeling about this decision. Using "I" statements to communicate how you feel is a conflict resolution skill that allows for you to take ownership of your own feelings while allowing your parents to better understand your perspective of the situation without feeling directly attacked. The format of "I feel (emotion) when (situation), can you/we (solution or compromise)?" can be a great way to start a conversation that centers connection and understanding. If it feels intimidating to talk with your parents on your own, you could seek out the support of the guardian or another trusted family member in mediating this conversation. This can be a difficult and confusing situation to navigate. If you'd like to talk more about this and/or access additional resources, we encourage you to reach out to a trusted adult such as a school counselor/social worker or a bloom365 advocate (our LEVEL Line information is listed above!).

Q: How do I get over the past? When I was little my mom's ex bf raped me I finally decided to tell my family. Ever since then I haven't been okay my mental health is killing me. After I told my dad and mom both suffered of guilt for not being there for me. He was also abusive to me and my siblings. When it happened he had drugged me. And forced me to watch inappropriate videos. I was 5 when everything happened. I told them when I was 14. I stayed scared of men... When I was 11-12 we

moved in with my mom's other bf and she forgot about me and my other sibling, she left us to starve and I took care of my siblings in that house we yelled cried hit she neglected us.

A: We are so sorry to hear of the abuse and neglect that you experienced. You are never to blame for what has happened and it is not your fault. Thank you for trusting us with such a deeply vulnerable and personal experience, we are glad that you have shared what you have gone through and have reached out for support. Healing from traumatic experiences such as sexual violence is a deeply personal and unique journey that will look different for each survivor. Finding community can be extremely helpful in the healing journey as traumatic experiences can make you feel isolated or alone. Finding people or activities that make you feel supported and connected can be supportive in processing what you have experienced. This could look like spending more time with close and trusted friends, joining a club or group about an interest or hobby that you enjoy, or finding a support group for survivors of sexual assault. Connecting with a trusted professional such as a therapist, social worker, or advocate can be a supportive connection in your healing journey. They will be able to provide you with non-judgemental emotional/mental support, therapeutic services, or referrals to therapy or other services that can be helpful to you. You are not alone and there is support available to you. We encourage you to reach out to a bloom365 (1-888-606-HOPE (4673)) or RAINN advocate (1-800.656.HOPE (4673)). We are here for you!

Q: I don't know how to convey feelings. I usually just bottle it up, and wait until the bottle breaks. Even when it's normal to cry I don't. I don't know why.

A: It can feel difficult to express our emotions and thoughts to others in our lives, including to ourselves. Opening up can be a difficult thing to do, especially when you are not used to it. Being vulnerable with ourselves and those close to us can take time and some practice. One way to become more comfortable with vulnerability is to find ways to express your feelings. This could look like journaling, writing poetry or short stories, creating art, or even creating playlists of songs you identify with. Sometimes it can be helpful to talk about your feelings with someone you feel comfortable with but isn't too close to a situation, such as a trusted adult like a school counselor or advocate. There are people who are here to listen and support how you're feeling. If you would like to talk more about this with advocates from bloom365 advocates or Teen Lifeline, please feel free to reach out to either or both of us at the numbers listed above.

Q: How do you cope when sad? I don't

A: We want you to know that you are not alone. It can be difficult to express our emotions for so many reasons, especially if we're not used to it. It might be helpful to try writing out how you feel before trying to verbalize it to help you ease into expressing big emotions, like sadness. Sometimes when we bottle up those big emotions, they can wear us down over time and make it harder to cope with other difficult emotions. It's important to take time for self-care and process our emotions so that we can be the best version of ourselves, and also for those important people in our lives. Self-care activities can include spending time with people you love and people that make you happy, spending time in nature, or writing down your thoughts and feelings in a journal or something similar. Some ways to process emotions in a healthy way are journaling, writing poetry or short stories, creating art of any kind, or talking about how

you feel with someone that you trust. How you choose to self-care and process your sadness is up to you, but it's super important!

Q: If you support LGBTQ, why don't you help gay relationships? Why do you ignore that?

A: Thank you for sharing your concerns with us and for advocating for the LGBTQ+ community. We appreciate the feedback immensely and will take this to our team so that we can learn and grow. Our services are for all youth (11-24) who have witnessed or experienced violence in their lives regardless of gender identity and sexual/romantic orientation. Our bloom365 team is committed to equity and making sure that our services are inclusive and inviting to all people, especially those with diverse identities. We aim to create a welcoming space for all LGBTQ+ youth and we welcome any and all feedback in making sure that we are making this a reality!

Q: Why don't you talk about gay kids until someone calls you out?

A: Thank you so much for sharing this feedback and concerns with and for advocating for gay youth. We know that violence can occur within all relationships regardless of sexual/romantic orientation and it is especially important to boost the experiences of LGBTQ+ youth who have experienced dating and other forms of violence. We will take this important feedback back to our team so that we can work together to ensure that our resources and services are more inviting to LGBTQ+ youth and their experiences!

Q: I had a boyfriend who would force me to kiss him even though I said I was uncomfortable. And I asked if we keep our relationship a secret he would talk about his ex being better than me. He would hit on my best friend behind my back. He made me feel worthless unless I was with him. He would spread rumors about me and lie to me. I broke it off months ago and he asked me back many times but when I would reject he would call me bad names and say I'm fat and ugly. I'm thankful to have friends who support me and help me too.

A: We are so sorry to hear about what you have gone through with your ex-boyfriend. How he treated you was not your fault and you have done nothing to deserve such treatment. You are deserving of love, respect, and equality within your romantic relationships. We are so happy to hear that you have a supportive group of friends that you could rely on during that time! Having even one supportive person in your life can make a huge difference in healing and moving forward from traumatic events. If you'd ever like to talk more about this with a professional advocate or are curious about other types of healing support such as therapy, our bloom365 are to offer any support you may want or need. Feel free to reach out to us at our LEVEL Line information above and know that just like your friends, we are here for you!

