



Elephant in The Room Q & A

DVSSP-Brownsville High School

Spring 2023

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

Resources:

For additional resources, please visit bloom365.org/resources

<p>BLOOM365 Peer Support Helpline</p>	<p>Text or call a BLOOM365 advocate for free, confidential support. Text/Call: 1-888-606-HOPE (4673) Monday-Friday from 3PM-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>Domestic Violence Services of Southwestern PA (DVSSP)</p>	<p>24/7 Hotline www.peacefromdv.org/hotline WASHINGTON COUNTY: 800-791-4000 or 724-223-9190 GREENE COUNTY: 724-852-2463 FAYETTE COUNTY: 724-439-9500</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>

***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: Why does it hurt so bad

A: We are sorry to hear that you are feeling this way. We are glad that you reached out. If you or someone you know is experiencing depression or extreme feelings of loneliness, sadness, or despair, please know that help is available. Some signs that someone might be experiencing depression include: Loss of interest in activities previously enjoyed, withdrawal from friends/family, sleeping too little or in excessive amounts, and sometimes more drastic changes in behavior. If these symptoms are present for most of the day over more than two weeks, this may be a sign that it's more serious than just feeling sad.

We do work alongside a few organizations that specifically help youth experiencing depression, including Teen Lifeline and the Suicide Prevention Lifeline. You can contact them at the numbers above for additional support relating to depression. School social workers and counselors are also a great source for information on dealing with depression. BLOOM365 and DVSSP advocates are also available at the number above if you'd like additional support or resources. We are here for you!

Q: What if I hurt someone the way I was hurt?

A: Toxic and other harmful behaviors can be taught or internalized from witnessing or experiencing it from others. However, 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 information above if you'd like to talk more about this. With commitment, intention, and additional support - it is possible to change wilting behaviors into blooming ones!

Q: My mom emotionally neglects me but I don't see her as a mother anymore anyway

A: We are sorry to hear that you have been treated that way by your mom. Being at home with a family member who is emotionally neglectful or engaging in other harmful behaviors can be a very stressful and sometimes isolating experience. We encourage you 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 - we are here for you!

Q: If your partner begs to only kiss you, but you say no, would that be assault?

A: You deserve to have your boundaries respected. Saying no should be as simple as just, well, saying no. In reality, you might feel pressured, guilty, manipulated, or coerced when you say no. Begging someone to do something that they have disagreed with is coercive behavior that can be considered assault. If your partner pressures you or threatens to break up with you because you don't consent, it's a sign that you're in an unhealthy relationship. If you would like to talk with a BLOOM365 or DVSSP advocate further, feel free to reach out to our number listed above.

Q: Life isn't a choice but a blessing

A: Thank you for sharing these kind words with us!

Q: Is him touching me when I'm sleeping and him drunk ok, even I got out?

A: We are so sorry to hear that you have gone through this. What you experienced is not your fault and you have the right to say no and have your boundaries respected. Consent is so important because no one should ever be forced to do anything that they do not want to do. Processing a traumatic event such as sexual assault and/or coercion can bring up a lot of intense emotions and how a person reacts is person and unique to them. Healing from sexual assault will look different to each survivor. We encourage you to reach out to an advocate from RAINN to receive free non-judgemental support and resources for navigating such a traumatic experience. BLOOM365 and DVSSP advocates are also here to offer support in the healing journey, you can reach out to us at our HelpLine at the information above. You are not alone and we are here for you!

Q: My ex catfished me and I think they might have coerced me into doing sexual stuff with them. This isn't the first of my exes to do this. Why does it keep happening to me?

A: Thank you for trusting us with such a deeply personal experience. We are so sorry to hear that you have experienced this in your past relationship. What you have experienced is not your fault. Finding healing through traumatic experiences like sexual assault or harassment can be difficult but with support and care, you can find skills and tools to support you through the healing journey. We encourage you to reach out to advocates at RAINN or bloom365 or DVSSP who can provide you with free, non-judgemental support and resources as you process this. You can find contact information in the resources table listed above. We are here for you!

Q: I was curious, should I feel bad for leaving someone I think was slightly manipulative. I have my own share of mental health issues & when dealing with them I tend to distance myself and the last time we talked I feel like he was trying to make me feel bad by saying my issues were "affecting" him & when I told him not to try & use my problems against him & after that it was a huge problem. I just need a second opinion.

A: We are sorry to hear about what you have experienced with your partner. You are the expert in your own life, so only you can determine if that was a decision that was best for you. However, if you are not

receiving the type of love or understanding you would like, it could be helpful to think about whether or not this is a relationship you want to be in. It can be useful to look at the [Blooming and Wilting Flowers](#) to help you determine whether this relationship is healthy or unhealthy. If the relationship is built off of power & control and we are not able to make changes by communicating in a healthy way with our partner using “I statements,” we may consider whether this relationship is one that we want to continue. If you’d like to talk more about this, our bloom365 and DVSSP advocates are here to listen and support. Please feel free to reach out to us at the information above!

Q: Why don’t I feel like enough even though the person who hurt me is gone?

A: We are sorry to hear that you are feeling this way and we are glad that you reached out. Moving forward from a person or relationship that has caused you harm can be a difficult and personal journey and will look different for each person. Accessing support from trusted people and finding coping skills that work best for you can be helpful in this healing journey. This can look like reaching out to professionals such as a counselor or advocate to share about what you’re going through and/or seeking out coping strategies such as spending time with a loved one, writing in a journal, or even listening to your favorite music. Giving yourself time to process feelings and emotions is important. It’s also important to be kind to yourself and to be patient and give yourself time for your heart to heal. We all cope with things in different ways and at different speeds. Find what works for you, and always know that DVSSP and BLOOM365 are here to support you if needed! You can find our advocates at the HelpLine information above.

Q: What do I do if the negative person in my life is my parent?

A: Living at home with a parent who is negative or harmful can be an overwhelming and isolating experience. It can feel as though you are alone and sharing your experience with others can feel difficult to do. We are glad that you reached out to us. If you are concerned about your safety while at home with your parent, we strongly encourage you to reach out to a trusted adult such as another family member, advocate, or school staff about what is happening at home. They can support you in finding resources that center your safety and wellbeing. Reaching out and sharing what you’re going through with a trusted person can help you to feel less alone. If that doesn’t feel safe to you, finding other coping skills such as talking to a trusted friend or spending time on a hobby that you love can be helpful in processing how you’re feeling. DVSSP and bloom365 advocates are also here to listen and support you - you reach out to us anonymously at the HelpLine information above. You are not alone!

Q: What do I do if my parents don’t believe in therapy but I feel as if I need it?

A: Navigating conversations about therapy and mental health can be a tough thing to do, especially when you’re talking with others who may not believe in therapy or the impacts of unaddressed mental health concerns. If your parents are open to it, it could be helpful to explore resources such as the [National Alliance on Mental Illness of Pennsylvania](#) to gain a better understanding of the experiences of those with mental health concerns. Regardless of your parents’ ability to understand your struggles, your experiences are valid and important. We encourage you to reach out to advocates from NAMI, DVSSP, bloom365 for additional support. You are not alone and your experiences are important!

Q: Love yourself no matter what ❤️

A: Thank you for sharing these kind and blooming words! <3

Q: Change my personality: don't be so loud, less annoying, more positive, more outgoing, more confident

A: Thank you for sharing your journey to healthier self esteem and confidence with us. Building good self-esteem can take a long time and is not always easy. But, knowing that you want to learn how to have better self-esteem and that you can improve is the first step. Focusing on the things we love about ourselves can be one helpful way to lift our self-esteem. We 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. 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. With time, commitment, and love - we can build more loving and healthier relationships with ourselves!

Q: Thank you for this program, really useful and informative

A: Thank you for this blooming feedback and for being open to what we have to share! :)

Q: Family is everything

A: Family can be an important system of support and protective factor for many people. There are so many types of families and they can look different for everyone!