



Elephant in The Room Q & A

ASU Prep Polytechnic High School
Spring 2023

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

Resources:

For additional resources, please visit bloom365.org/resources

BLOOM365 HelpLine	For free, confidential support: Text/Call: 1-888-606-HOPE (4673) Monday-Friday from 3PM-9PM (MST) To reach a specific advocate directly, please feel free to contact our HelpLine and tell us who you would like to speak to.
Teen Lifeline	Text or call 602-248-TEEN (8336) for free, confidential support 24/7 relating to suicide, depression, bullying, or relationships.
National Teen Dating Violence Hotline	Text "LOVEIS" to 22522 24/7
National Domestic Violence Hotline	1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
National Sexual Assault Hotline	1-800.656.HOPE (4673)
Suicide Prevention Lifeline	1-800-273-TALK (8255)

***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 was sexually assaulted in middle school by a “friend.” Now I hate being touched by people and will break down crying if someone touches me without consent, this includes hugs, high fives, pats on back, etc. Is this a form of PTSD & is this normal?

A: We are so sorry that you have experienced this from someone that you trusted. Sexual assault can be a very traumatic experience and is never the fault of the survivor. How a survivor processes and reacts to their experience is deeply unique and personal. According to [the CDC](#), Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD is “an intense emotional and physical responses to a traumatic experience.” Symptoms of PTSD can persist for months after an event has happened and can cause a variety of different symptoms such as panic attacks, flashbacks or other emotional/physical reactions to the trauma, and being overly alert or easily startled. If you find yourself identifying with any of the symptoms shared by the CDC, please know that help is available. This could look like reaching out to a trusted professional such as a counselor or advocate for support and resources. If you’d like to explore other resources or would like an empathetic ear, our BLOOM365 Advocates are here at the HelpLine information above. We are here for you!

Q: If you were SA’d at a young age but never said anything is it better to still not tell your parents to avoid making them upset or just tell them

A: Sexual assault can be a very traumatic experience and is never the fault of the survivor. How a survivor processes and reacts to their experience is deeply unique and personal experience. Only that person can decide what is the best choice for them in addressing their assault. If it feels safe to do so, we strongly encourage anyone in this situation to share their experience with a trusted adult in their lives such as a parent, advocate, or school staff like a counselor or social worker. They will be able to share empathy and care as well as resources or other tools that can be supportive in the healing process. Going through a traumatic experience can make you feel isolated or alone - connecting with trusted people in your life can help you to feel supported. Our advocates are here to offer support to anyone who would like to talk more about this. You can reach out to us at the HelpLine information above.

Q: For 10 years, now 17, I was sexually abused by my dad. I thought it was normal & healthy. Recently my boyfriend helped me get out of that situation, but since I felt it was a normal thing, I was upset with him. This situation bettered my relationship with my boyfriend. Overall, we have a healthy relationship, some unhealthy aspects, but all relationships do. I now understand that what my dad was doing is wrong & know that it is a type of unhealthy relationship. If someone did that to me again, I would know it’s wrong and unhealthy.

A: Thank you for trusting us with such a deeply personal and vulnerable experience. We are sorry for what you have experienced. What happened to you is not your fault and you have done nothing wrong. We are glad that you have a trusted person in your life like your boyfriend who you can talk to about what you have gone through as you process this experience. If you’d like additional support or resources

in this healing journey, we encourage you to reach out to an advocate from RAINN or BLOOM365. You are not alone!

Q: I have dealt with a lot of emotionally abusive relationships and a few physical ones (friendships, I never dated). Are there any free therapy communications to use for this and other issues? I am very self aware and often feel too self aware for most therapies. Are there any free therapy resources?

A: We are sorry to hear that you have gone through abusive romantic and platonic relationships. What you experienced is not your fault and we are glad that you feel comfortable reaching out for help. BLOOM365 has counseling services available free of charge (*parental/guardian consent is required to start therapy for participants under 18 unless you are legally emancipated or homeless). If you would like to know more information about our counseling services, you can fill out this [inquiry form](#) or reach out to our team via email at info@bloom365.org. Whether you are curious about our counseling services or would like to explore other therapy resources, please reach out to our advocates via email or at our HelpLine information above.

Q: My legal name is [redacted] but I go by [redacted]. I was curious as to why this program has just now been introduced to ASU Prep. I am not at all opposed for being apart of this, but this school has never really cared about this type of topic. I know that some people have been affected and they are just now sharing their feelings, but why now? What was the reason you came here, at the near end of the last year of high school. They haven't cared, never made an effort. It seems almost convenient and targeted. In summary, why now?

A: Thank you for sharing your feedback with us! What you have to say is important and we are glad that you are sharing this with us. We were invited by ASU Prep to share our resources with students who are going to college to provide you all with the tools needed to navigate situations like those we address in the doses. We appreciate you being open to what we have to share and we hope that this can be valuable to you!

Q: Drawing helps me calm down.

A: Drawing is a great coping skill to have, we are glad that you have found something that works for you!
:)

Q: How can I help a friend cope with the trauma of past sexual abuse? The abuse occurred about a year ago, and she jokes about it but I know it hurts her.

A: We're so sorry to hear what your friend has gone through. We want to affirm that what happened to your friend is not her fault and she has done nothing to deserve that. We encourage your friend to reach out to a trusted adult or RAINN advocate to receive free non-judgemental support and resources for navigating such a traumatic experience. Providing continual support with a friend is also a good idea. Checking in and making sure they know you are there for them even after the initial conversation is a great option. The most important thing we can do is let our friends know that we are there for them when they are ready, make sure they are safe, and let them know that they are not alone. Our advocates are also here to offer support to you and your friend please feel free to reach out to our advocates at the HelpLine information above. You both are not alone and we are here for you both.

Q: How does someone cope with a relationship that has been over for 3 years and you have moved on to someone else?

A: Losing someone you had a good connection with can be very painful. Especially if we have known that person for a really long time and/or had history with them. While ending a close relationship can be tough, it can be a great time for self-evaluation and growth. Finding ways to cope can be really helpful. For example: Spending time with the people you love, writing in a journal, yoga, joining a new sports team or club, or simply going for a walk. 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 BLOOM365 is here to support you if needed!

Q: I'm afraid of yelling

A: Yelling, especially when occurring in violent situations, can cause others to feel unsettled. Identifying and being aware of our triggers can be a helpful tool in understanding ourselves better. Thank you for sharing this with us.

Q: I am losing my grip on reality

A: We are sorry to hear that you are feeling this way! This sounds like a very confusing feeling to navigate. If you'd like to talk more about this, our advocates are here to listen and support you. You can reach out to us at the HelpLine information above.

Q: Is it really worth it?

A: We are not sure what this is referring to but trying something out or learning more about it can be a helpful way to determine if something is worth it. :)

Q: How would you differentiate an abusive relationship from a bad one with no compatibility?

A: It can be useful to look at the [Blooming and Wilting Flowers](#) to help you to determine whether a relationship is abusive. Healthy relationships are stemmed in equality and freedom and exhibit the words seen in the center of the blooming flower while abusive or unhealthy relationships are stemmed in power and control. If you find that your relationship exhibits more of the wilting flowers and if any of the red flags from the [red flags checklist](#) apply to your situation, it could be a sign that your relationship is abusive. We highly encourage you to reach out to a BLOOM365 advocate or trusted adult. BLOOM365 advocates are always here to listen and can also provide more clarity if needed.

Q: My past relationship was insanely abusive, even though I left that relationship, I still have PTSD from that person. They constantly belittled and harassed me, even sexually assaulted me. My current relationship is good but I still have that trauma from the past relationship. I can be affection towards my current partner or even fully commit because I am anxious they'll hurt me like my past relationship, no matter how much they reassure 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 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: Why does so many people go through dating abuse?

A: Dating abuse occurs when one person believes they have the right to gain and maintain power & control over another person. Choosing to have power and control over someone else or to have equality and freedom in our relationships is a deliberate choice that we all make. People do not usually begin a relationship as overtly abusive or controlling. There is a gradual progression of power and control. Oftentimes if we were raised in an environment where abuse was present, the early signs/actions can be really tough to spot because they could be viewed as okay or normal (taught abusive behavior). But when we educate ourselves and others about the signs of abuse, we can engage in productive conversations and work together to end the cycle of dating abuse!

Q: The descriptors used are so violent and evil. I don't want to stick those things to myself because it makes me a victim

A: Thank you for sharing your thoughts and feedback with us. It is important that the words we share will make you feel confident and empowered. We hope to share more positive descriptors as we continue our doses!

Q: Hi, hi. Have a nice day

A: Thank you for these blooming words! :)

Q: Why does no one trust stairs? Because they're always up to something >:) have a good day <3

A: Thank you for sharing a joke and kind words with us!

Q: Majority of your statistics only on men abusing women but in reality it can be both ways. They also look bias because of that and they are not up to date. LGBTQ+ is also not really mentioned as much. It is only mentioned once. I think it should be brought up as well.

A: Thank you for sharing this important feedback with us. 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, abuse can be experienced by anyone regardless of gender or sexual orientation and our data should reflect that as well.

Q: What is considered aggressive media?

A: Aggressive media, sometimes referred to as violent media, is defined as media that portrays or glorifies violence. It can include media such as movies, television shows, and even social media posts. The connection between exposure to violent or aggressive media on behavior and mental health has

been [widely researched](#). While a connection between the two has been explored, it is important to remember that exposure to violent media is one of many factors that can influence abusive patterns of behavior.

Q: People suck lolz. People in this class are so disrespectful

A: We are sorry to hear that the learning environment during the doses has not felt comfortable. We appreciate you letting us know and sharing this feedback with us as we work to create safe and inclusive environments for everyone.

Q: I wish my former friend didn't turn out the way she did. Her environment was a very negative one.

A: We are sorry to hear that your former friend has been in a very negative environment. Growing up or spending significant time in a toxic or abusive environment can have huge impacts on a person's mental, emotional, and personal health. We hope your friend is able to access the healing and care she deserves.

Q: Can you be in an abusive relationship with yourself?

A: Abusive relationships are usually spoken about and understood in terms of relationships with another person however relationships can and look different for everyone. We have a variety of different relationships that we navigate in our lives including the ones we have with ourselves. It is definitely possible to exhibit abusive or toxic behavior to ourselves which can show up in how we view or talk about ourselves and like abusive behavior, it can be modeled from those around us. But as with other types of abusive relationships, reaching out for support and care from those we trust can support in healing from these dynamics. If you'd like to talk more about this, our advocates are here to listen - please feel free to reach out at the HelpLine information above.

Q: How do I help a friend who I know faces harassment?

A: It can bring up feelings of helplessness or frustration when we witness someone that we care about be a victim of abuse or harassment. We are sorry that your friend is going through that and we are glad that your friend has someone who cares about them and their safety in their lives. A helpful place to start is to let our friends know that we are there for them, make sure they are safe, and let them know that they are not alone. This could look like talking to your friend about a safety plan for when their harassers show up, creating a space where your friend can talk honestly about their experiences, or making time together to do an activity that they enjoy. If talking to a trusted adult such as school staff or a bloom365 advocate feels safe for your friend, you could encourage them to reach out or offer to be with them as they reach out. Ultimately letting your friend know that you care about them and their safety and that you are there for them is one of the best things a friend can do. Our advocates are here for you and your friend as you navigate this, please feel free to reach out to us at the HelpLine information above.

Q: It's your fault even though you're the victim

A: This is a common victim blaming statement that a lot of survivors hear. Victim blaming, or attitudes and behaviors that blame survivors for the violence they experienced, can cause feelings of shame and be a huge barrier to survivors reaching out for the support they need and deserve. When we talk openly

and honestly about victim blaming, we can engage in productive conversations that can break down the impacts of victim blaming and create environments where survivors feel safe and empowered to speak on their experiences.

Q: Statement I hate: “Stop crying or I’ll give you a reason to cry.”

A: We are sorry that you have had hurtful statements like this directed at you. We can understand why you’d dislike that statement. Statements like these can be dismissive of the feelings and experiences of the person who is upset. Hearing statements like this can make you feel as though your feelings are not important or that you have to hide how you feel. It is important to remember that despite what those statements may say or imply, your feelings and how you express them are valid and important. We encourage you and others with similar experiences to continue to express your feelings in ways that are healthy and authentic to you and to share with trusted people in your life what is happening. You can always reach out to your advocates if you’d like a kind and empathetic ear to listen - you can find us at the HelpLine information above.

Q: Why do I have to act male and boarish to get any respect when I get more disdain than respect?

A: Ideas surrounding the “correct” way men should behave are heavily influenced by unhealthy gender norms. An unhealthy gender norm is a rule or belief about how certain genders should behave. Some examples are the idea that men should be the “tough” ones in relationships or that men should not express emotions. These are unhealthy because people who do not follow norms may be ridiculed or made fun of. Unhealthy gender norms are very common in our society and can be a barrier to reaching out for male victims of abuse and violence. These ideas go back many years and historically it has been passed from generation to generation but we can break down some of these unhealthy gender stereotypes by engaging in productive conversations like those we are having now. Thank you for sharing your experience and opening up this conversation.

Q: Do a lot of phobias come from abusive relationships?

A: Phobias are defined by [Harvard Health](#) as the “persistent, excessive, unrealistic fear of an object, person, animal, activity or situation” and is a type of anxiety disorder. Some different examples of phobias include specific fears of animals, places, or situations such as arachnophobia (fear of spiders) and agoraphobia (fear of public spaces). Phobias can be caused by genetic and environmental factors and certain intense situations such as abuse can exacerbate or trigger a fear and related symptoms. If you have a phobia and you find that it is impacting your ability to function normally at home or school, we encourage you to reach out to a trusted professional such as a mental health counselor to support and resources in navigating this experience.

Q: How do I get rid of the voices

A: We are glad that you reached out to us, this sounds like an overwhelming and scary situation to navigate on your own. We strongly encourage you to reach out to a mental health professional such as a counselor or therapist for support and resources. Our advocates are also here to offer additional support in finding the care that you may want or need. You are not alone!

Q: What happens if you mix an elephant and a rhino? Elephino

A: An elephino sounds adorable! Thank you for sharing this joke with us!

Q: Why are my feelings punished when I bring up how I feel?

A: We are sorry that you have felt dismissed or punished when you have shared your feelings with others. It takes a lot of courage and vulnerability to open up to others about what we're going through. Sometimes others may react negatively when faced with how others may feel which can feel like a barrier to being honest and open about what we're feeling. It can be important and helpful to remember that despite how others may react, your feelings are valid and there are people who want to listen to what you have to share. We encourage you to continue to share your feelings with trusted people in your life who make you feel affirmed and listened to. Our advocates are also here to offer a listening ear if you'd like to talk more about this or any other feelings you may have.

Q: What do you do when you were SA'd at a young age but you never told your parents so now you'll worry they'll find out and get mad at you for not telling them? Nothing will really happen to him if I told my parents so I don't see a reason why to outside of avoiding conflict

A: We are so sorry to hear that your younger self went through such a traumatic experience. Thank you for trusting us with such a vulnerable experience, we are glad that you reached out to us and are sharing what you have gone through. The decision to disclose abuse or sexual violence is an extremely personal one that is unique to each survivor and choosing to tell your parents is a decision that is ultimately yours to make. We encourage you to explore options that will be supportive in your healing journey and there are times where sharing our experiences with trusted people in our life like parents or friends can be very helpful in that journey. Talking with an advocate from the National Sexual Assault Hotline or bloom365 can be helpful in navigating this part in your journey, you can find us at the hotline information listed above. We are here for you!

Q: I don't see the point in talking or reporting it. Police do nothing, half the time they don't believe you or the person says nothing happened or they don't want to talk to the police and its case closed. I was 8 and he was 14 nothing happened. I was 17 he was 16 nothing happened to either of the two. The second I told everyone I was lying so what's the point of reporting. Nothing happens ever.

A: We are so sorry to hear that you have gone through these traumatic experiences. What you have experienced is not your fault and we thank you for trusting us enough to share this with us. There are a lot of barriers that make disclosing sexual violence to police or other authority figures difficult for survivors and it may not feel like an empowering choice for every survivor. Who you decide to disclose your experience to is a deeply personal decision that is ultimately yours to make. We encourage you to reach out to trusted people in your life such as a friend or an advocate from the National Sexual Assault Hotline or bloom365 to access non-judgemental support and resources that can be supportive in your healing journey. We are here for you!

Q: I have a hard time expressing myself because I'm often put down for feeling things it's frustrating.

A: When we feel that our feelings are dismissed or ignored by others, it can feel frustrating and isolating. We may find it hard to share how we feel or we may not share how we feel at all. While others may have

their own experiences that make it difficult for them to express understanding or care to other's feelings, your feelings are important and worthy of being shared. We encourage you to continue to share your feelings with trusted people in your life who make you feel affirmed and listened to. Our advocates are also here to offer a listening ear if you'd like to talk more about this or any other feelings you may have.

Q: Every voice in my head counts

A: Thank you for reaching out to us. If you find that these voices are unsettling or are impacting your ability to live your daily life, we strongly encourage you to reach out to a mental health professional such as a counselor or therapist for support and resources. Our advocates are also here to offer additional support in finding the care that you may want or need. You are not alone!

Q: How do I end an unhealthy friendship that has gone on for years? I have tried time and time again to label my boundaries + tell them how I feel, but they blame me as the problem. I have come to a point where I am sick of being gaslit + constantly broken down. I am even nervous to write this down because they might find out.

A: Ending an abusive friendship can be a hard thing to do. You can end a friend in a way that makes you feel comfortable. "I statements" are an awesome tool for ending friendships or relationships, 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 feel that our friendship isn't compatible anymore and I think we should go our separate ways." If you feel like the situation could become dangerous or even just too uncomfortable for you, you can do a couple of things-- you can make a safety plan to start with or you can have that conversation in a relatively public space like a park. Ultimately, your safety and comfort is the most important. If you would like to explore other options of ending a friendship or any other aspects of this, our bloom365 advocates are here to help. You can reach out to us at our HelpLine at 1-888-606-HOPE (4673).

Q: Is saying "if I rape you now you'd be quiet" a rape joke?

A: This statement could be considered sexual harassment. Harassment is a way of trying to control or get power over someone else in an unwanted way. This includes unwanted touching, comments, yelling, and looks that make someone feel uncomfortable. If you or someone you know is experiencing these things, we highly encourage you to talk to a trusted adult about what's going on. For free, confidential support, you can reach a BLOOM365 Advocate at the number above.

Q: My parent is abusive but denies it

A: We are sorry to hear that you have been treated that way by your parent. 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 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: Y'all should add "Animals" by Maroon 5 to the creepy song list. Gave me red flags when I was like 10

A: Thank you for sharing this feedback with us! We will keep this in mind for future Doses.

Q: Why is the delay guy hula-hooping?

A: Hopefully because he enjoys it! 😊

Q: I'm lonely

A: We are sorry to hear that you are feeling lonely! If there are trusted people in your life who you feel safe and comfortable spending time with, we encourage you to reach out for support. You can also talk with our advocates whenever loneliness comes up and we would be happy to talk with you. You are not alone!

Q: A lot of the guys here make me feel unsafe. I've had nightmares about some of them before.

A: We are so sorry to hear that you are feeling unsafe and vulnerable around these individuals. Seeing these individuals so frequently at school can add to that persistent feeling of vulnerability. Everyone deserves to feel secure, cared for, and safe while attending school and in their day to day lives. We want to encourage you to connect with a trusted adult in your life or bloom365 to receive supportive services, which includes safety planning; RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network) defines safety planning as "brainstorming ways to stay safe that may also help reduce the risk of future harm." We are here to support you!

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 agency and all the rights that we have as individuals. For someone to give consent they cannot be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Because drugs and alcohol can affect one's ability to make informed decisions, they often cannot truly give consent. Even if both partners are under the influence of a substance, it does not mean that consent is given. Consent should look like FRIES:

- **F**reely given. Consenting is a choice you make without pressure, manipulation, or under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- **R**eversible. Anyone can change their mind about what they feel like doing, anytime. Even if you've done it before, and even if you're both naked in bed.
- **I**nformed. You can only consent to something if you have the full story. For example, if someone says they'll use a condom and then they don't, there isn't full consent.
- **E**nthusiastic. When it comes to sex, you should only do stuff you WANT to do, not things that you feel you're expected to do.
- **S**pecific. Saying yes to one thing (like going to the bedroom to make out) doesn't mean you've said yes to others (like having sex).

Q: I'm having trouble knowing how to navigate a healthy relationship after my abusive ex partner

A: We are sorry to hear that you experienced abuse from your ex-partner. What you have gone through is not your fault and we are glad that you reached out. Healing from traumatic events like abuse can take time and can be different for each individual person. Some individuals find that engaging in self-care or talking to a counselor/therapist/social worker can be helpful in processing an experience such as abuse. Sometimes it can be helpful to find outlets that help us to feel safe or more at peace; this could be spending time with friends or loved ones, engaging in an activity like yoga or taking an art class, or even creating playlists to listen to can all be helpful in processing tough emotions from those past experiences. We encourage you to try some of these ideas or other ones that you're interested in to see what feels best for you. If you'd like to talk more about this or access [our resources](#), please feel free to reach out to a BLOOM365 Advocate at the information above. We are here for you!

Q: Why do I feel like all my friends don't like me? I feel like they "tolerate" me, but I also try to believe they really do like me as a friend. I think my middle school experience with friends, it's hard for me to believe that others actually care about me.

A: We are sorry to hear that you are feeling this way with your friends. It can feel very difficult to talk about our emotions to other people, even those that we feel close to. Depending on how comfortable you feel, you could try to talk to your friends about your feelings. They might not know how you are feeling, and they could be ready to support you once they do know. It might also be helpful to practice how to cope with those intense feelings when they come up. This can look like writing in a journal, doing yoga or another activity to move our bodies, or creating a playlist of your favorite songs. Giving yourself time to process feelings and emotions is important and sharing how you feel with others can be a great way to build understanding. If you'd like to talk more about this with someone who is not close to the situation, our advocates are here to listen and offer support. You can find us at the HelpLine information above!

Q: Is it appropriate for an ex to repeatedly contact you? They want to continue being friends but I want no communication with them but can't convince them.

A: We are sorry to hear that you are experiencing this with your ex. You have the right to set boundaries and to end a relationship in the ways that feel best to you. If someone is repeatedly calling or texting another person's phone or is constantly "checking up" on the other person, this could be a red flag for a potentially unhealthy or abusive relationship. [The Office on Violence Against Women \(OVW\)](#) defines stalking as someone engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person which causes this person to fear for their own or others' safety and to experience emotional distress. Harassment is a way of trying to control or get power over someone else in an unwanted way. This includes unwanted touching, comments, yelling, and looks that make someone feel uncomfortable. If you or someone you know is experiencing these things, we highly encourage you to talk to a trusted adult about what's going on. For free, confidential support, you can reach a BLOOM365 Advocate at the number above.

Q: You guys make it seem like saying no is easy or respected

A: Thank you for sharing this feedback with us, it is important to us to know how our Doses are impacting those attending our programs. We apologize for making it seem as though saying no is a decision that is easy or respected by others. We know that saying no is never as simple as saying no. In

reality, people may feel pressured, guilty, manipulated, or coerced when they say no. Everyone deserves to have their boundaries respected. Our intention is to share the tools and resources so that everyone can feel empowered to express their boundaries and respect the boundaries shared by others!

Q: How does recreational drug use factor into blooming vs wilting behavior?

A: Drug use (similar to alcohol use) can cause impairment to the parts of our brain that control memory, judgment, and decision making. Depending upon the person, being intoxicated can highlight or exacerbate violent or abusive behavior that we see highlighted in the wilting behaviors. We encourage anyone who may be struggling with substance use to text your zip code to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA)'s helpline at 435748 (HELP4U) to receive referrals to services. Our advocates are also here to support - please feel free to reach out to us at our Helpline information above.

Q: In an interracial relationship, there's a lot of conflict over clashing cultures. Those insecurities seem more off limits to talk about... How do we address that?

A: Thank you for asking this question. It is one that is important to think about. Talking honestly about cultural differences can feel uncomfortable or difficult to do at times. While it may feel hard to do and it may feel easier to avoid, engaging in open conversations about cultural differences is a great way to build cultural awareness and understanding. Through building our cultural awareness and openness, we can bridge cultural misunderstandings within intercultural relationships.

Q: Is it normal to feel guilty after being sexually assaulted? I didn't say no bc I felt he'd break up with me and if we didn't have sex, he would ice me out. I know it's coercion but it still feels like its my fault.

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 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: Why can't I express concern without being considered scared or weak?

A: Vulnerability is a skill that can be difficult for some to express or receive. Being vulnerable with ourselves and others can bring up a lot of different intense emotions. Some may react by being dismissive of others feelings or some may close up and not share how they're feeling. Regardless of how others react to you sharing your feelings or concerns, they are important and valid. We encourage you to continue to express your feelings whether that be through journaling, talking with trusted people, or even using mediums such as art. If you'd like to share your concerns in a non-judgemental and caring space, our advocates are here to listen - please feel free to reach out to us at our Helpline information listed above.

Q: I'm an emotional person & cry at little things. My parents get mad at me for crying all the time & to learn to control my emotions. I try hard but can't do it, is there anything I can do to work on this?

A: Learning to understand and process our emotions in healthy ways is a skill that can take some time to figure out. Crying is a normal expression of emotion and can sometimes be helpful in processing how we feel. It is not necessarily a bad thing although it can become a barrier to expressing our emotions in a healthy way when it is the only tool we use to process our emotions. Resources such as [this tool](#) and other coping strategies such as journaling or talking with a trusted person can be helpful in finding ways to manage our emotions that work best for us. Take some time to explore coping strategies that are healthy and helpful to you and know that you can reach out to our advocates at our HelpLine information above if you'd like more support with navigating this.

Q: If people knew what went on in my head they would act different towards me.

A: We are sorry to hear that you are feeling this way. It sounds as though you have a lot of intense feelings in your head that you are processing. While it may feel scary to do so, sharing how you're feeling to a trusted person or professional can be helpful in understanding your feelings. It can also be a supportive reminder that you are not alone and there are people out there who will share empathy and understanding with you. If you'd like to talk more about this or explore resources, our advocates are here to help. Please feel free to reach out to us at our HelpLine above. You are not alone!

Q: I've always had trouble communicating and my boyfriend gets upset when I don't. I wish to learn how to better communicate with him.

A: Communicating with others in healthy and effective ways is a skill that can take some time to develop. It does not come naturally but healthy communication can become easier with time, intention, and practice. One tool that can be helpful is using "I" statements. "I" statements, typically follow the format of "I feel (emotion) when (situation), can you/we (solution or compromise)?" This style of communication allows for you to take ownership of your own feelings and gives the other person the opportunity to understand your perspective of the situation without feeling directly attacked. If you find that you're having a tough time verbally expressing yourself using "I" statements, writing down how you feel and sharing what you've written with your boyfriend can be a less intimidating way to become comfortable with expressing yourself. Take some time to find what feels the most comfortable to you and if you'd like to talk about this more, you can reach out to our bloom365 advocates via our HelpLine at the information above.

Q: People say "you don't know what you got till its gone." In reality, you know what you got but never thought you'd lose it.

A: Thank you for sharing these words of wisdom with us!

Q: What do I do if my family refuses to respect my beliefs about God?

A: It can feel frustrating or disappointing when we feel that our religious beliefs are not respected by those we care about. If using "I" statements to communicate how you feel with your family doesn't seem to work, it might be helpful to consider other boundaries or coping strategies that can be supportive

when engaging with them. This could look like journaling about your feelings, sharing how you feel with a trusted friend, or creating boundaries around religious conversations with your family. Sometimes connecting with others who share similar values and beliefs can be helpful - there may be groups or clubs where you can connect with others like you. Find what works for you, and always know BLOOM365 is here to support you if needed!

Q: I appreciate you all taking the time to come in & talk to us, I'm sorry if some of my peers seemed disinterested or upset about our lessons. I think that we as a community just don't have a lot of trust/faith in these sorts of things because of past experiences. I personally think you all did amazing & I am happy that this program exists for us to reach out if need be. Thank you (especially to Noa who taught us during this program)

A: Thank you for sharing these blooming words with us! We are so happy that we were able to come out and share our resources with the ASU Prep community. Thank you for having us in your space and being open to what we have to share!

Q: Thank you

A: Thank you for having us and sharing this blooming feedback with us!

Q: When the time comes remember who you really are

A: Thank you for sharing these important and encouraging words!

Q: Thank you for coming in. This program frustrated me at some points, but I hope some stupid people at this school realize they're in the wrong :)

A: Thank you for sharing this blooming feedback with us! We appreciate you being open to what we have to share and we hope the tools/resources we shared will be of use to the ASU Prep Polytech community!

Q: There is a couple that is likely abusive but I have not seen any outright violent behavior, just emotionally abusive actions; who would I talk to about this? I don't know them very well so is it even my business? I know one partner has been very abusive in a past relationship.

A: Witnessing an abusive relationship can be a scary and uncomfortable experience. It is normal to feel confused or unsure of how to address the situation. Understanding the barriers to leaving an abusive relationship (fear, love, dependency, and insecurity) is an important place to start in supporting survivors. Think of these barriers as hooks. It's not easy to un-hook them all at once and we understand that it can be difficult to leave an abusive relationship, especially when we have hope that the abuser will change or eventually stop. It's 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 the survivor. You can also tear out the extra red flag checklist on page 41 in your workbook and share with this person about why you are concerned. We cannot make people get help if they do not want to, but we can do everything in our power to help them feel supported. Sometimes a person may not be ready to accept the help we would like to offer them. The most important thing we can do is let survivors know that we are there for them when they are ready, make

sure they are safe, and let them know that they are not alone. We encourage you to reach out to bloom365 if you'd like to talk more about this or access additional resources for either supporting this person or other survivors who may be navigating an abusive relationship.

Q: We had multiple students admit to being perpetrators yet nothing was done about it. In fact, they got snaps for recognizing it. This is very uncomfortable. I don't understand why you guys care more for them than the victims.

A: Thank you for sharing your honest feedback about how our content, and its delivery made you feel uncomfortable. We understand how snapping for those disclosing perpetration can cause discomfort and other unpleasant feelings, and that response is completely valid and normal. At bloom365, our intention when facilitating the 7-Doses is to validate, support, and amplify youth survivors' voices, while also helping end interpersonal violence (IPV). In order to help bring an end to IPV, early intervention for those showing up unhealthily is key. In an attempt to encourage the introspection and disclosures of potential harm-doers, we do snap for these disclosures solely for the sake of acknowledging the difficulty it takes in admitting that you need help, rather than snapping for the behaviors themselves. However, you bring up a very valuable point about how snapping carries its own connotation within certain contexts, and how snapping for perpetrators like we do for survivors carries a negative connotation and can bring up certain feelings. We are so thankful for your very thoughtful feedback and appreciate you bringing it to our attention, and we will discuss internally a solution that could aid in mitigating the snapping for perpetrators and its connotations.