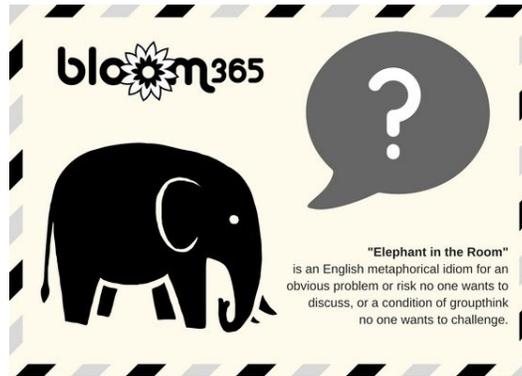


# Elephant in The Room Q & A

Metro Tech 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](http://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)
<b>Suicide Prevention Lifeline</b>	1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Q: Student

A: BLOOM365 Advocate

### **DOSE 1 & 2**

**Q: What if two of the couples are going back and forward with the abuse of control in the relationship?**

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. In this type of situation, we recommend reaching out to an advocate at the number above.

**Q: I've been in a few abusive relationships but I still don't know how to help myself.**

A: First, we want you to know that the abuse was not your fault. Experiencing abuse can emotionally and physically impact a person, and it's important that this is dealt with properly to help you move forward. We encourage you to text or call an advocate at the number above. A BLOOM365 advocate can help you take the steps to healing. We also encourage you to join us for our Monday night support group!

### **DOSE 3**

**Q: My family member is abusing my sister in law from what I've witnessed. Most of my family members tell me to stay quiet and let them resolve their problems. I have talked about abuse and I have no support so far from anyone.**

A: It can be very difficult to watch someone you know as a victim or perpetrator in an abusive relationship, and we understand wanting to help them. Please know that it is not your responsibility to "rescue" your sister-in-law, but there are some ways you can help if you so choose. For one, you can serve as a supportive person in their life. Let them know that you are there for them. You can also find ways to spend time alone with them doing activities you both enjoy. If you feel comfortable, you can give them the number to the National Domestic Violence Hotline (1-800-799-SAFE(7233)). Don't be discouraged if they are not ready to make the call. Remember the importance of not blaming the victim and understand there are a lot of barriers to leaving an abusive relationship. You can continue to let them know you are there for them, and that the hotline is available whenever they are ready to make the call. You can also reach out to a BLOOM365 advocate by calling or texting the number above. We can provide you with local resources and talk with you more about helping your in-law in this situation.

**Q: Do you believe that men and women are exactly the same, and all differences are caused by stereotypes, gender norms, and oppression?**

A: As we talked about in Dose 3, gender norms are ingrained into our culture. Historically we have seen these gender norms perpetuated through a system (and the root cause you learned about) called patriarchy. Patriarchy is a subset of oppression but it is a system that is designed to benefit men and masculine folks so that they can hold power in society. To make change around this issue we must first begin to break down the stereotypes that perpetuate the idea that men and women should not be treated as equals. Our goal with Dose 3 is to shed light on unhealthy gender norms and how rigid beliefs

in these norms is something that puts someone at a higher risk for having power and control in their relationship. The definition of hyper-masculinity is, “The exaggeration of stereotypical male behavior with an emphasis on strength, sexuality, and aggression.” While there is nothing wrong with being masculine, hypermasculinity becomes an issue when it causes the hyper-masculine partner to hold an unequal amount of power in the relationship, which can lead to unhealthy relationship stemmed in power and control. As long as one person does not hold more power than the other because of their gender and both people feel free to be themselves, then that relationship can Bloom.

#### **DOSE 4**

**Q: If songs are so wilting, why do people listen to them?**

A: We unfortunately live in a wilting society where it is the norm for people to listen and give our attention to media outlets that may not be beneficial for us. The best that we can do is make the change within ourselves, and filter out the wilting media that is presented to us on a daily basis. At BLOOM365 we would never tell you not to listen to certain things, but we do like to encourage teens to critically think about the media they are consuming. We encourage you to think about whether the media is wilting or blooming and if it contributes positively to your overall well-being.

**Q: My sister is manipulative, is that like normal for a 6 year old? She gets me into arguments with my mom, and I end up looking like the bad one. It makes me upset because my mom and I have tension between us and don't talk to each other.**

A: We recommend using the communication technique we learned in the classroom to express our feeling and the changes we would like to be made in our relationships using “I statements”. I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_\_ can you please do \_\_\_\_\_ instead. You can also text or call a BLOOM 365 advocate at 602-799-7017 if you feel like you need additional support.

#### **DOSE 5**

**Q: You say to love ourselves, but what if we try to be strong but we get hurt by the words they say like you're fat, die and the only way you think that the pain can go away is by cutting yourself. What do we do because sometimes we can't take this pain.**

A: 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. Building good self-esteem can take a long time and is not always easy because it takes time to become confident. School social workers and counselors are a great source for information on dealing with thoughts such as these. You can always contact BLOOM365 by texting or calling the number above. You can schedule an appointment with your primary care provider to get a referral for therapy. You can also contact Teen Lifeline at the number above for support. We want you to know that there is always someone available and that you are not alone.

**Q: I want to learn how to have a better self-esteem. I have been trying to do something to help myself but it's hard when I'm the one putting myself down. I'm a horrible person.**

A: We want to start off by saying thank you so much for being brave and writing to us. You are not alone in feeling this way. 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. Our self-esteem is of the thoughts, feelings, and opinions we have about ourselves. That means self-esteem isn't fixed. It can change, depending on the way we think. Once you're aware of that, and know that the way you think is up to you, you can begin to change the way you think. Changing the way you think about yourself changes the way you feel about yourself. Here are some additional tips to help you cope with achieving better self-esteem. Know that mistakes are lessons, view them as learning opportunities. Don't ever think you're inferior or less than anybody else. Nobody is perfect. Aim for effort rather than perfection because you'll never be perfect, but you should be content with at least having had tried. Remind yourself that everyone excels at different things. Focus on what you're good at, what makes you unique and cheer others on for their success. Try new things, set goals. Take care of yourself by exercising, eat well, and sleeping properly. If you still can't seem to find ways to build your self-esteem, please feel free to reach out to a BLOOM365 Advocate at the number listed above for more resources or finding ways to cope.

**Q: How do you overcome fear to do what you love?**

A: As we learned in the program, the first step is wanting to see change is standing up and taking action. Even in regards to self esteem, that if we want more love and acceptance we have to do those things towards ourselves. If we want to overcome fear and do what we love, we've got to get out of comfort zone and try. This will definitely take some trial and error, but you will constantly learn new things about yourself. We like to say that if you're uncomfortable, you are growing and learning. Once you get to a point of where you are consistently doing the things that you love, you'll look back and will be proud of your accomplishments. If you'd like to speak more about this, an advocate is always here to lend a free listening ear at the number listed above.

**Q: Insecurity can come from rejection because of appearance.**

A: Great point. As we learned in Dose 5, body image and appearance is a major influence on teen's 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. Although we can not change how people view us, we can ultimately work on our own self esteem and change the way we view ourselves. At Bloom we encourage during Dose 5 to be the change that you want to see. One of the best ways to feel good about your body is to work on having a healthy one. Exercising and eating nutritious foods are key to developing a strong and fit body, and a positive attitude towards yourself. As you work to improve your body image, you will experience self-acceptance and learn to recognize the qualities, skills, and talents that make you special.

## **DOSE 6 & 7**

**Q: What if both people are under the influence? Is it okay, still?**

A: Issues of consent are often much more complex than we'd like them to be but the bottom line comes down to, if someone feels they were assaulted, then they were assaulted and we need to treat the

situation as such. While both parties may have been drinking, we can't use that as an excuse to delegitimize that one, or possibly even both parties, feels that something went terribly wrong. It's important to recognize that someone can commit an assault without realizing that they are harming someone and the best we can do to avoid that is knowing, and really looking for, all of the signs of consent. Engaging in anything related to consent while under the influence is a risky behavior, just like driving a car while drinking.

**Q: How do you deal with sadness getting to you and can't control it and start crying? How do you avoid crying in the middle of class or in public?**

A: School social workers and counselors are a great source for information on dealing with these symptoms. If you are experiencing these symptoms we encourage you to contact Teen Lifeline because you may be at risk. You can contact Teen Lifeline at 602-248-8336 or 800-248-8336 for support. Another resource is you can always contact us at BLOOM365 at 1-888-606-HOPE (4673). We want you to know that there is always someone available.

**Q: How can someone be more social and can talk to more people?**

A: Great question, and we definitely want to let you know are not alone. Something to remember is social skills takes time to develop and practice. Just like anything we want to become better at, the more we practice the more confident we will feel. We encourage you to take it slow, and one day at a time. Some places you could go to become more social would be joining a new club, , or engaging in sports on your campus. If you see someone new or by themselves, pushing yourself to try and engage in a conversation with them. You can also join us at our weekly support group every Mondays (holidays excluded) at our Blooming Point. If you'd like more information please email us at [teens@bloom365.org](mailto:teens@bloom365.org) or reach out at an advocate at the number listed above.

**Q: How do you know if you have depression?**

A: School social workers and counselors are a great source for information on dealing with depression. You can always contact a BLOOM365 advocate at the number above. You can also schedule an appointment with your primary care provider to get a referral for therapy. Teen Lifeline is a great free, resource for depression. Please see above for the number to text/call for support. We want you to know that there is always someone available.

**Q: How do you kindly tell a guy that you don't want to date him?**

A: Effective communication can be helpful in this situation. Communication allows other people to understand where we are coming from without feeling attacked, which allows them to empathize with us. We highly encourage you to use "I-statements" to communicate. You might communicate to this person by saying, "I feel we are not compatible, and I think we will both be happier if we just remain friends." If you want to remain in eachothers lives, you might say "I would love to remain on good terms. You are important to me, and I hope we can continue to be friends."

**Q: I was in an abusive relationship a couple of weeks ago, when I left him he threatened to kill himself. I cut off all connections to him so I don't know if he's okay. Before we were together, he had**

**been to the hospital for almost ODing and for attempting suicide. I want to make sure he is okay but I don't know. Please help me.**

A: Thank you for being brave enough to share and reaching out to us. We want to let you know that the abuse you experienced was not at all your fault. We understand that this is a difficult situation to be in. If you do not feel comfortable reaching out to him yourself, you may find it useful to reach out to a trusted adult or a friend of his who can have the conversation with him themselves. He may be more receptive to the information and getting help if it comes from someone he is close to. You can provide this person with the red flags checklist and the above resources so that they can have the conversation with him. If you believe he is in immediate danger, please call 9-11. You can also reach out to a BLOOM365 advocate at the number above to discuss this situation further.

**Q: If you ever get harassed can you do anything about it? Like if its in public?**

A: It's important to remember that sexual harassment or assault is never your fault. If this happens in public, we first advise you to try to move away from the perpetrator. If you can't get away due to being in a close space, then try to shift your body to displace their movements, or get out of their eyesight. 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 sit down somewhere, go for a walk, or text a trusted friend or adult. It is also a good idea to report these incidents.

**Q: Why do we feel pain when we lose someone we really had a good connection with?**

A: When you love someone whether it's intimate or a friendship, you integrate them into your life. You spend time with them, they help you do things, they solve problems, and they just exist along with you. When that all disappears, you feel lost because you actually lost something. 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. With all this said, while ending a close friendship and or break up is tough it can be a great time for self evaluation and growth. A great tip for coping after a break up is to remember to be patient and give yourself time for your heart to heal. Getting over a break-up could take days, weeks or even months. In your packet, you can reference the "6 Tips for Coping After a Break-Up" to find more BLOOM365 suggested tips. If you're still struggling with coping, please reach out to a Bloom Advocate at the number listed above.

**Q: Can I still ask for forgiveness from my friend for blaming her for being in a wilting relationship?**

A: We absolutely believe that you still can. As we discussed in Dose 2, leaving an unhealthy or abusive relationship is never easy. We brainstormed and talked about the barriers to leaving (fear, love, dependency, hope, etc.). Remember to think of these barriers as hooks. It's not easy to unhook 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. On page 15, you can reference the "Top 5 Ways to Help a Friend Going through Dating Abuse. You can be there for your friend and let them know that you are always available to talk. This will let your friend come to you for help whenever they feel comfortable. Try to uplift your friend by telling them positive things and spending time with them doing activities together that will take their mind away from the negatives

**Q: How do you know when it's time to give consent?**

A: Consent always applies, especially during parties when there might be items such as drugs or alcohol. 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. Because drugs and alcohol can affect one's ability to make informed decisions, they often cannot truly give consent. If someone can not give consent, and another person or people take advantage of that, then situations like assault can happen. This is where consent comes into play. It is okay to show physical affection when in a relationship as long as both parties consent. 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 are some things to do when someone is continuing to make sexual advances and you feel as if you are in danger?**

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 at the number above. 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.