



**Elephant in The Room Q & A
South Mountain HS
Fall 2017**

Resources:

BLOOM365 Advocate	Text or call 602-799-7017 for free, confidential support. Please allow up to 24 hours to receive an initial response.
BLOOM365 Hotline	Call 1-888-606-HOPE (4673)
BLOOM365 Drop-In Support Groups	Every Monday (Holidays excluded). Please email teens@bloom365.org for more information.
Teen Lifeline	Text or call 602-248-TEEN (8336) for free, confidential support 24/7 relating to suicide, depression, bullying, or relationships
National 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)

Q: Student

A: BLOOM365 Advocate

Dose 1

1) Is abuse hard for you to talk about?

It is a heavy topic and it can be difficult to hear about the things teens have experienced, but at the same time, that's what is driving me to speak to you all today. I truly believe that no one deserves to be abused and therefore I want to do everything in my power to prevent it, even if that means being uncomfortable for an hour. After all, that uncomfortable hour could potentially prevent someone from having to deal with a lifelong trauma.

2) Do you have support groups and what are they for?

Yes, BLOOM365 does have support groups. Our support groups offer a safe place where you can connect with other teens who have experienced abuse/violence and discuss various topics. These groups offer an opportunity to increase your own safety and self-esteem. For more details about these groups and how to get involved, please feel free to contact us at teens@bloom365.org.

3) Do you work with teens experiencing depression if not where can they get help?

We do not specifically work with teens with depression, but we are always here to listen. We do work alongside a few organizations that specifically help youth experiencing depression, including Teen Lifeline. You can contact them at 602-248-TEEN (8336).

4) Why did you guys choose to come to South instead of any high school?

We go to as many schools as we can to help spread our blooming message! South just happens to be one of the schools we work with.

5) What do you do when you really love them but they call you names and hit you but you "can't live without them?"

No one deserves to be hurt, especially by someone they love. It's important to remember that you lived before them and you can live without them. If you don't feel safe, please call 1-888-606-HOPE or 1-866-331-9474. You can also TEXT or call a BLOOM365 lead advocate at 602-799-7017.

6) What do you do when they threaten to kill themselves if you leave them?

We encourage you to share this information with an adult that you trust as this is one of the red flags that increases your risk of being seriously hurt. If you ever feel threatened, you can also call 9-11 and ask about an Order of Protection. Because the most dangerous time in an abusive relationship is when it is about to end, we highly recommend reaching out to a BLOOM365 advocate for help in creating a safety plan. You can text or call 602-799-7017 to contact Sebastian directly.

7) Can abusive relationships be fixed?

If the perpetrator is willing to see their behavior as abusive, they can make the choice to change that behavior. A counselor, social worker, advocate, or other trusted adult can be there to help if the perpetrator is willing. Ultimately, it is up to the perpetrator to recognize his or her actions and to make the choice to change their behavior.

8) Why is it important for us to learn this and tell others?

Remember the 10% Tipping Point from Dose 4? When 10% of your peers or a population starts to adopt healthy, blooming values, the rest of society should follow. It starts with you!

9) How can we have productive arguments?

A productive argument makes use of “I” statements rather than “You” statements. For example: Saying something like, “I feel betrayed when you talk about me behind my back, can you please come to me with that information next time?” Rather than saying something like, “Why are you always spreading rumors about me?”. This style of conflict resolution allows for you to take ownership of your own feelings, allowing the other person to understand your perspective of the situation without feeling directly attacked. This prevents them from feeling like they need to defend themselves and allows for more effective communication.

10) What age do you recommend dating?

Every person is different so there no exact age that works for everyone. When you feel like you ready to handle the conflicts and responsibilities of a relationship, you might start to think about dating.

11) Have you ever been in an abusive relationship?

Some of us working for Bloom have experienced abusive relationships and some of us have not. Regardless of our personal experience, we all are very passionate about this cause.

12) How do you know when you are ready to date?

This really comes down to the individual. Again, it’s important to consider your ability to handle the conflicts and responsibilities that can come along with dating relationships. Assessing whether this is something you are ready for can help you to decide if you are personally ready to begin dating.

13) How is one supposed to openly talk about something so personal?

In situations like these, trust is key! When you feel like you can trust the person and that the person will respect you in return, then opening up can often become a bit easier. Like anything else, opening up takes practice. Using I statements, which allow us to take ownership of our own feelings, can be a good place to start. If you feel you would benefit from talking through this with an advocate, you can reach out to a BLOOM365 advocate at 602-799-7017.

14) How can we control our anger when it comes to relationships arguments?

The first important step is to recognize when you’re angry. Then, if you can, take a deep breath and count to 10. If you need to, you can take a break from talking about it and come back when you feel more calm. It may be useful to communicate this strategy with your partner before an argument arises so they know to give you some space when you may need to take a step back.

Dose 2-

1) How can I stop my depression?

First of all, we want you to know that you are not alone. Teen Lifeline is a great organization that specifically works with youth experiencing depression. You can reach them at 602-248-8336.

Dose 3-

1) How do you stop senioritis?

You are almost done! Congratulations! Keeping your future goals in mind as you finish up high school can be a helpful way to stay motivated. Whether you are planning to continue your education or start working, know that finishing high school strong will help you get to that next step.

2) What if both partners are abusive?

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 perpetrator. With that being said, sometimes two partners can try to control each other. In this situation, we recommend that both partners reach out to an advocate (602)-799-7017.

3) Should I break up with him?

You are the expert in your own life, so only you can make that decision. However, it can be useful to look at the blooming and wilting flowers to help you to determine whether this relationship is healthy or unhealthy.

4) What if your boyfriend or husband locks you in your house, takes every electronic away and doesn't let you leave the house, talk to anyone, and treats you like a servant? Then abuses you and forces you to do things you don't want to do?

These are definitely signs of an unhealthy or abusive relationship. Remember for a relationship to be healthy, both partners have to be free and equal. BLOOM365 is here to support you! You can always reach out to an advocate at 602-799-7017.

5) When your partner gets mad at you do you be yourself or start controlling?

Remember that abuse is much different than anger. We all get angry, but we all do not chose to exert power and control. Take a deep breath, walk away from the situation for a bit, and come back to the conversation when you and your partner aren't as angry. If your partner is the angry one, you can always ask to come back to the discussion when both of you have calmed down.

6) In the Dorothy and May example today why did Dorothy kill her girlfriend too?

The act of killing someone can be seen as a final act of total control. In this unfortunate situation, Dorothy exerted power and control over May by murdering her.

7) Is it possible to cheer a person up and not let them get mad at their partner but cheer them up?

Reminding your friends that you are always available to listen is a kind gesture that can help to cheer someone up. Try focusing on what is great about your friend instead of what is bad about their partner or their relationship.

8) How do you end a relationship if they refuse to leave you alone?

It's important to remember that the most dangerous time in an abusive relationship is when the survivor tries to leave. If you are concerned about your safety, please contact a BLOOM365 advocate so that you can create a safety plan. Otherwise, talking to your friends to make sure someone can walk with you to and from class can be helpful if they are bothering you at school. If you continue to have issues at school, you may want to reach out to a trusted school staff member about additional steps you can take. If you are experiencing issues online, you may choose to block their number and social media accounts to keep them from contacting you online.

9) How do you take care of mental abuse?

Taking care of your mental health is so important, especially if you have or are experiencing abuse. Talking to a professional like your school counselor, a BLOOM365 advocate, or someone at Teen Lifeline (602-248-8336) can be very helpful. Some other ideas might include staying active in the activities that bring you joy and keeping supportive and caring people close to you.

10) Who discovered the red flags?

The red flag checklist that we gave you, as well as other lists of red flags, were created by people who have studied the common patterns of dating violence.

Dose 4-

1) Why do people like bad words in music?

Some people do, some don't. We all have different tastes! Music can have a major impact on our mood and sometimes it feels good to listen to music that reflects how we feel. However, we encourage teens that want to Bloom to think critically about the music that they listen to and determine if this music glamorizes power and control or any of the root causes.

2) Why don't they just ban cigarettes?

It would be very difficult to pass a law like that! Especially since we tried it with alcohol and it didn't work out so well.

3) If you found yourself in an abusive relationship, what would you do?

Everyone copes with abuse in different ways. One thing that we all have in common is that no one deserves or wants to be abused by someone they care about. The easy answer a lot of people would like to give is to just leave the relationship, but it is not always that easy. Knowing that you or someone you love is worth more than abuse and deserves love may help with that decision. If you are dealing with an abusive relationship and would like to talk through your options or just need a listening ear, please feel free to text or call a BLOOM365 advocate at 602-799-7017.

4) How does Grand Theft Auto relate to dating abuse?

We used Grand Theft Auto in class as an example of how violence is socially accepted in our society. When we accept violence in so many parts of our lives, it is easier to accept violence that occurs in dating relationships, even if we know it shouldn't be happening.

5) What are ways to be truly happy?

There is no one way to answer this question as different people find happiness in different things! Finding things that bring you joy and keeping them close to your heart is a great way to start. Another great tip is to begin to develop meaningful relationships and friendships with people who are caring. Sometimes we might face things that make it hard to be happy, such as mental health issues or experiencing a tragedy. This is when it may be helpful to speak with a mental health professional about how you are feeling.

Dose 7-

Is there a crew at South Mountain?

There is not one set up yet! That means YOU get to create your own crew! We got around 60 sign ups this semester so we should have a great crew!

How do you know if someone really loved you, even if they don't show it?

When someone loves us they treat us with kindness, respect, empathy, affection, and so many more great qualities that make us feel cherished. When someone loves us, they are willing to treat us with equality and freedom and not power and control. It is also important to realize that we receive and give love in different manners; some people like hugging and kissing to show love, others might appreciate gifts and actions more. We should understand how we like to receive and how we show love to others. Having a partner that shows love in the same way you like to receive love can be an important aspect of a healthy relationship.

What can I do if my family pressures me to be more like the norm of feminine?

If anyone is pressuring you to be someone or something you don't want to be, you can always be honest and try to have a conversation about how their pressuring makes you feel. Using "I" statements may be helpful in this circumstance.

How can I end a relationship?

You can end a relationship in a way that makes you feel comfortable. 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, you can have that conversation in a relatively public space like a park, and of course you could always have someone you trust nearby for emotional and safety support for during and after. These types of situations can be difficult for a lot of people. We encourage you to explore the coping strategies we discussed during dose 6 and find one that best suits you. This could be spending more time with friends or dedicating time to a new hobby or skill. You can also reach out to a BLOOM365 advocate to help you come up with a daily or weekly goal to help you look toward all of the blooming things ahead for you!

How can I leave a relationship if I feel bad for the person who I am dating?

If you are not happy in a relationship, remember to always take care of yourself. Communication is an important tool we can use to help end a relationship on good terms. By communicating our desires and reasoning for wanting to end a relationship, we can give each other closure to move on and hopefully grow from our experience. Closure is an important part of healing and moving forward with our lives. .

How can we engage in conversations with people who disagree with us or disapprove of us?

The “I” statements (“I feel __ when you __, next time could you maybe __”) are always a good idea! This keeps the focus on how you feel, and helps to avoid the hostile and defensive reactions we sometimes get when we get when we have those tough conversations.

What if someone is in your way of achieving?

If you have a relationship that you feel is not helping you in any way, it’s your choice on what you would like to do about it. You can always have a conversation with that person about how you are feeling and do what you feel is best for you!

Why do some people focus only on looks?

Society has put many ideas of what beauty ‘should’ look like, when in reality no one really fits this standard. So sometimes when people go for looks, it is what they think they need in a significant other. When you recognize that these beauty ideals shown in the media are unrealistic, it can be helpful in realizing beauty comes in a variety of forms.

Why does consent still apply to situations such as parties with drugs and alcohol?

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.