

by Abigail Van Buren

Transgender Classmate Isn't Ready for Romance With Teen

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DEAR ABBY: I'm 16 and **have had trouble with romance** for as long as I can remember. I've had almost 80 crushes since kindergarten. I counted. Right now I am close to a relationship with a boy at my school who is a year older. I have had feelings for "Ben" for almost a year, and I found it was mutual a few months ago. He invited me to coffee but later canceled, explaining that he wasn't emotionally prepared, which was clear. He feels the way he does for a reason. **Ben is a transgender male, and his mother disapproves, as do many of our classmates.** Two months ago, we agreed to be "just friends ... for now." Since then, no feelings have changed for either of us. However, I know Ben still isn't ready, largely because of his mother's and his classmates' influence. I'm getting impatient. I've been in relationships before, the middle-school kind, and I know how my brain functions. Right now, **I worry obsessively** about how he feels. This will subside after a real relationship starts. But before that happens, **the issue is all-consuming. I constantly rehash concerns** we need to talk about in my mind, and I don't know how to ignore them until we can speak again. It makes my grades suffer. **I blame Ben's mother and classmates** for the stress he's under. **They're the reason for his dysphoria and panic attacks.** I'm angry. I want her to leave her son alone. How can I wait peacefully and get over **my bitterness toward his mother?** --

CRUSHING TEEN IN OHIO

DEAR TEEN: Anger, frustration and bitterness can make people sick. You need to find ways to get your mind off this budding romance and channel these negative emotions, if only because Ben isn't ready for what you have in mind. Bear in mind that he is on a long and complicated journey. (Give him props for honesty.) Then buckle down and concentrate on your schoolwork, find a sport or other activity you can involve yourself in and, **if your school doesn't have a Genders and Sexualities Alliance,** consider going online to gsanetwork.org and starting one at your school.

Not just 1 person with problems, but 2 here. Putting the blame for mental problems everywhere except where it belongs. Abby all-in on GSA (used to be "Gay-Straight Alliance," since 2016, "Genders and Sexualities Alliance.") While the writer doesn't identify their sex, it is most likely a girl who is interested in another girl who thinks she's a man. Special counseling, now outlawed, is needed for both. Steering the issue to GSA as a magic bullet only worsens the problem.