

Peer relationships

[Life, Relationships](#)



Having arrived at the gateway to adulthood, the teenage years are an exciting time of freedom, no responsibilities, and supposedly the best time of your life; unfortunately it is not always a cake walk. Whether it is maintaining good grades or keeping up with what the plans are for the weekend, there is a serious amount of pressure throughout high school and it becomes easy to get lost in the madness. Studies show that the qualities of peer relationships at this time are key contributors to mental health now and throughout life.

Positive relationships are beneficial to young adults because it helps in gaining a sense of what good social interactions are and produces equal or greater relationships in the future. On the flip side, poor peer relationships can have negative effects on adulthood mental health and social relations. Unforgiving social cliques and high societal expectations are a few causes of the shrinking of teen self-esteem and disruption of stable mental well-being. When students start high school they quickly find their place on the social ladder.

Some students find themselves at the top, some find a place in the middle they're comfortable with, and others are sometimes cast out and pushed to the bottom by the rest. Social status and cliques rank unnecessarily high in importance amongst adolescents; teens are consistently pressured to maintain their high social standing. This chronic stress leads to their disengagement from classroom activities (McGrath & Noble, 2010). Even pupils that seem to be at the top of their social ladder develop conflict among one another, disrupting school performance.

These students become more focused on the trifling drama and maintaining social stature and find the importance of school beginning to decline.

<https://assignbuster.com/peer-relationships/>

Research conducted by Helen McGrath and Toni Noble shows that, young adults that have poor relationships with their peers, show lower levels of school achievement and higher levels of school avoidance. Once teenagers' attention is elsewhere in the classroom, they begin to fall behind on school work due to the fact that they are more focused on their life outside of school.

Bad study habits can develop if they are engrossed in their social life and they can carry those bad study habits with them through high school to college. Pupils with high social standing are not the only ones affected by negative peer relationships; it influences students at the bottom of the social ladder as well. The so called "bottom" of the social ladder is made up of persons that have often times been rejected by their peers for one reason or another; they may dress different, act a certain way, or lack some sort of attribute that society believes is necessary.

Students that are excluded from their peers still seek the same social fulfillment as others; in a way this causes them to be more desperate for that fulfillment. Being bullied by social exclusion may appear less visibly harmful than verbal or physical forms of bullying but may be more detrimental to children's participation in learning activities and have more impact on their academic outcomes, states McGrath and Noble.

Social exclusion and bullying can go even further than classroom disengagement; as a result of bullying, people can lose their ability to love and trust, denying them the chance to experience a quality relationship later in their life. They might find themselves as a submissive partner or they may want to be completely alone. Aside from its long-term effects, some

<https://assignbuster.com/peer-relationships/>

consequences of bullying can be seen and felt immediately. When one calls another a harsh name, the victim might cry, just like a bruise might appear after a punch to the arm. However, some effects of bullying are not always obvious to the naked eye.

The results of bullying might grow and appear over time, damaging a person in profound ways for the long term. Victims often develop eating disorders, begin to self-injure, or require extensive counseling. Social bullying can also leave people without a supportive group of friends that they can lean on and spend time with. Isolation amongst peers has negative repercussions towards young adult mental health because at this age, according to Kingsly Nyarko of the University of Ghana's psychology department, being accepted by peers has important implications for adjustment both during adolescence and into adulthood.

Friends are supporters and motivators, they help you feel better when you're sad and can talk you through any problems you are facing. When that support is missing from a person's life, they have no one to talk to, making them feel alone and excluded. This can damage an adolescent's ability to maintain healthy friendships and possess adequate social skills. Being teased, rejected or socially excluded by other pupils on an ongoing basis has been identified as the single most common characteristic of children who are at high risk for developing emotional and behavioral disorders (McGrath & Noble, 2010).

Isolation makes adolescents feel as if there is something wrong with them, thus lowering self-esteem and creating disorders such as anorexia, depression, anxiety and bipolar disorders. Some individuals recover from

<https://assignbuster.com/peer-relationships/>

loneliness by using their own strategies, or by letting time do the healing. Others require outside professional help. The most obvious approach is to help people develop satisfying personal relationships. This can be done by improving how they interact with others through social skills training or forms of psychotherapy aimed at changing dysfunctional interpersonal dispositions (e. g. fear of rejection). It can also be done by improving opportunities for interactions through programs aimed at removing barriers for social interaction (e. g. , providing transportation) or at bringing people together (e. g. , discussion groups). Major depressive disorders in early adulthood range from 10%-17% (Maughan & Collishaw & Stringaris, 2012). One of the biggest issues for teens is fitting in. Society tells young adults that they need to act a certain way or look a certain way, and when a teen doesn't feel they follow that socially acceptable conduct, they often become repressed within themselves.

They want to be accepted and there is a fear of being alone and not being wanted. Popularity is a huge social factor for any teen, especially in High School. Everyone wants to be part of the " in crowd" and if you cannot be a part of them, you want to dress like them or act like them. Pressures like this do tend to be worse for girls; about twice as likely to be affected as men (Maughan et al. , 2012). Girls feel the need to please others and seek approval while boys learn that it is ok to be themselves and do their own thing.

Boys tend to be able to deal better with these social issues than girls do. They are able to put events behind them, and not depend upon others for reassuring them of their self-worth. One example is when an adolescent boy

and girl are equally interested in each other; the boys seem to be able to cope with love's losses better than girls do. They put it behind them and move on, while girls focus on the breakup and keep talking about it, stirring the emotional pot. These depressive episodes are not just short term; 50-70% are likely to develop a further episode within five years (Maughan et al. 2012). However, sometimes depression can be avoided all together. Having a good home life and a high self-esteem would be primary for people not to be depressed. Although in some cases you are predisposition to have depression, little things do help. Talking about your problems and not bottling them up helps immensely to avoid emotional breakdowns and blowups. Avoiding extreme “ stressers,” like putting yourself in a situation you cannot get out of, also helps. Avoidance of cigarettes and alcohol also helps with staying healthy and happy.

Despite the vast amount of negative effects peer relationships have on young adults there are a substantial amount of positive effects as well. When healthy peer relationships are established early on, they positively affect every aspect of everyday life; one facet being school attendance and performance. The link between pupil engagement, achievement and well-being appears to be bi-directional, i. e. the more pupils are actively engaged and achieving in learning, the greater their sense of well-being and vice versa (McGrath ; Noble, 2010).

When students are treated well by other pupils it makes them more enthused about participation in school activities. Positive peer relationships are also linked to higher levels of school attendance and pupil engagement with learning and a reduction in the likelihood of dropping out in secondary

school (McGrath ; Noble, 2008). When students find their school environment to be supportive and caring, they are less likely to become involved in substance abuse, violence, and other problem behaviors. They are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward themselves and pro-social attitudes and behaviors toward others; supportive schools foster these positive outcomes by promoting students' sense of "connectedness", "belongingness", or "community" during the school day. Additionally, this time during adolescence is imperative because, the development of strong interpersonal skills and relationships during emerging adulthood is an essential component of effective career and role functioning throughout the adult life p.

Comments by others, particularly parents and peers, reflect appraisals of the individual that some adolescents may incorporate as part of their identity and feelings about themselves (Nyarko, 2012). Negative experiences in early adulthood are often particularly damaging to self-esteem. In early years, personality and sense of self is being formed, and harmful experiences can leave one feeling that they are not valued or important.

Even though one is close to adulthood, there has still been too little amount of time to build any resilience, so these negative views can become the ones that teens believe about themselves. The way one may view them self can be tainted by society's ideas of 'beauty'; this is where helpful friendships are essential. When a teen's self-esteem is disintegrating they need constructive re-affirmation to keep a positive attitude; this can be accomplished through strong friendships.

Frequently, the friendships we make during our youth fade or dwindle as we grow up and move on to new places in life. Yet when our childhood and school-year friends stay with us into adulthood, they are often the most important friends we have. Our common history and the length of time that our connection has continued becomes the glue that keeps us together, even if we've changed significantly from when we first met. Our most valuable friends are the ones with whom we feel the deepest connection and greatest trust.

It is with these friends that we share our fears, secrets, desires and problems and dreams. There are many unexpected benefits from this type of relationship, including such things as lessening stress, limiting depression, lowering blood pressure, keeping our minds agile, and lessening the debilitating effects of old age. Research has even shown that people with close friendships are more likely to exercise regularly, avoid excessive alcohol and even be more inclined to quit smoking. Positive peer relationships in early adulthood have positive effects on self-esteem.

Chen, Cohen, Johnson, and Kasen (2008) summary article on Psychiatric disorders during adolescence and relationships with peers found that, during adolescence, friends are providers of companionship, social and emotional support, and intimate self-disclosure and reflection. Group activities such as sports are an effective way to gain self-esteem boosting encouragement and relationships. Being involved in a team allows teens to build relationships and social skills that will help them further in life. Other group activities such as school extracurriculars have similar constructive effects on teen contentment.

Peer relationships play an important role in psycho-social development and well-being throughout life (Chen et al. , 2008). Young adults' body image often times can be influenced by their relationship with peers. For some it is viewed as the lowest point in their life; others claim it to be the highlight of their years. No matter what personal opinion individuals express, it is evident that early adulthood is a key turning point in life. The experiences at this time, positive or negative, set the very foundation for later adulthood.