Adolescent Dating Aggression: Understanding the Influence of Peers

*Understanding the causes of adolescent dating aggression, and the steps needed to prevent its occurrence, are vital for helping teens develop healthy romantic relationships. The Prevention Researcher, the quarterly journal focused on successful adolescent development, offers a complimentary article on “Peer Group Influences on Adolescent Dating Aggression.”*

Eugene, OR (PRWEB) October 25, 2011 -- “The high rates of dating aggression among adolescents is alarming,” says Steven Ungerleider, PhD., founding editor of The Prevention Researcher. “It has both physical and mental health consequences that negatively affect the lives of teenagers and their future romantic relationships.”

The social world of most teens increasingly involves dating and romantic relationships. Peer groups are central to adolescent dating because it is within these groups that teens meet potential romantic partners and learn dating norms.

In The Prevention Researcher, Jennifer Connelly, Ph.D. and Laura Friedlander, M.A. write that ‘in adolescence, the peer group is a critical social context for dating and romantic relationships. Adolescents’ peer groups play a role not only in facilitating dating, but also in shaping violence-tolerant attitudes as well as the tendency to use aggression within relationships when conflicts arise.”

Connelly and Friedlander’s article, “Peer Group Influences on Adolescent Dating Aggression,” explores the impact of dating aggression, discusses the role of the peer group in adolescent dating and dating aggression, and describes a prevention program based on a model of peer engagement.

Among their important research findings, the authors note that certain adolescent characteristics heighten the risk of dating aggression. “The first of these is adolescent’s sensitivity to rejection from important people in their lives, a belief system which has been labeled ‘rejection sensitivity.’ The second is the adolescents’ susceptibility to mimic their peers’ attitudes and behavior and to allow them to overly influence their own beliefs and behaviors, a tendency referred to as ‘susceptibility to peer influence.’ Both of these characteristics shape the way that adolescents relate to their peers and the degree to which they may be influenced by them.”

Studies of prevention programs reviewed in the article show that “it is important that these programs take into account the powerful role that the peer group plays in shaping individuals’ attitudes and behavior towards dating.” The authors’ describe the RISE (Respect in Schools Everywhere) program, an example of a peer-led approach that demonstrates the power of peer influence in preventing dating aggression.

“Connelly and Friedlander clearly show how adults can work together to both prevent dating violence and intervene when it occurs,” says Ungerleider. “Parents and professionals who work with young people can help teenagers develop and maintain healthy romantic relationships, making a positive difference in their lives as they transition into adulthood.”

For a complimentary copy of “Peer Group Influences on Adolescent Dating Aggression,” visit [www.tpronline.org](http://www.tpronline.org).

About The Prevention Researcher

PRWeb ebooks - Another [online visibility tool from PRWeb](http://www.prweb.com)
Founded in 1994, The Prevention Researcher is published by the non-profit, Integrated Research Services in Eugene, Oregon. The quarterly journal focuses on successful adolescent development and serves professionals who work with young people in a variety of organizational settings.

Each issue of The Prevention Researcher covers a single topic, presenting the latest adolescent behavioral research and findings on significant issues facing today’s youth. The journal provides information about programs that create supportive environments for youth, strategies for preventing problems affecting adolescents, and resources that help youth-serving professionals.

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