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Strong teenage friendships key to good romantic relationships in adulthood

Teenagers who have strong relationships with people of the same gender are more likely to have satisfying romantic relationships in [...]

By Tom Bawden
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Teenagers who have strong relationships with people of the same gender are more likely to have satisfying romantic relationships in later life, a new study finds.

Now, researchers have found that the friendship skills teenagers learn with their peers of the same gender were the strongest predictor of romantic satisfaction in their late 20s and beyond.

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"In spite of the emphasis teens put on adolescent romantic relationships, they turn out not to be the most important predictor of future romantic success," says Professor Joseph Allen, of the University of Virginia.

All about skills

"Instead, it's the skills learned in friendships with peers of the same gender- skills such as stability, assertiveness, intimacy, and social competence – that correspond most closely to the skills needed for success in adult romantic relationships," he said.

The study is published in Child Development, a journal of the Society for Research in Child Development.

Researchers interviewed and observed 165 adolescents from ages 13 to 30, living in suburban and urban areas in the southeastern United States. The group was racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse.

The study assessed teenagers' own reports of the quality of their social and romantic relationships, as well as those of close friends.

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