



# The Impact Of Positive Interpersonal Relationships During Adolescence On Mental Health

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## Abstract:

Adolescence Is A Formative Stage Marked By Rapid Psychological, Emotional, And Social Change, Making Positive Interpersonal Relationships Especially Influential For Mental Health Outcomes. This Research Investigates How Supportive Connections With Peers, Parents, And Other Significant Figures Contribute To Adolescents' Emotional Well-Being And Resilience. Drawing On Current Empirical Evidence, The Study Examines The Pathways Through Which Healthy Relationships Foster Protective Factors Such As Self-Esteem, Secure Attachment, And Adaptive Coping, While Mitigating Risks For Anxiety, Depression, And Behavioral Difficulties. Findings Highlight That Consistent Emotional Support, Open Communication, And A Sense Of Belonging Significantly Enhance Mental Health During This Developmental Period. The Study Underscores The Critical Role Of Fostering Positive Interpersonal Environments In Schools, Families, And Communities, And Offers Implications For Prevention And Intervention Strategies Aimed At Promoting Adolescent Mental Health.

## KEY WORDS:

Adolescence, Positive Interpersonal Relationships, Mental Health, Mental Wellness, Peer Relationships, Parent-Adolescent Relationships, Social Support, Attachment Theory, Emotional Well-Being, Psychological Well-Being, Resilience, Self-Esteem, Emotional Regulation, Social Belonging , Adolescent Development.

## Background Of The Study:

Children Entering Adolescence Are Going Through Many Changes In Their Bodies And Brains. These Include Physical, Intellectual, Psychological And Social Challenges, As Well As Development Of Their Own Moral Compass. The Changes Are Rapid And Often Take Place At Different Rates. It Can Be An Exciting Yet Challenging Time In The Life Of A Teenager.

This Stage Introduces New Challenges And Opportunities As Young People Navigate Identity Formation, Increasing Autonomy, And Expanding Social Worlds (Steinberg, 2017).

The Quality Of These Relationships Exerts A Significant Influence On Adolescents' Mental Health And Social Development, Shaping Their Emotional Resilience, Self-Concept, And Capacity For Successful Interpersonal Functioning.

### **Importance Of Interpersonal Relationships During Adolescents :**

Adolescence Is Marked By An Increase In The Significance Of Peer Relationships. Peers Become Increasingly Frequent Providers Of Social Support And Companionship (Furman & Buhrmester, 1992), Although Parent Relationships Remain Important (Steinberg, 2001). This Increase In Intimacy And Companionship Is Observed Within Same-Sex Friendships As Well As Other-Sex And Romantic Relationships (Kuttler & La Greca, 2004).

Peer Relationships, Meanwhile, Become Increasingly Influential As Adolescents Seek Acceptance, Validation, And Shared Identity Among Their Social Groups. Positive Peer Interactions Help Adolescents Develop Social Skills, Empathy, And Collaborative Problem-Solving Abilities. Friendships Characterized By Trust, Reciprocity, And Emotional Support Facilitate Healthy Identity Formation And Reduce The Likelihood Of Emotional Distress. Peer Acceptance, In Particular, Has Been Linked To Higher Self-Worth And Lower Rates Of Depressive Symptoms. Social Learning Theory Suggests That Peers Serve As Important Models For Behavior, Providing Opportunities For Learning Prosocial Behaviors Such As Cooperation And Perspective Taking. Strong Peer Bonds Can Also Mitigate The Impact Of External Stressors By Offering Emotional Reassurance And Companionship.

The Relationship Between Children And Their Parents Or Caregivers (Such As Guardians, Aunts And Uncles, Or Grandparents) Is One Of The Most Important Relationships In A Child's Life, Often Lasting Well Into Adulthood. In Adolescence, This Relationship Changes Dramatically As Youth Seek Increased Independence From Their Families And Begin To Make Their Own Decisions. With Increased Independence Comes The Possibility Of Increased Risk, Both Positive And Negative, And Teens Need Parents Or Caregivers To Help Them Navigate The Challenges That Adolescence Presents. Though Some Amount Of Conflict Between Adolescents And Their Parents Is Normal, Adolescents Still Rely On Parents Or Caregivers To Provide Emotional Support And Set Limits. Both Emotional Support And Setting Limits Are Linked To Positive Adolescent Development And Parent-Child Closeness.

Although Teens Have Increasing Independence From Their Families, Parents And Caregivers Still Play A Large And Vital Role In Their Lives. Parents And Caregivers Help Shape Adolescents' Self-Control, Plans For Their Future, Moral And Social Values, And Their Broader World View. As Children Grow, Parenting Shifts From Making Decisions For The Younger Child To Helping Older Children And Adolescents Make Decisions On Their Own, While Minimizing The Chance That They Engage In High-Risk Behavior.

Warm, Supportive, And Communicative Parent-Adolescent Relationships Foster Secure Attachment Patterns That Contribute To Emotional Stability. Adolescents Who Perceive Their Parents As Available, Respectful, And Encouraging Tend To Exhibit Higher Self-Esteem, Better Emotional Regulation, And Fewer Internalizing Symptoms Such As Anxiety And Depression. From The Perspective Of Attachment Theory, Such Relationships Provide Adolescents With A Secure Base From Which To Explore New Social Environments

Positive Interpersonal Relationships During Adolescence Also Contribute To Cognitive And Moral Development. Through Interactions With Peers And Adults, Adolescents Learn To Negotiate, Resolve Conflicts, And Understand Differing Viewpoints. These Experiences Strengthen Executive Functioning Skills, Such As Decision-Making And Impulse Control, And Support The Development Of Moral Reasoning. Adolescents Who Engage In Healthy Social Interactions Are More Likely To Develop Prosocial Behaviors Like Empathy, Generosity, And Altruism. Such Competencies Not Only Enhance Social Functioning But Also Contribute To Long-Term Psychological Health By Fostering A Sense Of Competence, Autonomy, And Relatedness—Three Core Psychological Needs Identified In Self-Determination Theory.

These Relationships Influence Identity Formation, Emotional Regulation, Coping Skills, And Moral Development—Factors That Have Long-Term Implications For Well-Being. As Such, Understanding And Nurturing Supportive Interpersonal Relationships During Adolescence Is Essential For Promoting Healthy Psychological And Social Outcomes Throughout The Lifespan.

### **Importance Of Mental Wellness :**

Adolescence Is A Dynamic Period Of Rapid Physical, Emotional, And Cognitive Changes, Making Mental Wellness A Crucial Foundation For Overall Health, Development, And Future Success. Mental Wellness For Teenagers Goes Beyond Merely The Absence Of A Diagnosed Mental Illness; It Encompasses A Positive State Of Emotional, Psychological, And Social Well-Being That Allows Them To Realize Their Potential, Cope With Life's Everyday Stresses, Work Productively, And Contribute To Their Community.

This Is A Particularly Vulnerable Time, As Young People Navigate Complex Pressures Related To Social Expectations, Academic Performance, Peer Relationships, And The Pervasive Influence Of Social Media, All While Their Brains Are Still Maturing. Failure To Address Mental Health Conditions During This Formative Stage Can Lead To Significant Long-Term Consequences, Including Educational Difficulties, Involvement In Risk-Taking Behaviors Like Substance Use Or Self-Harm, Social Exclusion, And A Higher Risk Of Physical Health Problems In Adulthood. Globally, It Is Estimated That One In Seven Adolescents Aged 10–19 Years Experiences A Mental Health Condition, Yet Many Cases Remain Unrecognized And Untreated Due To Stigma And Barriers To Care. Therefore, Promoting Mental Wellness Is Essential To Help Adolescents Build Resilience, Develop Healthy Coping Skills, Form Strong Relationships, And Ultimately Thrive Into Healthy, Productive Adults.

### **Problem Statement :**

Despite The Known Importance Of Social Relationships, Many Adolescents Experience Deteriorating Mental Wellness Due To Peer Pressure, Family Instability, And Increased Social Comparison. The Extent To Which Healthy Relationships Predict Mental Wellness Requires Deeper Empirical Exploration.

### **Purpose Of The Study :**

To Examine How Healthy Interpersonal Relationships Influence And Predict Mental Wellness Levels Among Adolescents.

## **Research Question :**

What Is The Relationship Between Healthy Interpersonal Relationships And Adolescent Mental Wellness?

## **Hypothesis :**

Healthy Interpersonal Relationships Significantly Predict Higher Levels Of Mental Wellness Among Adolescents.

## **Significance Of The Study :**

Findings May Guide Mental Health Interventions, Inform School Counselling Programs, And Support Efforts To Strengthen Family And Peer Relationships. The Study Contributes To Knowledge On Preventive Mental Health Strategies For Adolescent Populations.

## **Literature Review:**

### **1. Friendships & Mental Well-being**

Today, Research Studies Highlight the Role of the Complementarity between the Quality of the Relationship and Mental Well-Being in Relation to the Age Group, the Quality of Friendships, and the Age Group. It Was Discussed in a Very Important Research Review by Bagwell et al. (2022) That Younger Youngsters Experiencing Better-Quality Friendships Exude Better Subjective Well-Being Compared to Those Experiencing Poorer-Quality Friendships, in Addition to Reduced Experiences Regarding Feelings of Loneliness. Better-Quality Friendships, Which Complement Intimacy, Trust, Loyalty, and Communication', Also Result in 'less likelihood of developing emotional problems like anxiety and depression'.

### **2. Peer Support, Social Belonging, and Behavioral Out**

Research also indicates the importance of Support by Peers and Functioning/Behavioral Problems. Al-Qudah and Hassan (2024) highlighted that perceived peer and family support improves the prosocial behavior of individuals significantly, and the symptoms of both internalizing and externalizing issues are reduced significantly. Importantly, school belonging was used as a mediator, and its significant mediating role was identified between the variables for adolescents as peers can affect the adolescents by making them feel as if they belong to the surroundings, and this would improve the mental health of the adolescents.

### **3. Parent–Child Attachment And Peer Relationship Quality**

Parental Attachment is a crucial part of shaping social behavior. As far as the systematic review conducted by Moretti et al. (2022) is concerned, there is support for the idea that a good attachment of the parent is linked to the ability of adolescents in having adequate peer relationships. The propensity of adolescents towards good social skills is very likely if they experience good communication and a good attachment experience of the parent.

## **Theoretical Framework :**

The current topic is greatly established on Attachment Theory and Social Support Theory, which are theoretical constructs with sound conceptual grounding for understanding the influence of relationships and their impact upon mental wellness within adolescents.

### **Attachment Theory**

Attachment theory was first conceptualized by John Bowlby and later developed by the attachment researcher and psychologist, Mary Ainsworth. It holds the emotional ties formed between individuals and their caregivers during the early years of life as very essential for the emotional regulation and self-worth of the individual.

In the adolescence stage too, attachment patterns remain a more crucial component of mental wellness. When adolescents exhibit a secure attachment to their caregivers but perceive them as responsive and available to them, there are high probabilities that these individuals will develop a good self-concept, ways of effective coping, and a sound relationship between peers and adult relationships too.

On the other hand, Insecure Types of Attachments (those that are Anxious, Avoidant, and/or Disorganized) have also been linked with issues with Emotion Regulatory and Rejection Sensitivities as well as Conflicts within Interpersonal Relations. In other words, adolescents that have not achieved a strong attachment might find it difficult to obtain and maintain a relationship that can make them more liable to Mental Disorders. Thus, Attachment Theory clarifies that Mental well-being within adolescents is rooted within early and continuous interpersonal associations.

### **Social Support Theory**

Social Support Theory suggests that mental or emotional well-being of an individual is impacted by the extent of access an individual has in their social networks. Social support may be emotional in nature, which involves empathy and care, or be informational in nature, which involves appraisal support through feedback and judgment.

Social Support from family, peers, teachers, and community members is equally important for Adolescents because it helps in reducing the negative effects of stress. The stress-buffering hypothesis proposes that social support has been shown to buffer the negative consequences of stress in Adolescents because it serves as an important protective factor against the negative effects of stress.

Empirical studies have found that adolescents who experience high levels of social support tend to display positive mental health outcomes, such as low depression and anxiety and high life satisfaction. Supportive interpersonal relationships give adolescents the sense of belonging and emotional security they need in order to maintain positive mental health during this crucial phase of their life.

## Concept Of Healthy Interpersonal Relationships

Healthy Interpersonal Relationships Act As Protective Factors That Buffer Against Stress, Promote Emotional Stability, And Enhance Psychological Well-Being. Understanding Mental Wellness Through A Relational Lens Emphasizes The Importance Of Fostering Supportive Family, Peer, And School Relationships To Promote Positive Mental Health Among Adolescents.

Characterized By Trust, Empathy, Communication, Respect, And Conflict-Resolution Skills, Healthy Relationships Foster Safety And Allow Adolescents To Express Themselves Freely.

## Mental Wellness In Adolescents

Adolescence Is A Crucial Period For Developing Social And Emotional Habits Important For Mental Well-Being. These Include Adopting Healthy Sleep Patterns; Exercising Regularly; Developing Coping, Problem-Solving, And Interpersonal Skills; And Learning To Manage Emotions. Protective And Supportive Environments In The Family, At School And In The Wider Community Are Important.

Multiple Factors Affect Mental Health. The More Risk Factors Adolescents Are Exposed To, The Greater The Potential Impact On Their Mental Health. Factors That Can Contribute To Stress During Adolescence Include Exposure To Adversity, Pressure To Conform With Peers And Exploration Of Identity. Media Influence And Gender Norms Can Exacerbate The Disparity Between An Adolescent's Lived Reality And Their Perceptions Or Aspirations For The Future. Other Important Determinants Include The Quality Of Their Home Life And Relationships With Peers. Violence (Especially Sexual Violence And Bullying), Harsh Parenting And Severe And Socioeconomic Problems Are Recognized Risks To Mental Health.

Some Adolescents Are At Greater Risk Of Mental Health Conditions Due To Their Living Conditions, Stigma, Discrimination Or Exclusion, Or Lack Of Access To Quality Support And Services. These Include Adolescents Living In Humanitarian And Fragile Settings; Adolescents With Chronic Illness, Autism Spectrum Disorder, An Intellectual Disability Or Other Neurological Condition; Pregnant Adolescents, Adolescent Parents, Or Those In Early Or Forced Marriages; Orphans; And Adolescents From Minority Ethnic Or Sexual Backgrounds Or Other Discriminated Groups.

## Prior Research Linking Relationships And Mental Health

Early Studies indicate that the association between families and adolescents' mental wellness ranks as one of the most powerful predictive factors in the lives of adolescents. It has been found that adolescents who feel warmth and responsiveness in their association with their parents tend to display less depression, anxiety, and problematic behaviors compared to their counterparts. Additionally, adolescents who encounter rejection and high levels of conflict within their families tend to display more mental distress and vulnerability to internalizing and externalized disorders.

Peer Relations Have Also Been Investigated Extensively as Key Factors Contributing to Mental Health Outcomes of Adolescents. Findings from studies suggest that supportive peer relationships make a positive contribution to self-concept, emotional regulation, and life satisfaction. Teenagers who experience high levels of support within their peer relationships are less likely to experience depressive symptomatology and are more likely to experience high levels of emotional resilience. On the other hand, peer relationship problems defined as rejection, victimization through peer support relationships can lead to poor mental health outcomes defined as depression, anxiety disorders, loneliness, and suicidal thoughts.

## Identified Gaps

While The Literature Is Increasingly Robust, Recent Studies Also Highlight Some Limitations And Areas Needing More Research:

- **Causality And Longitudinal Evidence Is Limited.** Many Studies Are Cross-Sectional (Snapshot At One Time), Limiting Inferences About Causality Or Developmental Trajectories.
- **Mixed Findings Under Stress / Adversity / Unusual Contexts.** As Seen During The Covid-19 Pandemic, Peer Relationships Did Not Always Buffer Mental Health Problems, Suggesting That Under Certain Stressors, Friendship Quality Alone May Not Suffice.
- **Intervention Evaluation Still Sparse.** Although Friendship-Based Interventions Show Promise, Systematic Evaluation Is Limited; More Randomized Controlled Trials (Rcts) And Long-Term Follow-Ups Are Needed To Understand The Sustainability Of Effects.
- **Mechanisms Not Always Clear.** While Associations Are Documented (E.G. Peer Support → Well-Being), Fewer Studies Tease Apart Psychological Mechanisms (Why And How Peer/Family Relationships Lead To Better Mental Health: E.G. Improved Emotion Regulation, Social Skills, Sense Of Belonging, Meaning In Life).

## Methodology:

### Research Design

Correlational-Predictive Quantitative Design

### Population

Adolescents Aged 12–19 Years In Schools Or Communities

### Sample Size

100-120

### Sampling Method

Simple Random Sampling

## Variables And Operational Definitions

Independent Variable (IV): Healthy Interpersonal Relationships

Definition :

Quality Of Positive, Supportive, Emotionally Healthy Interactions With Parents, Peers, And Teachers.

Measurement Tools :

Functional Ideographic Assessment Template- Questionnaire, Short Form – Fiat-Q-Sf

It Is Used To Assess A Person's Interpersonal Functioning And Relationship Difficulties Across Five Key Areas: Asserting Needs, Communication (Giving/Receiving Feedback), Conflict, Emotional Expression, And Interpersonal Closeness/Disclosure. It Helps Therapists Identify Specific Problems In Relationships And Track Improvements, Guiding Treatment By Highlighting Which Areas Of A Client's Social Interaction Need Attention.

## Dependent Variable (DV): Mental Wellness

### Definition :

Psychological Well-Being Is Reflected In Emotional Stability, Positive Functioning, Resilience, And The Absence Of Distress.

### Measurement Tool

- Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (Wemwbs)

It Is Used To Measure Positive Mental Health (Wellbeing) In A Population, Not Just The Absence Of Illness, Helping To Evaluate Mental Health Promotion Programs, Monitor Population Wellbeing Levels, And Understand How Factors Like Age, Status, Interventions Affect How People Feel And Function Well.

### Data Collection Procedure

1. Secure Permissions And Ethical Approval.
2. Collect Consent From Parents And Assent From Adolescents.
3. Ensure Privacy And Confidentiality During Completion.
4. Administer Standardized Questionnaires (10-15 Minutes)
5. Collect And Securely Store Completed Surveys.

### Results

Descriptive Statistics Were Computed For The Fiat–Q–Sf And The Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well Being Scale (Wemwbs). Scores Were Calculated By Averaging Item Responses, With Higher Scores Indicating Greater Interpersonal Difficulties On The Fiat–Q–Sf And Higher Psychological Well Being On The Wemwbs.

Participants Reported Moderate Levels Of Interpersonal Functioning Difficulties ( $M = 3.31$ ,  $Sd = 0.59$ ) And Moderate Psychological Well Being ( $M = 3.11$ ,  $Sd = 0.67$ ).

Internal Consistency Reliability Analysis Indicated Good Reliability For Both Measures. The Fiat–Q–Sf Demonstrated A Cronbach's Alpha Of .81, While The Wemwbs Demonstrated A Cronbach's Alpha Of .83.

A Pearson Product–Moment Correlation Was Conducted To Examine The Relationship Between Interpersonal Functioning And Psychological Well Being.

The Correlation Between Fiat–Q–Sf And Wemwbs Was Negative But Not Statistically Significant,  $R(105) = -.15$ ,  $P = .12$ .

## Scoring And Measures

**Fiat–Q–Sf.** The Functional Idiographic Assessment Template – Short Form Assesses Interpersonal Functioning Across Domains Including Emotional Expression, Closeness, Conflict Management, And Assertiveness. Items Are Rated On A 6 Point Likert Scale Ranging From 1 (Strongly Disagree) To 6 (Strongly Agree). Higher Scores Indicate Greater Interpersonal Difficulties. All Required Reverse Scored Items Were Corrected Prior To Analysis.

**Wemwbs.** The Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well Being Scale Measures Positive Mental Health, Including Optimism, Emotional Stability, And Social Connectedness. Items Are Rated On A 5 Point Scale Ranging From 1 (None Of The Time) To 5 (All Of The Time). Higher Scores Indicate Greater Psychological Well Being.

## Discussions

In the current research, the linking factor was the connection between interpersonal relations during the adolescent stage and the state of the subjects' mental well-being. Although the correlation was not significant, the negative sign reveals that there can be an inverse relation between the two variables, in the sense that as the subjects' interpersonal relations issues intensify, the mental well-being gets lower.

Supportive associations offered by parents, peers, and teachers are, therefore, important for the development of emotional control, resilience, and social competency during the adolescent stage. The association between emotional support and competence was also shown to be important for stress and developmental mastery in adolescents. The results support previous findings showing that social support is related to better emotional outcomes.

However, the non-significant result regarding the statistical significance of the factor indicates that the interpersonal relationship may not be the sole factor for the well-being of the adolescent. Based on Self-Determination Theory, psychological well-being will tend to remain steady in spite of the relationship tension if the psychological needs of the individual are satisfied. This reveals the possibility of the influence of the individual factor.

Overall, while the findings do not establish a strong predictive relationship, they underscore the importance of interpersonal relationships as one of several interconnected factors influencing adolescent psychological well-being.

## Conclusion

Adolescence is an important time when we experience a lot of emotional and social changes. This is when the people around us like our friends and family have an impact on how we develop as people. The study found that having relationships with others during adolescence makes a big difference in our mental health and how well we get along with others. Even though the connection between relationships and mental health was not extremely strong it is still important. Shows that the people we interact with every day like our friends, family and people we care about really help us feel good about ourselves. Adolescence and the relationships we have during this time play a role in our emotional well-being and adolescence is a time when we need support from the people, around us.

Supportive relationships are really good for adolescents because they give them a sense of belonging. Adolescents feel like they are part of something when they have relationships. They feel accepted. They feel safe emotionally. When adolescents feel like people are listening to them and they are valued and understood they are more likely to feel good about themselves. They are more likely to be able to deal with their emotions in a way.

The study found out that when adolescents can talk about their feelings and get help when they need it they are off. Emotional openness is like a shield that protects adolescents from feeling really bad. Adolescents who can be open about their feelings in their relationships can handle stress and anxiety and problems with friends better. Supportive relationships and emotional openness are very important, for adolescents. Adolescents need relationships to feel safe and to be able to talk about their feelings.

The role of interactions is really important for good mental health. When people are kind and understanding it helps teenagers deal with school work figuring out who they are and what others think of them. Supportive interactions make teenagers feel more stable. They also learn important skills like being kind to others working together and talking to people in a good way. These skills are necessary for teenagers to get along with others for a time. Supportive interactions and mental health go hand in hand. Supportive interactions are crucial, for good mental health.

Conflict is a part of life and healthy conflict resolution is really important. When people are teenagers they are going to disagree with each other and misunderstand each other.. If they are in relationships where people talk to each other with respect and try to solve problems together then they can learn how to deal with conflict in a good way.

Healthy conflict resolution and conflict resolution like this helps teenagers become emotionally mature. It also helps them to not use ways of dealing with their problems. This means they are more likely to be happy and healthy. Healthy conflict resolution is very important, for teenagers. It helps them to have better lives.

The connection between people and their mental health is not that big of a deal.. It is always there and that is what matters. This means that having relationships with people even if they are small can really add up over time. So it is an idea to make sure people feel safe and supported at home in school and with their friends. This can really help teenagers feel good about themselves. Mental health and interpersonal relationships are important to think about. Having relationships can make a big difference, in mental health over time.

In conclusion, this study emphasizes the importance of encouraging positive relationships during adolescence as a foundation for healthy mental and social growth. By fostering emotional expression, supportive interactions, and effective conflict resolution, caregivers, educators, and mental health professionals can significantly impact adolescents' psychological well-being. Future research can explore these topics in more depth, but the current findings show that relationships have a vital and lasting influence on adolescents' lives.

## **Limitations**

This study was limited because it was based on correlation design, relied upon self-report measures, and spanned all ages, which might have blurred any development-related discrepancies. Cultural factors were also not examined in this study.

## Recommendations

For Schools:

Strengthen Teacher-Student Supportive Interactions

For Parents:

Improve Communication And Emotional Support

For Counselors:

Promote Social Skills, Peer Bonding

For Future Research:

Future Research Should Employ Longitudinal Designs, Examine Specific Relationship Types, And Explore

Moderating Variables Such As Resilience And Emotional Intelligence. Incorporating Qualitative Methods May Further Enrich Understanding Of Interpersonal Experiences.

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