

Teen break-ups occur independent of how well couples handle disagreements

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Adults who resolve and recover from conflict are known to be happier in their romantic relationships but the same does not hold true for teen romances, according to research published April 17 in the open access journal *PLOS ONE* by Thao Ha and colleagues from the Behavioural Science Institute of Radboud University Nijmegen, Netherlands.

The authors observed 14-16-year olds in romantic relationships dealing with conflicts over issues such as cheating, experiencing jealousy and parental rules about dating three times over a period of several years. Statistical analysis of these relationships showed that the likelihood of a couple breaking up was independent of how well or poorly they handled or resolved these disagreements, and teens that were capable of better resolution were not more likely to stay together over time.

These results contrast with previous studies of adult and late adolescent relationships. The authors suggest that this may be because of differences in [relationship goals](#), as younger teen couples are likely to focus more on shared recreational activities and peer approval than on long-term commitment. Thus, they conclude that conflict resolution and recovery may become more important in [relationship satisfaction](#) during late adolescence and adulthood, rather than the mid-teens.

More information: Ha T, Overbeek G, Lichtwarck-Aschoff A, Engels RCME (2013) Do Conflict Resolution and Recovery Predict the Survival of Adolescents' Romantic Relationships? *PLOS ONE* 8(4): e61871.
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