



## An Intervention to Reduce Relationship Violence

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With the growing recognition that dating violence, even in its most subtle form, can have deleterious impacts on those victimized, there have been efforts made to intervene early to reduce this scourge. Given that children begin developing romantic relationships in early adolescence, investigators have contemplated ways to meaningfully intervene among this age group to mitigate relationship violence. In an article we are early-releasing this month in *Pediatrics* ([10.1542/peds.2021-052880](https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2021-052880)), Temple et al find that a demographically diverse sample of seventh graders who participated in a modified health-based curriculum, “The Fourth R”, had a self-reported reduction in perpetrating adolescent relationship abuse one year later as compared to their peers who participated in the standard curriculum. The authors use the term, “adolescent relationship abuse” to mean sexual, physical, or psychological manifestations of violence. Abuse was measured using four questions from the Conflict in Adolescent Dating Relationships Inventory”. There were nearly 2,300 students enrolled in 24 different Texas public middle schools that were able to submit the pre- and post- intervention questionnaires. Although the modified curriculum also purports to teach lessons on injury prevention and substance use, the authors admit that there was no statistically significant difference in self-reported behaviors in those domains one year later. However, the authors are continuing to collect data as part of a larger, three-year study to determine if the reduction in relationship violence persists and/or whether there are any significant differences in other outcomes (injury prevention, substance use, etc.).

While these findings are intriguing enough on their own, it will be interesting to see whether there are long-lasting reductions in relationship violence observed in subsequent years. This study reminds us of the need to counsel our patients starting in early adolescence on how they can foster healthy relationships among their peers and significant others.

**Related Links:**

- [Dating Violence and Peer Victimization Among Male, Female, Transgender, and Gender-Expansive Youth](#)
- [Predicting Teen Dating Violence Perpetration](#)
- [Emergency Department Alcohol Intervention: Effects on Dating Violence and Depression](#)
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