

New study examines on/off relationships and 'sex with an ex' among teenagers and young adults

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A new study finds that nearly half of older teenagers and young adults break up and get back together with previous dating partners and over half of this group have sex as part of the reconciliation process. This study was recently published in the *Journal of Adolescent Research*.

Researchers Sarah Halpern-Meekin, Wendy Manning, Peggy Giordano and Monica Longmore studied data on 792 daters and cohabiters ages 17 to 24, also known as "emerging adults." The researchers studied two relationship patterns specifically – reconciliation with an ex, or breaking up and getting back together, and "sex with an ex," when couples break up, yet remain sexually involved.

Study authors found that approximately 44% of emerging adults who had been in a [romantic relationship](#) in the past two years had experienced at least one reconciliation with an ex romantic partner and 53% of those who reported reconciliations also reported having sex with their ex. Additionally, [racial minorities](#) in particular were even more likely to experience reconciliation or [sexual relationships](#) with previous romantic partners.

The study authors discussed the implications of reconciliations with previous [romantic partners](#): "Emerging adults who reconcile may be prone to a behavior pattern that involves cycling through relationship formation... Furthermore, having sex with an ex may be problematic

because former partners can have difficulty moving on from an old relationship or building new romantic attachments."

More information: "Relationship Churning in Emerging Adulthood: On/Off Relationships and Sex with an Ex"

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