

# An Overview of Youth Health in Montreal

UNDERSTAND, MOBILIZE, TAKE ACTION



## Intimate Partner Relationships

Intimate partner relationships during adolescence contribute positively to development, identity formation, and the acquisition of social skills. This period also represents a critical window of opportunity for prevention, as early romantic and sexual experiences can have a lasting impact on the course of one's relationships. When marked by violence, these relationships can have a significant negative impact on young people's well-being, overall health, and romantic relationships.

### HIGHLIGHTS

In Montreal, 34% of young people have been in a romantic relationship in the past year, and 21% have had consensual sex.



**A significant proportion of young people report having experienced violence in their intimate partner relationships:**

- **38%** of young people report having experienced violence in their romantic relationships, a trend that has been on the rise since 2010–2011.
- **8%** of young people report having experienced one or more instances of forced sex. This trend has been on the rise since 2010–2011.
- **Girls+** report experiencing violence more often than **boys+**, and certain groups within Montreal's population are particularly vulnerable to violence.



**Various factors can play a protective role against violence in romantic relationships. In fact, it appears to be less common among young people who have:**

- Flourishing mental health
- High self-esteem
- Strong interpersonal and social skills
- Strong social support systems (family, peers, school, community)

Intimate partner violence among adolescents is a major public health issue in Montreal. Various preventive measures are already being implemented in schools and community settings, but their scope, visibility, and support need to be strengthened. Sustained political and financial support is essential to ensure the long-term viability and effectiveness of the initiatives undertaken.

In a rapidly changing environment marked by emerging challenges, it is essential to consider how to adapt practices so that they remain safe and effective. The active involvement of young people in the design and evaluation of interventions is a key factor in better addressing their needs and taking their realities into account.

**Expanding early and coordinated interventions can help a generation of young people develop healthy, equitable, and non-violent relationships, thereby contributing to a lasting reduction in violence in interpersonal relationships.**

