

Identity Consolidation and Health Risk Behaviors in College Students

Seth J. Schwartz, PhD ; Larry F. Forthun, PhD; Russell D. Ravert, PhD;
Byron L. Zamboanga, PhD; Adriana J. Umaña-Taylor, PhD; Beryl J. Filton, MA;
Su Yeong Kim, PhD; Liliana Rodriguez, PhD; Robert S. Weisskirch, PhD, MSW;
Michael Vernon, PhD; Yuliya Shneyderman, MS; Michelle K. Williams, PhD;
V. Bede Agocha, PhD; Monika Hudson, DM

Objectives: To investigate the protective role of personal identity consolidation against health risk behaviors in college-attending emerging adults. **Methods:** A multisite sample of 1546 college students completed measures of personal identity consolidation and recent risk behavior engagement. **Results:** Multivariate Poisson regression indicated that personal identity consolidation was negatively related to binge drinking, illicit drug use, sexual risk behaviors, and risky driving. These find-

ings were consistent across gender, ethnicity, and place of residence. **Conclusions:** A consolidated sense of personal identity may protect college-attending emerging adults from health-compromising behaviors. Health professionals could incorporate an identity development component into college health programming.

Key words: identity, alcohol use, illicit drug use, unsafe sex, impaired driving, college students

Am J Health Behav. 2010;34(2):214-224
