

their feelings are less vulnerable, and they begin to demonstrate the more mature emotions of later adolescence. Whereas early adolescents react immediately and emotionally, older adolescents can control their emotions until socially acceptable times and places for expression present themselves. They are still subject to heightened emotion, and when it is expressed, their behavior reflects feelings of insecurity, tension, and indecision.

As sources of credible information, support, and encouragement, nurses can help adolescents cope with the changes and challenges they face. To promote both emotional health and psychosocial adjustment, nurses and other health care professionals can encourage adolescents to develop (1) skills to cope with stress and change and (2) skills to become involved in personally meaningful activities.

Intentional and Unintentional Injury

Injuries kill more adolescents in the United States than any other single cause, with unintentional injury accounting for 48% of deaths among teens 12 to 19 years old between 1996 and 2005 ([Blum and Qureshi, 2011](#)). Motor vehicle crashes are the single greatest source of unintentional injury and death in young people. Many factors contribute to the higher rate of crashes among teen drivers, including the lack of driving experience and maturity, driving too fast, using alcohol, and using cell phones to talk or text. Homicide, a form of intentional injury, is the second leading cause of death among all adolescents in the United States ([Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012](#)). Homicides among adolescents mostly involve firearms; many adolescents report easy access to a gun.

Injuries also account for substantial morbidity among adolescents. During adolescence, peak physical, sensory, and psychomotor function gives teenagers a feeling of strength and confidence that they have never experienced before. Their propensity for risk-taking behavior plus feelings of indestructibility makes adolescents especially prone to injuries. The leading causes of injury-related morbidity among adolescents include vehicular crashes, firearms, drowning, poisoning, burns, and falls. Some of the developmental characteristics of teenagers and injury prevention suggestions are outlined in [Box 15-3](#).