



**FIG 15-4** Romantic relationships are important for most adolescents. (©2011 [Photos.com](#), a division of Getty Images. All rights reserved.)

An integrated sexual identity often emerges during late adolescence as individuals incorporate sexual experiences, feelings, and knowledge. For most, this identity is consistent with their own physical and mental capacities and with societal limits and expectations. Most adolescents identify themselves as being predominantly heterosexual; however, about 1% of high school students identify themselves as bisexual or homosexual and 10% are unsure ([Steever, Francis, Gordon, et al, 2014](#)). Whatever their sexual orientation, most teenagers possess the capacity to have intimate relationships that satisfy the emotional and sexual needs of both partners.

**Sexual orientation** is an important aspect of sexual identity. Sexual orientation is defined as a pattern of sexual arousal or romantic attraction toward persons of the opposite gender (heterosexual), of the same gender (homosexual), or of both genders