

The word resilience seems to **be used everywhere these days**. Friends talk about: she is a resilient person. Business people talk about building a resilient company? So, what does resilience actually mean? How is it conceptualized in research that study people over time?

In this review we identify a lot of confusion in the literature and group them into **three approaches to resilience**.

The first considers resilience as a trait: – **this person has what it takes**. Thus, resilience resides in the person and is measured by so-called resiliency personality scales. This approach ignores the context: the same person may be resilient at work but shows low resilience in social relationships.

The second approach to resilience looks at outcome. Why are some **people doing better in mental health than expected considering the adversity they have experienced**? The focus is on identifying factors **that explain the better-than-expected outcomes**. Outcome resilience may be due to external factors such as social support but also internal factors such as self-control.

The third approach focusses on understanding the process of resilience. Are there factors **that promote better outcomes** for all humans whether they have experienced adversity or not? We call factors that benefit everyone **promotive factors**. For example, such a promotional factor is being born into a family with high socioeconomic status. In contrast, **protective factors** refer to a process where those **who experienced adversity, for example, maltreatment or very preterm birth, may benefit disproportionately more from factors** such as parenting or social support than those who did not experience

adversity. **Protective factors moderate the effect of adversity on outcome.**

The review then outlines in detail how we can statistically test resilience as **trait, outcome, or process**.

Our review closes with recommendations on conceptualization of resilience, terminology, methodological approaches and how to interpret results. **We hope that our recommendations will lead to more structured approaches to the study of resilience in future and a common language when we talk about resilience.**