

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 promotive 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 **disproportionally 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.**