

Glossary of Terms in Resilience Science by Ann S. Masten

Adversity	Challenging experiences that threaten function, development, or survival of an individual or system
ACEs	Adverse childhood experiences, usually referring to the measure developed by Felitti and others (1998) for the ACE study
Assets	Advantages or resources associated with positive (desirable) outcomes; predictors of positive outcome; also known as promotive factors
Competence	Capability for effective function in the environment, potential or manifested
Developmental cascade	Spreading effects over time across systems or domains of function that result from interactions in dynamic systems and cumulatively alter development
Developmental tasks	Psychosocial milestones or accomplishments expected of people of different ages in a given cultural and historical context; Common developmental tasks include bonding with caregivers, walking, talking, learning to read, getting along with other people, and caring for one's children
Dose or risk gradient	A graph showing a pattern of rising problems or undesirable outcomes as the level of trauma, exposure to disaster, or number of cumulative risk factors or ACEs increases
Late bloomers	Individuals from high-risk backgrounds who begin to manifest resilience later in adolescence or adulthood following a period of maladjustment or problems
Promotive factor	Predictor of positive outcome under most conditions, whether risk is low or high
Protective factor	Moderator of risk or adversity associated with better outcomes particularly when risk or adversity is high
Resilience	Capacity (potential or manifested) of a system to adapt successfully to challenges that threaten system function, survival, or development; positive adaptation in the context of significant adversity exposure
Risk	Higher probability of a negative (undesired) outcome
Risk factor	Indicator of risk for specified negative outcome in a population

Stress	Effects of disturbances in an individual or system that disrupt adaptive functions; response of a dynamic system to challenges or demands
Stressors	Events or experiences that typically result in stress on a system
Turnaround cases	Individuals who show a striking change in direction of the life course; In resilience science, a pathway indicating dramatic improvement in adjustment
Vulnerability	Individual or system susceptibility or sensitivity specific to harmful consequences from threats or disturbances; moderator of adversity or risk that results in higher than typical negative effects