

Abstract

This symposium aims to present different research on adolescence and youth underlying the relation between psychopathology and normative experiences, showing how strengthening positive and optimal resources/characteristics in youth lives can prevent psychopathological trajectories, reinforcing positive development.

The symposium integrates four presentations from four different countries aimed at showing the interface between positive and negative life features (individual or contextual) and how to manage them in order to potentialize youth's optimal functioning. Research often focuses on psychopathology and risk factors, ignoring the well-being and protective factors for adolescents and youth.

Altogether, these studies show how the domains of psychopathology and well-being, and factors of both risk and resilience may, at the same time, contribute to the development of mental health problems or to the promotion of positive development and optimal experiences in these populations.

With these aims in mind this symposium covers main topics as emotion regulation, affective experiences, and optimal experience, mental health problems and coping strategies, psychopathology and risk factors as well as well-being and protective factors, or education pathways, looking into normative or clinical adolescents, and marginalized youth, throughout different life contexts. All presentations underline an ecological and developmental perspective in order to improve knowledge in developmental processes in adolescence/youth, providing new insights to understand both risk and resilience considering both internal and contextual processes.

Researchers and practitioners can profit from these studies, and a proactive and useful discussion can emerge highlighting evidence-based guidelines to promote positive development and optimal functioning in adolescence.