



THE JACOBS CENTER
RESEARCH SEMINAR SERIES

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INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITY

The notion that some people are more affected than others by the same experience is widely embraced in most fields of psychology and usually framed in a Diathesis-Stress perspective: some people are more vulnerable to adverse experiences as a function of inherent risk characteristics (e.g., personality, genes). More recently, it has been suggested in the Differential Susceptibility framework (Belsky & Pluess, 2009) that individuals may vary in their environmental sensitivity more generally: some are more affected by both negative as well as positive influences. Based on this now empirically well-supported proposition, I will introduce the concept of Vantage Sensitivity which refers to variation in response to exclusively positive experiences (Pluess & Belsky, 2013). After introducing these three differences perspectives and presenting empirical evidence for both differential susceptibility and vantage sensitivity featuring behavioral, physiological, neuroimaging and genetic factors as moderators of a wide range of experiences ranging from family environment and psychotherapy to educational intervention, I will point out important conceptual differences between the concepts before discussing potential mechanisms and practical implications.

Friday, July 19, 2019, 10:30 h

At the Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development
Andreasstrasse 15, 4th floor, AND 4.19, 8050 Zürich