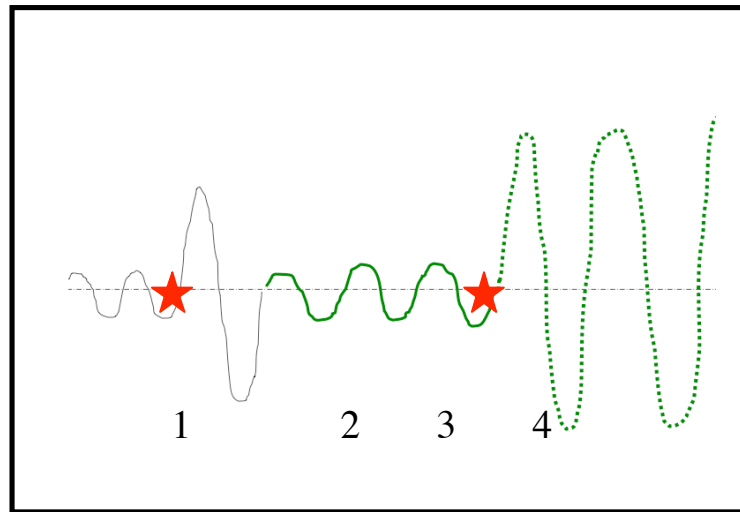


The role of Stress, Trauma, & Early Life Events in Origins of Symptoms & Chronic Illness

4 Phases of an Origins Model



1. Predisposition (to a symptom or chronic illness)

- appears to occur in early life
- is influenced by trauma/stress, which imprint a **conditioned response** in the nervous system
- occurs during pregnancy, birth, or in the first years of life
- influences parts of the organism undergoing greatest development (critical period programming)
- may impact genes by turning them on or off

2. Latency Period

- Represents a time frame during which conditioned responses strengthen, and physiological/emotional changes occur that are not yet visible
- the classic example of latency involves posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which can occur days, months or years following a traumatic event
- also referred to as “kindling” in the trauma literature (stimulation of nervous system patterns)
- kindling of conditioned patterns (programming) is influenced by events that stress the system, such as trauma, increasingly mild and seemingly unrelated stressors, and other environmental factors (pollution, infections, etc...); the greater the intensity or frequency of stressors, the more rapid the kindling and the shorter the latency period;
- life experiences that are supportive / resourcing / or otherwise non-stressful, may lengthen the latency period, delay the onset of illness, or fail to ever even stimulate the conditioned response (no illness)
- latency periods can last 10 years + in type 1 diabetes; 30 years in Alzheimer’s; 7 yrs in lupus;

2. Unmasking or ‘Reinstatement’ of the Conditioned Pattern

- a final stressful event stimulates the conditioned response and makes it visible, dominant, recurrent

4. Symptoms Onset: days, months, years after the “final stressor”

- Clinical symptoms are unmasked, representing onset of new nervous system patterns (ie: conditioning)
- Symptoms represent an intelligent, albeit magnified and prolonged “survival strategy” or defense response
- The more severe the symptom: 1) the more intense the traumatic experience and perception of life threat, 2) the earlier the event occurred, or 3) the greater the history of stress and triggers during the latency