

# The Role of Stress, Trauma and Life Events in Chronic Illness

## **A Look at Arthritis**

with Veronique Mead, MD, MA  
Somatic Psychotherapist



**Why are symptoms so variable in different people?**

**Why arthritis and not asthma or diabetes or better health?**

**Stress triggers my arthritis – why?**

**Why do I have pain when I feel good?**

**My symptoms began soon after my a great loss –could there be a connection?**

**Why do my symptoms vary from day-to-day, and moment-to-moment?**

*We are increasingly able to understand how emotions, life experiences, and traumatic events affect the body as well as the mind. Indeed, mind and body are part of a single whole and are not separate. In our time together, you will be introduced to a different way of thinking about disease and we will explore the effects of the mind on the body through a guided experiential exercise.*

*We have come to realize in the past 15 to 25 years of research that life events play a vital role in shaping our nervous and immune systems. Experiences that are stressful, especially if they occur early in life, can program our bodies to react with pain, inflammation, and other symptoms when they otherwise should not. This appears to be true for many diseases and this presentation describes a theoretical model for understanding the role of life events in affecting risk for chronic illnesses such as rheumatoid arthritis, type 1 diabetes, and inflammatory bowel disease such as ulcerative colitis and Crohn's, among others.*

*These perspectives are useful because they help explain why there is so much variability in symptoms from day to day and from person to person. They also suggest that we may be able to address our symptoms by working with our minds and emotions, as well as our bodies. This is a new paradigm for thinking about the intelligence that lies behind exacerbations and disease, and draws from extensive scientific research.*

---

*Veronique Mead is a Somatic Psychotherapist in Boulder who has a special interest in working with people who are coping with unusual symptoms or chronic illness. Her work integrates the growing scientific understanding of the brain, and the influence of body mind interactions on symptom expression and resolution. She is published in this area and her background as a family physician informs this work.*

**For more information:** • **Veronique Mead** [www.veroniquemead.com](http://www.veroniquemead.com) (303) 527-0551