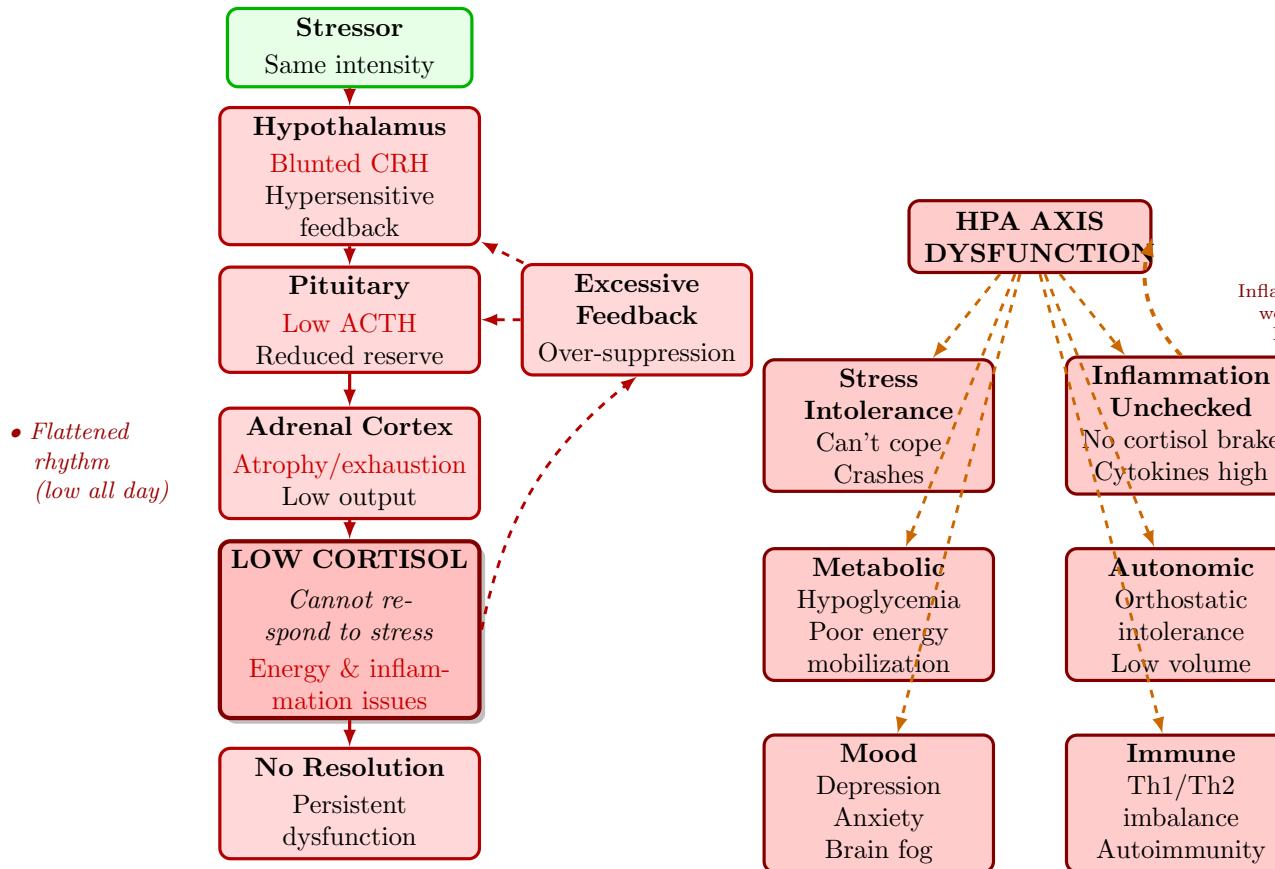


ME/CFS: HPA Axis Dysregulation



Blunted stress response:

- Hypersensitive negative feedback over-suppresses HPA axis
- Low cortisol → cannot mobilize energy for stress response
- Unchecked inflammation, metabolic instability, autonomic dysfunction
- Flattened circadian cortisol rhythm (low throughout day)

Chronic inflammation feeds back to further worsen HPA function.

Figure 1: ME/CFS HPA axis dysregulation with blunted response and systemic consequences.