

## Women and Transitions: The Theory of Turning Points

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### Introduction

A migraine attack, a banking crisis or the point of no return for climate change; all these seemingly different phenomena have at least one important thing in common. They suppose the transition from one stable state to another. The climate or the banking system may seem stable and capable of withstanding small or large crises. However, they can deteriorate progressively until reaching a point of inflection, like a chair that stands on two legs but until, with a slight push, it falls from one side [1].

Fall into depression is a turning point. The transition into motherhood and its encounter with health care service is a turning point [2]. Or transition into motherhood with a major disease [3]. Or, transitions to end-of-life care for patients with chronic critical illness [4]. "Turning point" is a point of inflection, or stage or milestone or change or a decisive, crucial, radical, important, critical, historical or key moment. It is a decisive "transition" [5]. Turning point or transition is a key concept in the developmental life course approach.

Often, a turning point involves a particular event of the experience or awareness that brings as a result, changes in a certain direction or a persistent path to long term [6]. The healthcare transitions, or demographic, epidemiological, psychological, social, economic, public health, the key political events, crises, or decisions or regulations in the health system are risky times or turning points that can make (to the patient and his entire family) and to become more vulnerable or stronger. The concept of transitions has its roots in several disciplines, in addition to in the History, such as Anthropology, Sociology, Psychology and Business. The transitions are also a central theme, among other health disciplines, in the family medicine. Although there are various definitions of the concept, the majority agrees that transitions involve a process that eventually produces the transformation of people and contexts [5,7].

These changes are not linear, you can go forward, pass the tipping point and then go back, but are there times that an earlier state may be unrecoverable. There are situations in which you can never recover. Such as a heart attack, that can be understood as turning point. But there are also many recoverable systems, even if you do not return exactly to the same state. Sometimes this recovery can take a lot of time. If you melt the Greenland ice, recovering it will require thousands of years [1].

### Women Are At the Center of All Life Transitions

Women are at the center of all life transitions whether the transitions are within the family or in community, such as maturation,

or because of national modernization or a move to an urban center, or because of relocation to another nation. However, women's roles in these transitions are ignored at best and misrepresented at worst [8]. There are four basic approaches, from family medicine, about transitions or turning points in women:

### Transitions and life cycle

The first basic approach to transitions or turning points is in the life cycle of individual and family. This cycle has implications for therapeutic work with families and women, because these critical periods of change and transition in families (Becoming partner, becoming parents, couples with children of school age, families with independent children, and family in later life), may involve the emergence of specific health's problems [9,10].

### Transitions, "trauma" and "stress"

Major life changes and role transitions, such as job loss, divorce, pre-marital break-up, retirement, widowhood, children moving out of the house, first marriage, job promotion, and having a child, are often stressors that create a generalized demand for adjustment by the individual. Empirically, these transitions have been shown to produce a wide range of effects on mental health with some differences in impact by gender [11]. One added stress is particularly concerning during transition to motherhood. Further, in chronic diseases, as type 1 diabetes mellitus (T1DM) there is a higher level of stress, for example because of managing blood glucose levels which is intense and difficult for women with T1DM and can result in hyper- or hypoglycaemia-related emergencies [3,12].

### Transitions and life course perspective

Another approach of turning points is from the concept of "path" or life course perspective. The turning points bring as result changes in a certain direction or persistent long-term trajectory [13]. Gender and other life course markers, like age, are associated with a range of psychosocial and structural attributes transitions which affect health regarding to factors such as marriage, leisure, mothers' transitions, etc. [14].

### Transitions and the phenomena of "rites de passage"

In medicine, the most obvious sense of transition is the step from "being healthy to being sick"; is the step that occurs with the medical diagnosis [15].

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