

## The Fennell Four Phase Model: Gender Roles in Women Adapting to Chronic Illness

Sara Rieder Bennett, Ph.D.

Patricia Fennell, MSW, LCSW-R

Chronic illnesses are among the most prevalent and demanding challenges in healthcare today. Estimates suggest that chronic illness is the leading cause of death worldwide and the leading cause of illness, disability, and death in the United States. Internationally, between 15.6% and 19.4% of people have disabilities (WHO, 2011), and these numbers have been rising with increases in world population and improvements in public health and medical care that stabilize formerly fatal illnesses (Fennell, 2003). Though women typically live longer without illness than men, the likelihood of women experiencing chronic illnesses is higher (Anderson, 2010). Women are also more prone to experience disability as a result of chronic illness, to experience multiple concurrent chronic illnesses, and are twice as likely as men to serve as caregivers to those with chronic illness (Anderson; Wendel, 2001). Given the multiple roles of women in families and society, the presenters examine gender role norms and ideologies that come into play when women adapt to chronic illness. Women continue to serve as primary caregivers for children, aging parents, and partners, and adapting to chronic illness in herself or a significant other complicates these roles (FCA, 2003). This workshop will include an overview of chronic illness, including exploration of the paradigm shift from acute to chronic care, static versus dynamic illnesses, four emerging groupings of chronic illness, primary mental and physical chronic illnesses, and feminist and sociocultural permutations of illness (Fennell & Rieder Bennett, 2013). The Fennell Four Phase Model (FFPM) will be presented and participants will have the opportunity to engage in structured discussion, activity, and role-plays to increase competence in treating women with chronic illness (Fennell, 2012).

### References

- Anderson, G. (2010). *Chronic Care: Making the Case for Ongoing Care*. Retrieved from <http://www.rwjf.org/pr/product.jsp?id=50968>
- Family Caregiving Association (2003). *Family Caregiving Association: Women and Caregiving: Facts and Figures*. Retrieved from [http://www.caregiver.org/jsp/content\\_node.jsp?nodeid=892](http://www.caregiver.org/jsp/content_node.jsp?nodeid=892)
- Fennell, P.A. (2012). *The chronic illness workbook: Strategies and solutions for taking back your life*. Albany N.Y.: Albany Health Publishing.
- Fennell, P.A. (2003). *Managing chronic illness: The four phase approach*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Fennell, P.A., & Rieder Bennett, S. (2013). Chronic illness. *Oxford Bibliographies Online*. doi: 10.1093/OBO/9780195389678-0160.
- Wendell, S. (2001). 'Unhealthy Disabled: Treating Chronic Illnesses as Disabilities,' *Hypatia*, 16, 17-33.
- World Health Organization. (2011). *World Report on Disability*. Retrieved from [http://www.who.int/disabilities/world\\_report/2011/report/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/report/en/index.html)