**Introduction:** The need to control escalating healthcare costs has led to numerous efforts by organizations to decrease cost including downsizing resulting in increased job vulnerability for all levels of the healthcare management workforce including nurse executives/managers. Previous research has suggested a variety of strategies that might turn involuntary turnover into a successful career transition for nurse executives. The purpose of this study is to explore the transition from job loss to re-employment among nurse executives/managers with a focus on placing job loss within the context of career transition theory. Results expand previous research focused on the experience of nurse executive job loss to include nurse managers.

**Method(s):** Career transition theory proposes that transitions are the “punctuations” and turning points that shape career outcomes. A process model of the career transition cycle has been proposed which includes preparation, encounter, adjustment, and stabilization. Careers are viewed as chains of transition cycles. The dynamics of transitions are explored in terms of affective content, modes of adjustment, continuity and change, and individual organization interaction (Nicholson & West, 1989). This study used a descriptive exploratory design. Long interviews with subjects were tape recorded, transcribed, and verified. Interview data were analyzed for content, themes and meanings within the context of career transition theory. A snowball sampling technique was used to identify nurse executives/managers who have experienced involuntary turnover, recovered and become re-employed in nursing. Interviews with 17 subjects were completed.

**Results:** Findings suggest that nurses’ transition and re-employment is consistent with the process model of the career transition cycle. Nurse executive and nurse manager experiences
with job loss vary in the understood reasons for the termination, the actual termination process and organizational/peer support post loss.

**Discussion & Conclusions:** Findings can provide a framework for individual career transitions and format for organizational problem solving related to systematic reduction in force, disengagement and turnover. Implications for nurses preparing to be executives/managers are discussed.

**Abstract History:**
This abstract has not been presented or accepted for presentation in whole or in part at the SNRS or other scientific meeting.

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