



## FTA Newsletter



# Climate change, concept or reality for family therapists?

*Olga Garcia Falceto*

In most places, climate change has gone from a distant concept to an almost daily reality. It is a daily reality if we consider the news that brings into our homes the increase in frequency and intensity of climate disasters around the seasons, like droughts and inundations, and high-temperature waves that take turns in the northern and the southern hemispheres.

Frequently in old days therapy sessions would become colloquially talking about the weather. This could, at present, be an entry to the subject. We could associate it with how calm or stormy is the “weather” at home.

But talking about how the family prepares its food seems to me one of the most promising avenues to deal with the family’s needed reorganization around climate change and the other planetary limits we are increasingly transgressing as a civilization (1). Around food preparation, the family experiences conflicts related to gender and intergenerational roles

as well as it is the scenario to think about how much red meat we are eating, how far away from home are the goods coming from, etc..., issues related to how high is the family's carbon print.

We must ask ourselves and the families we work with what can each of us change in our daily behavior to adapt to and mitigate global warming. And we sure must face the doubt about how important are our small actions. But, the reality is that we can do only as much as we can do, knowing that individual actions are not enough and that we need to add to collective actions.

Indeed there is much we can do as therapists. Our communities count on us. Often influential leaders consult us. Doing actively what we can is urgent, as median temperatures globally have already reached an increase of 1,5 degrees centigrade, which was expected to be the maximum increase reached in 2050.

As the São Paulo Declaration on Planetary Health (2) states, there is an urgent need for a “great transition (that) demands a rapid shift in how we produce and consume food, energy, and manufactured goods; requires rethinking the way we design and live in the world's cities; and insists we heal our relationship with nature and to each other”. If we as family therapists want to be truly systems-oriented in our practice, we must use a portion of our time with families to talk about how we are relating to Mother Earth.

(1) Richardson K, Steffen W, Lucht W, Bendtsen J, Cornell SE, Donges JF, et al. Earth beyond six of nine planetary boundaries. *Sci Adv.* 2023;9(37):eadh2458. doi: 10.1126/sciadv.adh2458.

(2) The São Paulo Declaration on Planetary Health Myers, Samuel S. et al. *The Lancet*, Volume 398, Issue 10308, 1299

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## Upcoming international events

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