Introduction
Leadership is a complex phenomenon, involving guiding and influencing others in a certain direction to achieve a specific goal (Borkowski, 2005). One of its main challenges is the process of transition to a leadership role. In an exploratory research, Brandão, Santos and Peres (2020) propose that this process has three phases: Learning, Autonomization and Consolidation. However, this usually undervalued process (Almeida, 2018) remains largely unknown. Given its emotional importance it is essential to explore in-depth the experience of leaders through this transition process.

Aim
This study explores the process of transition to a leadership role. Research questions:
- IQ1: What are the stages of the transition process?
- IQ2: What challenges do leaders face during the process?
- IQ3: How leaders manage the transition process?

Methodology
Qualitative exploratory and descriptive research, with a longitudinal single case study design. Data was gathered since January until May 2020, using a semi-structured interview, the Critical Incident Technique and the SISDAT Questionnaire.

Results
What are the stages of the transition process?
The transition occurs in 4 steps (Fig. 1), including the stages presented by Brandão and colleagues (2020): Learning, Autonomization and Consolidation. We also identified a prior stage - Reflection, which is similar to the “getting in” phase (Feldman, 1976), when the “to be leader” searches for information regarding the role, to identify if its competences are adequate to what is required in the function.

What challenges do leaders face during the process?
There were several challenges encountered in the transition process by the leader, notably:
- Learning - a time to adapt to the new role (Brandão et al., 2020), with doubts and challenges. Our leader had to: adapt to new tasks; learn to delegate; gain self-confidence; deal with people management issues (e.g., team conflicts); and manage personal requests.
- Autonomization - The leader has a broader notion of her role and tries to adjust the work method and the team to her need's assessment. Challenge: deal with the team's resistance to changes. Another important and contextual challenge was the adoption of teleworking in the team.
- Consolidation - The leader has adapted to the work environment and the role of leader, thus implementing changes she considers relevant. Challenge: team's resistance to changes, once again.

How do leaders manage the transition process?
Throughout the process, the leader mobilized several strategies, with self-regulation of the self being the most frequent, and care-seeking the least frequent. Table 1 shows, for example that when facing the challenge “Adaptation to new tasks” in the Learning phase (M2), our participant used the strategy “Careseeking”. Fight and caregiving, on the other hand, are associated with “Dealing with personal requests”, also in this stage.

Table 1. Strategies mobilized by challenge throughout the transition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges experienced</th>
<th>Learning</th>
<th>Autonomization</th>
<th>Consolidation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stages of the process</td>
<td>M2</td>
<td>M3 a.</td>
<td>M3 b.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptation to new tasks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Careseeking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning to delegate and trust</td>
<td>Self-regulation of the self and exploration behaviours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gaining self-confidence</td>
<td>Self-regulation of the self and exploration behaviours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Manage people</td>
<td>Self-regulation of the self and exploration behaviours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dealing with personal requests</td>
<td>Fight</td>
<td>Caregiving</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Switch to telecommuting</td>
<td>Fight</td>
<td>Caregiving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team resistance to changes</td>
<td>Fight</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion
The transition to a leadership position is a complex process and one that deserves greater focus. Organizations should support workers before and during the transition and future leaders need to learn on the challenges associated to the new role, developing skills and strategies that will allow them to manage the process with well-being (e.g., designing action plans or improving existing ones). This study shows the importance of the leader feeling supported when s/he is part of an organization. In view of the challenges faced during the process of adapting to the function, it is essential to have tools and resources to face them, since these challenges can trigger negative emotions. Our results enrich the scarce literature on this topic, opening to new investigations that look at the leader in a more humane and humanistic way, where emotions become more valued.

References