

## **Abstract**

This was a phenomenological study into the exploration of the impact of the mother-daughter relationship on the experience of a complex relationship with food. The relevant literature on this area is discussed and reviewed in relation to the findings of this research. Eight female students training to be Integrative Psychotherapists participated in semi-structured interviews. Analysis of the data revealed that mothers and the mother-daughter relationship impact in varying ways upon the relationship female clients have with food. Some effects are quite direct such as the passing on of food related attitudes and feeding practices (Waterhouse, 1997). Others are more symbolic and are concerned with managing, suppressing and expressing emotions (Pearlman, 2005; Orbach, 1986). This research also highlighted how food can be used to meet one's emotional needs. The findings were reflected upon and their implications for therapeutic practice and also the opportunity for further exploration.