

## Abstract

This study examines the ways that becoming a mother impacts a woman's understanding of her relationship with her own mother and early childhood. It uses Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to analyse interviews with five mothers. Building on the therapeutic and theoretical literature on motherhood, the research finds that early motherhood can be a period of intense psychological and emotional negotiation. This was captured in two superordinate themes. The theme of 'Remember and Return' identifies the ways that the vulnerability and liminality of labour transports women back to infancy and that the *doing* of motherhood revives memories of being parented. The theme of 'Reworking' draws together the ways that the relationship between adult-daughter and mother is renegotiated in this period and, in an original contribution to the literature, centres the challenge of holding of both unmet needs and a contextual understanding of motherhood. The research identifies an important role for relational developmental therapy in supporting, holding and processing this transition and provides how integrative psychotherapists can best work with this client group.