

# Adolescent Mothers' Experience of Parenting One Year After Delivery

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## Research Question

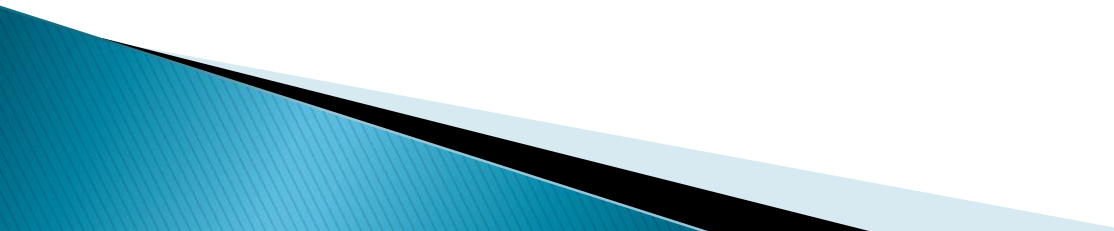
**What is the lived experience of ‘being a mother and a parent’ for adolescent mothers 12 months after delivery?**



# Research Design

- ▶ **Qualitative: Phenomenology approach**
- ▶ **Inclusion criteria**
  - Adolescent mothers up to age 19 years old
  - Delivery (CS or NSVD) of a healthy NB one year ago
  - Adolescent mother who can read, write, understand, & speak English
  - No documented medical or psychological problems
- ▶ **Setting**
  - Metropolitan area in northeast USA
  - Post partum maternal child clinic associated with a medical center

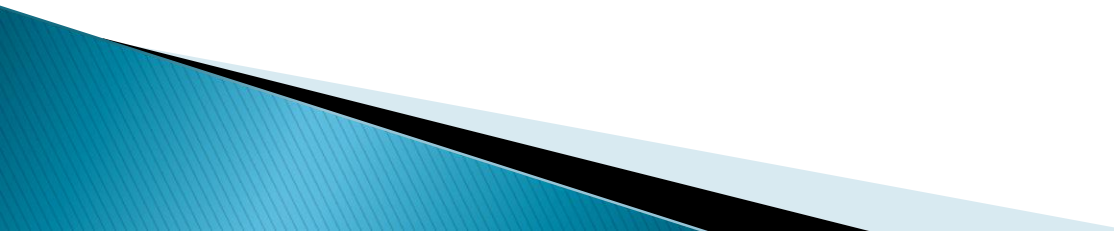
# Procedure

- ▶ **IRB approval**
  - ▶ **Data Collection involved the following:**
    - **Interview: demographic data**
    - **Focus group**
    - **Questionnaire**
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# Data Analysis

- ▶ Bracketing the researcher's opinions and / or feelings
- ▶ Lincoln & Guba (1985): the criteria for developing the *trustworthiness of qualitative inquiry*:
  - Credibility
  - Dependability
  - Confirmability
  - Transference
  - Authenticity
- ▶ Method of Data Analysis by Colaizzi (1978)
  - Line by line analysis and transcription
  - Numerous reading and note taking
  - Expert qualitative research review
  - Data saturation achieved to conclude study

# Themes

- ▶ The struggle to be a “good” parent
  - ▶ “Learning” everyday
  - ▶ “Caring” about my child
  - ▶ Being “me” is important
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# Theme 1: The struggle to be a “good” parent

*“I can be a voice for my child if I become more aware, flexible, and non-judgmental”|*

▶ Janise, age 16 years old:

“My son is small but not eating. Maybe he does not like some food, but I don’t think so, but how do I know?” I introduce foods but he does not take them. So he gets cranky and cries. Maybe it’s me. I told the nurse at the clinic. We will wait and see, but, ... guess what, he may have some food intolerances. So I am taking him for some tests next week.....”

# The struggle to be a “good parent”

- ▶ **Andy, age 19 years old:**

- **“Everyone tells me how to put my son down for sleep at night. No matter what I do he screams for a long time. What I do never works.... Is something wrong that I don’t see?. I bring him for a checkup. I am afraid to tell ‘them” (nurses at the clinic) he screams and does not sleep because I don’t know why or what to say. It ends up that he had a bad ear infection... now he is on medicine. I knew it had to be something, even though at times it can be frightening not to know.”**



## Theme 2: “Learning” everyday

*“I can be a better parent if I set a good example of doing the ‘right thing’*

▶ **Patty, age 17 years old:**

- **“I am learning all the time. I have to grow just like my baby has to grow. This never ends,...it goes on and on. It’s up to me to make it the best that I can...only when I grow up and set a good example will I be a ‘good parent’**

# “Learning” everyday

- ▶ Helena, age 17 years old:
  - “Today after I was out with my son and my friend and her baby, I felt like I was a real parent...a ‘good parent.’ Maybe I do know what I am doing when it counts. This is what happened,...her son was starting to choke on a teething cookie. I picked him up and pushed in his belly and tapped his back then he spit it up. We were in the park and everyone came around us and ‘cheered.’ Imagine that!... I learned this from a TV show and remembered it. I never thought I would use it.”

## Theme 3: “Caring” about my child

*“Having my child know I care and love her is important”*

▶ Suzanne, age 17:

- “My mom worked a lot,...she had to and I knew that. I never expected her to be at a school plays or fun days...I don’t think I every felt bad about that... that was the way it was...One day I came home from school with a fever and my throat was ‘killing’ me...mom sat down with me...we had some dinner...she held me in her arms,...I slept with her that night as she put a wet towel on my head, ...she kissed me,... she sang to me... I knew then without a doubt, she loved me and I was glad...nothing else mattered...I want to be that kind of mother and more....”

## Theme 4: Being “me” is important

*“Even though I am a parent what about being me?”*

▶ **Crystal, age 17 years old:**

- **“I want to finish school and get a ‘real job’ not just anything. I want to feel important as a person and a parent...it can happen but it will take time and a lot of work. My daughter is good, no trouble for a babysitter. I plan to get my GED and then be a hairdresser. I can even do this at home or part time in a shop. It is a dream now but I want to make it real someday soon. My sister is married with her own family and says she will help me. I live with my sister and her family. I am starting to really look into it. Maybe it is more than a dream. It makes me excited to think about it.**

# Being “me” is important

## ▶ Anita, age 18:

- “Someday I hope to have a ‘real man’ in my life and a family with more kids. Leo, is not the father I thought he would be. He is selfish. I don’t know everything but at least I realize it and try. He does not get it. He comes around less and less and barely looks at our son. He says he is too small and does not know what to do with our son. I feed my son, give him a bath, play with him, and put him to sleep,...then I go on the computer, this is my time. I want to be a pre-school teacher. I graduated high school and I will be going to the community college in the Fall. My family will help with baby sitting when I am at school. I can’t wait!”

# Discussion and Implications for Future Nursing Research

## ▶ Discussion

- Ongoing guidance, education, and support
- Informal discussions and activities for socialization
- Personal mentors
- The need for recognition for positive achievements

## ▶ Future Nursing Research

- Adolescent mothers who had a premature infant or an infant with medical problems and how are they adjusting a year later
- Adolescent father's and their roles in the lives of their children a year later
- How the adolescent mother is going forward and making positive changes in her life\*\*\*