

ABSTRACT

This exploratory qualitative study investigated young adult women's relationships with their mothers and informal kinship caregivers. The study explored how young adult women experienced their relationships with their maternal figures and the attachment patterns that emerged in their relationships. The sample consisted of seven black young adult women who were raised by their grandmothers or great-aunts. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data and a narrative analysis was employed to analyse the data. The findings of the study highlighted the impact of informal kinship care on participants' relationships with both maternal figures and the significant role that informal kinship caregivers have played in their lives. In addition, the findings indicate that individuals raised in informal kinship care form multiple attachments with their mothers and informal kinship caregivers, however these attachments are hierarchical as they have a preference for their informal kinship caregivers. Lastly, this study illustrated that in an environment where parents are employed away from home, die young and are unable to fully commit to taking care of their young children, informal kinship care can make a positive contribution to the lives of black children in South Africa.