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## Mother-Child Relationship as Perceived by Breast Cancer Women

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### Author(s)

Eva Mazzotti, Francesco Serranò, Claudia Sebastiani, Paolo Marchetti

### ABSTRACT

Cancer can threaten the stability of a mother's parental role, undermining her ability to take care of her children and keep the family together. We conducted face-to-face interviews to explore the experiences of mothers with breast cancer. Some mothers tend to handle their disease as if it were a temporary event. This strategy often implies a detachment from their children, in an attempt to protect them. Other strategies are instead based on the awareness that, from that moment on, the life of a mother, and that of her family, will have to go through important changes in the short and long run. The behaviors examined, adopted to safeguard children's wellbeing, can create or enhance dysfunctional and paradoxical communication strategies. The hospital staff can practically use the results of this study to help mothers successfully handle their family relationships.

### KEYWORDS

Breast Cancer; Narrative Interviews; Parenting; Qualitative Research; Mother-Children Relationship

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