

Edworthy, Z., Chasey, R., & Williams, H. (2008). The role of schema and appraisals in the development of post-traumatic stress symptoms following birth. *Journal of Reproductive and Infant Psychology*, 26, 123-138.

Recent studies show that post-traumatic stress reactions can occur following childbirth. The role of pre-event schema as a vulnerability factor in the development of post-traumatic stress symptoms in childbirth has not been investigated. We aimed to determine the relationship between pre-existing schema and interaction with previous trauma, birth experiences, birth appraisal and social support in the development of post-traumatic symptoms following childbirth. We undertook a prospective, longitudinal study, whereby 121 first-time mothers completed questionnaires from 34 weeks in their pregnancy, and of these 108 completed a second set of questionnaires at 6 weeks post-partum. We found that the development of post-traumatic stress symptoms following childbirth was significantly related to negative appraisal of the birthing experience and to pre-existing, maladaptive schemas. We conclude that appraisal of the birthing experience and pre-existing schemas have an influence on the development of post-traumatic stress symptoms following childbirth.