



Mrs. Samson and her children (2002)

A real story

Jerahmeel, 40, from San Pedro, Laguna, gave birth via emergency c-section in 2021.

As a single mom, she felt she was alone. At night, she was the only one awake feeding her baby; she would just cry. There was a point she thought, this is postpartum depression.

But her mother and her family supported her. She even felt like a princess because they took care of her. She didn't think she had to worry about her physical appearance because her baby is truly a blessing. What matters most is that she was thankful, and she has people around her who love her.

The presence of family can turn isolation into healing. You don't need to fix everything.

Just stay, listen, and remind her she is not alone.

That is often enough to begin recovery.

Got questions?
We're here.

This is a project by students from De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde as part of their research on **Postpartum Body Image Dysmorphia and Postpartum Depression in the Philippines**. Its goal is to provide information and practical guidance to the family members of new mothers.



Visit our website for the full resources and short documentary videos.

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Healing begins at home.

Your Support *Can Change Her* Recovery

A short guide for the family of a new mother.

Why is this important?

After giving birth, a mother's body, emotions, and self-perception shift. Many mothers constantly worry about weight gain, stretch marks, and scars. This condition is known as postpartum body image dysmorphia.

If left unaddressed or unnoticed, it can lead to postpartum depression, which affects a mother's ability to care for herself and her baby.

What we discovered during our research:

Even casual or playful comments like **"Tumaba ka"** (You got fat) can deepen a mother's insecurity.

The first people to see and hear her every day are her family.

Small changes in how you talk at home can be the key to her healing.

What can you do

Three simple steps for a home that can help her heal.

STEP 1

WATCH WHAT YOU SAY

Phrases like "You don't look like you gave birth" or "When will you diet?" don't help. They deepen a mother's feeling that she's no longer beautiful or enough.

Instead, try saying:

"It's normal to feel tired. Don't blame yourself."

"You're doing a great job. Don't rush your recovery."

STEP 2

RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS

Not every mother will directly say she's struggling. Often, it shows in her actions:

- Avoiding the mirror, or looking at herself with sadness.
- No longer wearing her old clothes.
- Crying more often, or seeming restless.
- Appearing uninterested even when with the baby.

If you notice these, don't judge. Just listen.

STEP 3

MAKE HOME A SAFE PLACE

A mother's true rest and recovery begin inside the home. Small actions have a big impact:

- Let her rest even just 15 minutes while someone else watches the baby.
- Praise her efforts as a mother, not just her appearance.
- Make sure she has someone to talk to who won't judge her like a partner, a friend, or a doctor.

Alvarez Family Photo (2018)

