



My letter to you and other women wondering about this program called Healthy MOMS

I was once in your shoes.

Actually, I didn't even have shoes when I first met with someone from the Healthy MOMS program. I had been using illegal drugs for most of my life, didn't have a place to live anymore and had recently lost my shoes and most of my clothes.

I honestly didn't believe I could take care of myself, much less a baby.

The Healthy MOMS program changed everything for me – and for the daughter I gave birth to about a month after enrolling.

You and your baby can get a lot of support from the program, too. If I could offer you advice today, it would be this: Tell them the truth about your situation. They won't judge you.

I found my case manager and the rest of the team to be caring and loving. Of course, I didn't know what to expect in the very beginning when I was pregnant and unsure about what I should do. Back then, I knew nothing about the program. I didn't go looking for it. A woman who worked at a local methadone clinic saw that I was pregnant and needed help, and she made an appointment for me to meet with a Healthy MOMS case manager.

From that time on, things started to get better. The case manager immediately found a safe place for me to sleep, so I wasn't on the street or staying overnight with strangers. The Healthy MOMS team got me clothes. They made sure my unborn baby and I got proper health care. They also connected me to helpful programs and services, especially taxi and ride-sharing services to get me to all of my important appointments.

The Healthy MOMS team will help you do whatever you want to improve your life – and the lives of your family members. But they're not going to do it for you. It takes your desire and ongoing effort.

I'm certain that you have what it takes to treat your disorder and fully care for your family. If a "hot mess" like me – who once cared so little about myself that I continually chased the next high, ran from the cops, lived on the street and shoplifted – can get control of her substance use disorder and maintain her sobriety for 17 months (and counting!), then you can as well.

Healthy MOMS will be your partner. Please allow its team to help now and in the months ahead, so that you can love your baby *and* love yourself. And love your new life in recovery.

With best wishes,

Jennifer Parker

