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1. Tell me about yourself including your title.

I am an Extension Educator at the University of Minnesota. Extension partners deeply with Minnesota communities, and the Department of Family, Health & Wellbeing where I work promotes resilience and wellness for families and the people who serve them. I bring to my work a focus on public health approaches to mental wellbeing.

2. Tell me about your organization.

The 40-Day Project team is a group of moms who are also professionals from different disciplines and who share an interest in supporting Somali birth parents during the postpartum period. The first 40 days following birth can be a beautiful time, and they can also be challenging and isolating. Our collective experience as women and mothers has inspired us to learn from one another and from others, and to share what we have learned. After birth, a parent typically focuses on what their newborn needs versus what they personally need as a parent. We see the critical importance of encouraging parents to understand and prioritize their own needs, reach out for help when needed.

3. What is your mission?

The 40-Day Project promotes self-care, social connections and mental wellbeing for birthing parents and the people who serve them during the five-week postpartum period. This first phase of the project focuses on the specific needs of Somali parents, and many materials are available in Somali and English. Current work is underway to reach Latinx postpartum communities with similar content.

4. What are some resources and/or programs you offer?

Through the **project website**, parents can access videos, reflection questions, links to local service organizations and other educational resources. Topics include normalizing the postpartum period, self-care, social connections, and mental wellness.

Parents can receive an **affirmative text message** every day for the first five weeks after the mother gives birth. Messages support self-care, offer links to postpartum resources and remind parents that they are not alone in the struggles of parenting a newborn.

Parents can also sign up for a **gift** to support their postpartum wellbeing

Parents and providers can listen to **birth stories** shared by team members that address specific topics of NICU experiences, teen parenting, pregnancy after loss and advocating for yourself.

The site includes a special “**resources for providers**” section with links to screening tools, suggested language scripts, trauma resources and crisis information.

5. Any other information you would like us to share with our community and members?

The 40-Day Project is research based and deeply personal. It aims to reach people at a significant time of change in their lives - one that is critical for the health of parent and child. The experiences of new parents are too often ignored, and the 40-Day Project aims to change this. We are currently in a pilot phase and are currently working to expand to other languages and cultures. Contact: Cari Michaels, cmichael@umn.edu