My name is Maria. I am 12 years old and in the 6th grade. I live at home with my mom, her boyfriend, and my three siblings, two of which are younger and one of which is a small baby. My birth father was arrested and sentenced to jail for a violent crime when I was very young. A few years ago, my mom went to jail for a while too so I had to stay with family members. Since before and after my mom went to jail, my mom and her boyfriend get into really big fights. I usually hear them at night while I’m trying to sleep screaming and breaking things. Sometimes my mom has bruises or cuts the next day. This year, my mom and her boyfriend got into a really bad fight and I had to go stay with a stranger and then other family members for a while. I think my mom hates me for telling people how scared I was.

One day this year, I went to class with a drink I had bought from the store. A teacher grabbed the drink from the floor and threw it out saying that I wasn’t allowed to have drinks in her class. I was really upset. I was staying with a stranger, I didn’t have my siblings or any of my things with me and I was really worried about my mom. I got really mad and my whole body felt like it had pins and needles all over it and my head felt like a balloon. I called the teacher really inappropriate names and ran out of the room. I ended up getting sent home and they called my mom to tell her what happened. I know my mom is stressed out about her fights with her boyfriend and I already think she hates me so that made me even more upset. I was so upset that I was just screaming and eventually started crying and got really tired. I can’t even remember screaming.

This happens a lot with me. I get really upset about little things that make me feel like I have no control over my life, like someone throwing out my drink. My friends are the only people I think love and care about me- and they love when I act up in class so I do it to get their approval.

In the future, I really want to go to college and do well in high school. I want to do well because I know I can and I know I’m smart. I just am not ready to give up the feeling I get when my friends approve and laugh at what I do.