

Voices on Violence

Emotional Violence

"It is too much," Sabina sighed. "It is better that he just beats me and gets it over with than sit around all day, laughing at me or looking at me with hot eyes. I know my stepfather thinks I am stupid but I wish he wouldn't make my life so miserable."

"Today he shouted at me in front of my friends. 'Look at this stupid girl. She thinks she is important now that she goes to school. Once a dog, always a dog,' he laughed."

"You know, words are only words. They can't hurt you, can they?" her friend asked her.

"If it was only insults, I could find a way of ignoring it even though they hurt me so much. But most of the time he shouts at me and I feel so scared of what he is going to do. He says he will send me away. I feel nervous all the time, as if a big monster is sitting on my head. I never feel happy."

"Can you go to anyone for help?" her friend asked.

"Who would help me?" Sabina replied. "Everyone knows he is like that. I wish I could tell him how it makes me feel. I feel so angry as if I want to burn everything that belongs to him or I feel like killing myself. But I know he won't listen to me. He will just laugh and say that 'the dog has started barking now'".

"No one should speak to you like that," her friend said. "Everyone deserves respect."

Sabina thought about what her friend had said for a while and then looked at her and asked, "does that 'everyone' include children?"

In a study completed recently, more than a third of the children consulted said they had experienced emotional violence at least once a week. More than one in six said that they experienced it 'everyday'.

Raising Voices, P o Box 6770,
Kampala, Uganda
info@raisingvoices.org
www.raisingvoices.org