

Ronnie's Morning

It was just one of those days.

Ronnie had been up all night. He was taking care of his sister, Lisa. She had a bad dream. His mom was drinking. She was asleep. She would not wake up. If she did wake up, she would be mad. That would not help Lisa.

In the morning, Ronnie's mom was still asleep. He got Lisa ready for school. Lisa had a permission slip. She was going on a field trip. Ronnie signed their mom's name. He didn't want to wake her. She would be mad.

Ronnie and Lisa walked to the bus stop. The bullies were waiting there. They stole Lisa's lunch, again. Ronnie tried to stop them. He was written up for fighting. Ronnie gave Lisa his lunch.

Ronnie went to first hour. It was history class. The teacher asked everyone to get out their homework. Ronnie had not done his. He was too busy caring for Lisa.

"You will not pass" Mrs. Smith said, sternly. "You need to be responsible."

Ronnie bit his tongue. He did not argue. That would get him in trouble.

"Yeah, Ronnie," Brad, the boy behind him whispered. "You're just as dumb as the ugly little sister of yours."

Something inside of Ronnie exploded. He turned around and punched Brad.

Questions

Please answer in complete sentences.

1. How do you think Ronnie feels?
2. What clues tell you that he feels this way?
3. Make a personal connection. Have you ever felt like Ronnie?
4. What do you think is going to happen next?

Coping Strategies are things we can do, when we are having a bad day. They help us to deal with being mad or upset. We will make better choices when we use these.

Here are some of them:

1. **Write it down**—Keep a journal. Write down your feelings. Have someone read it once a day, if you want.
2. **Write a letter.** Write about your feelings in a letter.
3. **Talk to someone.** Talk to a friend. Talk to an adult.
4. **Draw.** Draw something you like. Draw what is making you mad.
5. **Take a walk.** Ask if you can take a walk.
6. **Exercise.** Go running, when you are not at school. Ride your bike.
7. **Read.** Read a book you like.
8. **Do something you love.** Find a hobby. Do something that makes you happy.
9. **Focus on what you are doing.** Just do what you are supposed to do. Forget about the thing that is making you mad.

Coping Strategy Homework

Sometime during the next week, use a coping strategy. Write about it on this sheet.

1. The thing that made me mad was...
2. The coping strategy I used was....
3. Did it help, why or why not?
4. Will you use this strategy again? If not, what strategy will you use?