



ACCIDENTAL DAMAGE

as a cause of educational trauma



Purpose

Increase understanding of accidental damage in service of reducing its occurrence and preventing avoidable trauma

Objective

help you to recognise what accidental damage is and reduce it within your line of work

Strategy

story based. What is it? What causes it? How to spot and stop it? And what are the next steps?

Timing

45 minutes

EDUCATIONAL TRAUMA



The long emotional response to harmful or hurtful practices perpetuated by teachers and administrators on students. This pain is often carried into adulthood.

ACCIDENTAL DAMAGE

**Psychological harm that is
done without intent.**

CAUSES OF ACCIDENTAL DAMAGE

Attempts to help that actually harm

Losing sight of helping a child as the central goal

CAUSES OF ACCIDENTAL DAMAGE

Attempts to help that actually harm

Microaggressions

- You don't look autistic
- You're really high functioning
- You would never know
- We're all on the spectrum somewhere
- Look what you've achieved despite your autism

Misinformed/Uneducated practitioners

- Using outdated terminology
- Perpetuated misinformation
- Lack of understanding of the people they work with

Processes and help based on ableist assumptions

- Behaviourist approaches (such as ABA)
- Ableist reward systems
- Ableist student goals
- Any attempts to "cure" or treat Autism

CAUSES OF ACCIDENTAL DAMAGE

Losing sight of helping the child as the central goal

Focusing on as adults goal and not the child's needs

Seeing a child as a problem, not a child experiencing a problem

Focusing on making their job easier rather than helping a child

Talking about kids behind their backs

Not hearing, seeing or believing kids

Focusing on tickboxes, targets and timelines

SPOTTING ACCIDENTAL DAMAGE

In own practice

Tired

**Over-
whelmed**

**Under-
staffed**

Triggered

**Over-
worked**

Exasperated

Stressed

SPOTTING ACCIDENTAL DAMAGE

In own practice



“Here is Edward Bear, coming downstairs now, bump, bump, bump, on the back of his head, behind Christopher Robin. It is, as far as he knows, the only way of coming downstairs,

SPOTTING ACCIDENTAL DAMAGE

In own practice



“Here is Edward Bear, coming downstairs now, bump, bump, bump, on the back of his head, behind Christopher Robin. It is, as far as he knows, the only way of coming downstairs, but sometimes he feels that there really is another way, if only he could stop bumping for a moment and think of it. And then he feels that perhaps there isn't.”

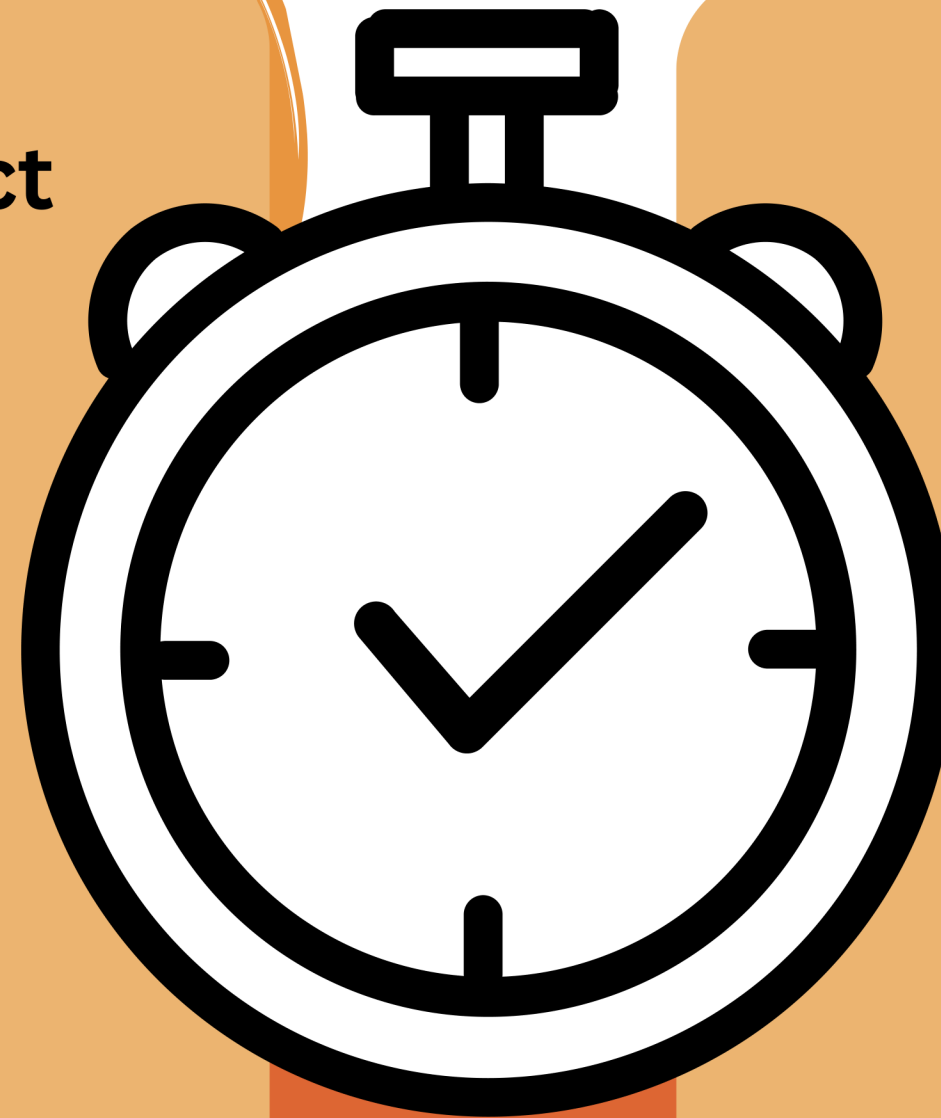
— A.A. Milne, Winnie-the-Pooh

STOPPING ACCIDENTAL DAMAGE

In own practice

Signs in self:

- Focusing on others impact more than your own
- Feeling of frustration, exasperation or anger
- Internal mind chatter
- Adrenaline responses - Fight, flight, freeze



Signs in young person:

- Withdrawal
- Crying
- Escalating emotional response
- Attempts to leave
- Getting defensive
- More disregulated
- Shutting down

STOPPING ACCIDENTAL DAMAGE





STOP

S T O P

**Whatever you're doing when you notice it,
STOP!**

THINK about the student, what they need,
your impact on them and how you can
help.

ORGANISE your thoughts so they are
helpful in consciously problem solving and
make a plan to try another tactic

Then, and only then, PROCEED with the
plan to best help the young person

TACTICS

**See a real person with
needs and feelings.**

**Be curious and
compassionate.**

**Ask the student what
they need.**

**Take responsibility for
yourself.**

IMPORTANCE OF INTERVENTION

You allow a child to experience harm in the moment that could have been prevented

You condone the behaviour and are therefore complicit in it

You teach the child that you will not advocate for them and they are not safe with you

You undermine any trust or respect that student had in you

You are complicit in perpetuating a culture that does harm leading to systemic accidental damage and educational trauma

THINGS TO CONSIDER

**1)Take some
time to reflect
on your own
practice**

**2)Consider the
implications
of my story on
training**

**3)Consider how
to promote a
culture of
compassionate
leadership**

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THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

contact my mum, Natalie Dow: Natalie.dow@nataliedow.co.uk