

Critically reflect upon  
an incident or  
situation when an  
individual's behaviour  
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The Teaching Assistant is faced in a difficult situation with a 17 year old Autistic Pupil X) where the entire disturbance begins when X has to operate a vending machine during school hours. X wanted to get a bag of crisps for his lunch and the TA allowed him to leave for this. At first he had difficulties figuring out the nature of the buttons on the machine and the TA was able to see him staring at the vending machine for a long time. Then he punched the glass window and started shouting. This was anomalous as many times before he had normally operated the machine for crisps. It was dark in the alley so it was suggested by the TA that he should turn the lights on. At this point X moved away from the machine and kicked it really badly. The TA was alert called the helping assistant in case any help would be required. X now made his way to the switchboard and started pushing all the buttons. This was a rare occasion as he had never demonstrated such violent behaviour. Things got worse when the situation became more and more disturbing with X pushing the button of the vending machine repeatedly and yelling strange words in his native language. Any attempts to take him away from the vending machine were met with hostile physical responses like kicking etc. When the TA and the helping assistant managed to reach the spot where X was throwing a tantrum as he literally wrestled with the buttons he paused for two minutes as the helping assistant asked him to stop in a loud but firm voice. The Child hit the helping assistant and the TA was also pushed away when there were attempts to pacify X by holding his shoulders. It could be seen that he was responding negatively to any attempts to be stopped from his disorderly behaviour. When we tried to stop him he ran off into the hallway and it took a long time to chase him down as he disrupted other class activity. Finally he started kicking the Vending machine again. It was a very

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emotionally charged moment as he dealt the TA with a punch in the stomach which was a final test of her patience. However the whole issue was resolved by distracting him with a bag of crisps and slowly suggesting that he return to the class. This took a lot of patience for the TA who was clearly upset by the punch but still had to manage the situation. Post the incident the TA had mixed emotions and felt less resentful for this episode which had tested her patience and resolved to understand better techniques to deal with such traumatic outbursts of X in the future. The reason that the TA was not upset too much by this direct violent attack was that she realised at the outset that since X was autistic he would be used to a certain routine and a disrupted routine which in this case was the defective vending machine can trigger violent reactions. Thus the key thus was patience and perseverance.