



**Richard Woods** @Richard\_Autism

19 Dec · 15 tweets · [Richard\\_Autism/status/1340282676402642944](#)



While I consider this to be little more than propaganda in places and making assumptions detached away from the evidence base. Also that some people do not have the expertise to be making such assumptions.

There is a comment that I find interesting:

[https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/neil-ayres/cant-help-wont-b\\_7783632.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/neil-ayres/cant-help-wont-b_7783632.html)

"is an overriding compulsion to control situations and avoid demands made by other people, due to exceptionally high levels of anxiety."

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PDA is the name of a complex and relatively rare syndrome on the autism spectrum, and it's one with which my own seven-year-old daughter was diagnosed last year. Newson's foundational work recognised a group of children that presented with autistic traits, and who were often being unsatisfyingly diagnosed as having "atypical autism". These children shared several defining features uncommon to others on the spectrum, but in common with each another. The most distinctive of these, and the one from which the condition takes its name, is an overriding compulsion to control situations and avoid demands made by other people, due to exceptionally high levels of anxiety.

Identification is essential. [Jane Sherwin](#), author of the recently published [Pathological Demand Avoidance Syndrome - My Daughter is Not Naughty](#) knows this firsthand. "Having one child with Asperger's and one with PDA has enabled me to see first-hand the huge differences both in the outward profile of the conditions, and in their successful management." Those with PDA do not generally respond well to the educational techniques, such as

What the above quote is essentially saying, in the full context of the previous sentence is that PDA fundamentally is an OCD & Related Disorders.

The high anxiety would be the obsession and the demand avoidance would be the compulsion, which the essay admits the demand avoidance is.

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There is evidence to support like Liz O'Nions research update:

<https://lizonions.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/1909childbehaviourparentingstrategiessummary.pdf>

I make these points in relation to Help4Psychology PDA definitions:

<https://rationaldemandavoidancecom.files.wordpress.com/2020/07/19th-april-2020-help4psychology-research-limitations.pdf>

Comparing this compulsion to Newson's descriptions, it would be linked to the "Need

for Control" which she describes as their being an coding problem in addition to coding problems of deficits in pride/ shame/ social identity.



#### Pathological demand avoidance syndrome: a necessary distinction wit...

A proposal is made to recognise pathological demand avoidance syndrome (PDA) as a separate entity within the pervasive developmental disorders, instead of being classed under "pervasive developmental...

<http://adc.bmj.com/content/88/7/595>

nine suggested types of avoidance strategies, 15 used more than two types, 10 used five or more types, and two used all nine.

#### Surface sociability, but lack of sense of identity, pride, or shame

All give an impression of sociability, but 84% show very inappropriate behaviour and social response *over and above* their demand avoidance. Sixty eight per cent show aggression to others, with no sex difference; 60% have extreme outbursts or panic attacks. Eighty two per cent show little sense of status or identity in others, and 86% show no sense of pride, shame, responsibility, or identity in themselves, *in addition* to the lack of this sense which is implied by their demand avoidance. Among the adults, 14 of the 18 can be violent when angry, and five of these are judged by their parents to be capable of "badly hurting someone"; seven have threatened suicide, and two of these have attempted it. Five of these respondents are afraid of their child, and 16 are afraid for her. One adult has "no sense of right or wrong", and in seven cases parents are "uncertain"

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"Eighty two per cent show little sense of status or identity in others, and 86% show no sense of pride, shame, responsibility, or identity in themselves, in addition to the lack of this sense which is implied by their demand avoidance." p596

I will restate this again, Newson et al (2003) does not link demand avoidance to anxiety, the article does not mention anxiety. Does sometimes mention panic and fear. Newson describes PDA behaviours as being much/ most obsessive in nature

"Obsessive behaviour: Much or most of the behaviour described is carried out in an obsessive way, especially demand avoidance" P597

What this seems to say is that Newson was correct to describe PDA as not being an autism spectrum disorder. For it not to be connected.

That she was incorrect in PDA having coding issues from a "need for control".

That if one critically engages with Newson's work, it would most likely be viewed as an OCD and Related Disorder today.

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"Surface Sociability" is a common trait amongst mental disorders, most do not include it in its dx criteria. It does seem an error in judgement to view PDA as autism.

PDA can end up anywhere as Newson set precedent of creating a diagnostic grouping for it.

[@threadreaderapp](#) unroll please.

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