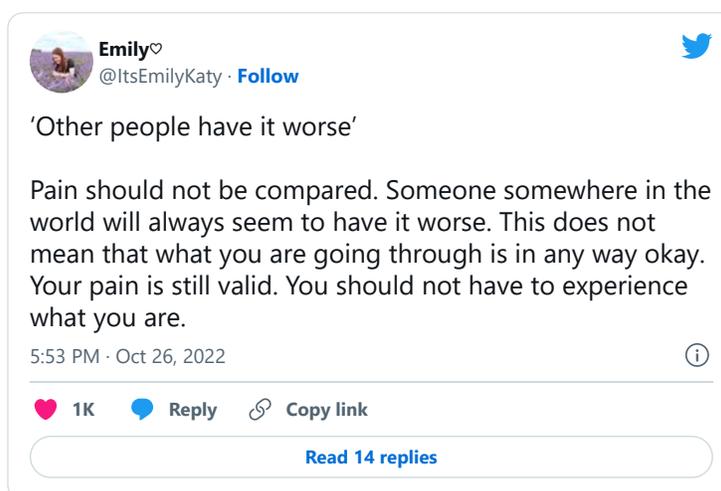




**Richard Woods** @Richard\_Autism

Oct 26 · 25 tweets · [Richard\\_Autism/status/1585374811034771457](#)

Totally agree. Then why do "PDA Profile of ASD" supporters, like Help4Psychology, seem to think it OK to try & split different types of autistic distress into PDA or what they call "rational demand avoidance" (in process co-opting term from autistic persons, like [@milton\\_damian](#) ?



I often point out the threshold in which demand-avoidance is literally pathologised as part of a Disorder is quite low, can be viewed around when demand-avoidance becomes "problematic"...

**AVOIDING VARIANCE.**

**When does PDA become "Pathological Demand Avoidance"?**

- 1) PDA presents as a continuum in human population.
- 2) Fluid & transient over lifespan & diverse situations.
- 3) "*the disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.*" (APA 2013, p21).
- 4) "*...start to display avoidant behaviour and challenging behaviour in response to a particular stressor...*" (Eaton 2018, p20).
- 5) Around EDA-Q threshold and/ or "*problematic demand avoidance*" (O'Nions et al 2018).

Aut|medes How do you build a Demand-Avoidance Disorder? 34

... Features which are often described by PDA are quite difficult for person expressing them to experience & for those around them to co-regulate. They do not need to be expressed at pervasive levels to be problem for children, or their caregivers etc...

... You show me a caregiver who loves their child, who says their kid attacking them during a meltdown as a response of demand to go to school once a week, is not a problem compared to that happening 3, 4, 5 days a week? You show me any rational person to say it is not a problem?

... Who is anyone to say that the distress expressed by autistic persons who show avoidance features in one or two settings is any less of a problem than it being expressed in three or more settings?...

... Would you recommend using different strategies to those expressing avoidance strategies to stressors from one or two settings versus those to persons expressing avoidance features to demands in three or more settings?...

... Many who follow would say no, many who follow me would suggest either Low Arousal Approach by [@studioIII](#), or something looking similar to PDA strategies...

... reduce demands, work with the child is, negotiate by offering two to three choices, having positive trusting relationship, using humour, have a Plan B, allow planned escape, listen to the child etc etc...

... Trying to divide autistic distress by using Help4Psychology "rational demand avoidance" group & PDA, in my view suggests a lack of empathy towards autistic persons showing distress via demand-avoidance (at all intensities, frequencies & levels) & their caregivers...

... When both groups need to be adequately supported. We know that generally, the autistic population is under severe stress due to a systemic lack of suitable support, not just those "PDA Profile of ASD" supporters choose to bestow PDA upon...

... I suggest that use of "rational demand avoidance" shows a lack of respect towards other PDA topic experts. Likewise towards autistic persons. "PDA Profile of ASD" indicates a lack of respect towards most autistic persons wishes for autism to not be divided into subgroups.

[@milton\\_damian](#) first published rational demand avoidance in relation to PDA in his 2017 book. I first referred to PDA with Rational Demand Avoidance in print in 2019 here (off the top of my head):

<http://www.larry-arnold.net/Autonomy/index.php/autonomy/article/view/CO3/html>

I did refer to Rational Demand Avoidance in a talk in 2018:

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325181432\\_Rational\\_Pathological\\_Demand\\_Avoidance\\_what\\_it\\_is\\_not\\_what\\_it\\_could\\_be\\_what\\_it\\_does](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325181432_Rational_Pathological_Demand_Avoidance_what_it_is_not_what_it_could_be_what_it_does)

How much empathy & respect does a person have for someone, if you are essentially telling them: "Sorry, your distress is not sufficient to warrant having a PDA diagnosis, as it does not conform our definitions of PDA, because we choose to view as a "Profile of ASD"?"

It is a choice to view PDA as a "Profile of ASD", as there is no consensus over what PDA is, or how to approach it clinically. There are examples of PDA being diagnosed at lower diagnostic thresholds & in non-autistic persons. For examples see slides below:

**THEY ARE BREEDING LIKE RABBITS.**

Examples of PDA is found in non-autistic persons.

- 1) "A "manipulative child" in the 1970s might get the label of Pathological Demand Avoidance Syndrome in the 2000s." (Goodley 2011, p10).
- 2) Chapter 5 study has one CYP with diagnosed with Attachment Disorder & ADOS Score of 1 (O'Nions 2013, p226).
- 3) Chapter 8 study has 23% of CYP diagnosed with PDA are non-autistic. (O'Nions 2013, p176).
- 4) "As well as significant symptoms of PDA, the four children met criteria for a range of neurobehavioural disorders; all four had cognitive impairment (IQ < 85) and met DSM-IV-TR criteria for ADHD. Three, in addition, met criteria for ASD..." (Reilly et al 2014, p3236).
- 5) 8 out of 11 (73%) CYP with PDA are non-autistic (Kaushik et al 2015, p8).
- 6) "Pathological (or extreme) demand avoidance is a term sometimes applied to complex behaviours in children within- or beyond-autism spectrum disorder." (Green et al 2018a, p455).
- 7) 7 out of 24 (29%) CYP with PDA are non-autistic (McFadzen 2020, p27).

   26

Just as it is a choice to set a PDA threshold substantially different to the Extreme Demand Avoidance-Questionnaire, which is problematic as most PDA studies involve the EDA-Q, one cannot be sure of generalising that knowledge base. Yet that seems perfectly fine for some parties

It is fine & hunky dory as many "PDA Profile of ASD" supporters seem to think they know better than everyone else on PDA. I have pretty much that notion expressed in communication from "PDA Profile of ASD" advocates. People's distress, expertise, Equality Act, just do not matter.

People's distress is not a trivial matter, it is something which should be validated, respected & the utmost done to alleviate that. It is more important that some people choosing to view PDA as a "Profile of ASD".

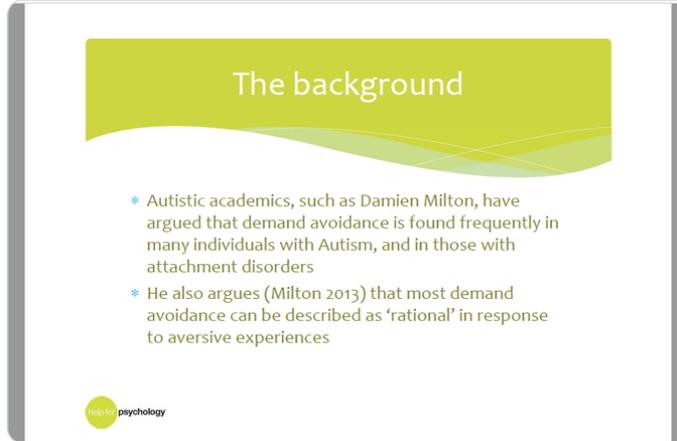


**Richard Woods**  
@Richard\_Autism · [Follow](#)



Replying to @milton\_damian

I think in your PDA essay you argue autistic demand-avoidance pathologised by PDA can be viewed as rational, which Judy Eaton kind of acknowledged in a 2018 conference talk, they say you argued most demand avoidance can be viewed as "rational".



7:58 AM · Oct 27, 2022



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**Richard Woods**  
@Richard\_Autism · [Follow](#)



Replying to @Richard\_Autism and @milton\_damian

You specifically ask if demand avoidance should be viewed as a rational act against prejudice & unfriendly social environment, or a pathological deficit in need of remedial strategies on 175 of your book. Also on p37 is: (rationally) avoiding "demands".

8:05 AM · Oct 27, 2022



1



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**Richard Woods**  
@Richard\_Autism · Follow



Replying to @Richard\_Autism and @milton\_damian

Must be said Damian, neither yours or my PDA scholarship is referenced or acknowledged in Eaton & Weaver (2020) where they propose, in print, their split of PDA & "rational demand avoidance".

8:10 AM · Oct 27, 2022



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**Richard Woods**  
@Richard\_Autism · Follow



Replying to @Richard\_Autism and @milton\_damian

I acknowledge their perspective on ratioanal demand avoidance in my recent book chapter & discuss it in relation to our own views on PDA. Pointing out we view there being no distinction between PDA & "rational demand avoidance", & that PDA should called Rational Demand Avoidance.

archers have found a group of autistic persons who start displaying PDA from around age  
y triggered by aversive school experiences (Eaton, 2019; Eaton and Weaver, 2020). The r  
oup "Rational Demand Avoidance" as they report these PDA behavioes present less freq  
Demand Avoidance", they are not necessarily pervasive (Eaton and Weaver, 2020). How  
istic CYP would not be able to process the reasons behind their demand avoidance beh  
and Avoidance as frequently autistic persons will avoid situations, w  
- 7-year-old CYP, may have any combination of issues with Theory of Mind, alexithymia  
(Eaton, 2019a). In our conceptualisation of PDA, there are no distinctions  
cal Demand Avoidance: Critical Autism Studies Chapter.  
oidance. This makes sense when autistic persons live in a world un  
ts from hostile experiences (Pellicano, 2020). This is reflected in hig  
ilities, anxiety 42 – 56 % (Woods, 2019a), Anxiety Disorders 20%, a  
JCD are associated with trauma and childhood aversive experiences  
be explained by trauma (Brede et al, 2017; McElroy, 2016; Milton,  
ce. They may have difficulty understanding their own mental state, their own emotions a  
dily signals mean. Consequently, these CYP would not be able to rationallise their deman  
o-emotional disabling effects of non-autistic led culture has on autis  
re cannot be a Rational Demand Avoidance group, if many of its members cannot ration  
om said culture would be intrinsically rational.  
oidance and such distinctions between "Rational" and "Extreme" demand avoidance is a

8:19 AM · Oct 27, 2022



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**Richard Woods**  
@Richard\_Autism · Follow



Replying to @Richard\_Autism and @milton\_damian

I wonder if they will respect our views on the topic?

8:20 AM · Oct 27, 2022



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 **Richard Woods**  
@Richard\_Autism · [Follow](#)

Replying to @Richard\_Autism and @milton\_damian

Damian, I actually mention Rational Demand Avoidance in print in 2018 here:



tandfonline.com  
PDA by PDAers, from anxiety to avoidance and mask...  
Published in Disability & Society (Vol. 33, No. 9, 2018)

10:32 AM · Oct 27, 2022

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Thank you in advance.

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