

## Demand avoidance and the PANDA method

**Many of our brothers and sisters don't have an official diagnosis** of PDA (Pathological Demand Avoidance), but strategies and mindsets for approaching demand avoidance can also be a useful way of re-framing what has been referred to as “defiance” or “challenging behaviour”.

Another way of thinking about PDA is as a Persistent Drive for Autonomy.

- Even as we are frustrated by our sisters' and brothers' resistance to perceived demands, it can be helpful to think of this as a way of communicating frustration, responding to unfairness, or exercising much-needed control and autonomy.

The **PANDA method** is about reframing our own responses to Demand Avoidance:

**Prioritise and Compromise:** Think about which requests, demands, or instructions are really essential. Which ones can be negotiated/ignored? Talk about the reasons why something is essential and try to offer real choices about when and how it can be done.

**Anxiety Management:** Try to use a “[low arousal approach](#)”. Keep calm, be flexible, and minimise potentially overwhelming stimuli.

- The stressors that cause our brothers' and sisters' anxiety might not be immediately apparent. If using [ABC charts](#) (to keep track of Antecedents, Behaviours and Consequences), it helps to be as holistic as possible. What sorts of things have happened across the day that might be causing our brothers and sisters stress?
- Things like “Now and Next” boards or Social Stories can provide reassurance by helping our sisters and brothers know what to expect.

**Negotiation and Collaboration:** Try to work together towards a common goal. (How can we make this happen?)

- It can help [level the playing field](#) to acknowledge when things are/feel unfair.
- Try doing tasks together, and let yourself be vulnerable too.

**Disguise and Manage Demands:** Look for ways to soften the edges of requests, so they don't feel as “demanding”.

- Try offering suggestions and observations, rather than instructions.
- Writing things down instead of saying it aloud can feel less confrontational.

**Adaptation:** Be flexible, and change what you can about the environment.

- What barriers can you remove and what steps can be simplified?

**Everyone is different, and we are all complex people.**

- Schedules and routines can be comforting, but can also feel demanding.
- Our brothers and sisters may want to make their own choices, but choice can also feel overwhelming. It may help to offer guided choices or a series of prompts.
- Our sisters and brothers may respond differently based on who makes the request.

The world is often unfair to our brothers and sisters, **but we also deserve space to acknowledge when things are unfair or too demanding.**

- We also have the impulse (and the right) to say “no” sometimes.
- It can be particularly frustrating when the demands on us go unacknowledged or when other people's frustration is taken out on us.

The PDA society has guides for [supporting adults with demand avoidance](#) in a variety of contexts, including [Personal Hygiene](#), [Special Occasions](#), [Workplace Adjustments](#), and a [Siblings Guide!](#)