

# Autism or PDA?



## Isn't PDA autism anyway?

PDA can be argued to fit the requirements for the autism spectrum diagnosis, but it has a distinct cluster of traits, including irrational demand avoidance, that aren't shared with autism in general

## What do autism and PDA have in common?

All autistic people can rely on the need for control in their environment in order to feel safe. Autistic people are also more prone to experiencing higher levels of demand avoidance than their neurotypical counterparts.

## What are the differences?

PDA individuals demonstrate a number of common traits that autism does not, including: instinctively utilizing social strategies (which are typically a struggle for their non-PDA autistic counterparts), roller coaster emotions, being drawn to other people, often with strong feelings of like or dislike, and enjoying novelty.

## The takeaway

Most autistic avoidances can be alleviated by approaching each need in isolation in order to eventually overcome or work around the struggles.

While PDA also improves when any co-occurring conditions are supported, it additionally requires a permanent sensitivity to factors that non-PDA autistic people don't experience, such as being mindful of phrasing and engaging on the PDA person's terms by matching their humor and tone so they can maintain a sense of control and feel safe



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