

Polyvagal theory and PDA



What is it?

According to polyvagal theory, people have different "vagal" nervous systems which operate at different times and have different effects on us. The default system is called the ventral vagal, which makes us feel relaxed and open to possibilities.

If we detect a threat, 1) our sympathetic nervous system takes over and makes us feel uneasy & mobilizes us for F adrenal responses, 2) our dorsal vagal system gives us physical gut problems

PDA and polyvagal theory

In polyvagal terms, when PDA people perceive demands our ventral vagus system shuts down and our sympathetic nervous system takes over. This can explain our proneness to F adrenal responses being triggered

Autistic avoidance and polyvagal theory

Polyvagal theory explains how all autistic people avoid demands when threats trigger our sympathetic nervous systems to take over, leading to avoidant reactions like withdrawing, shutting down and wanting to escape

Why PDA avoidance isn't polyvagal

Polyvagal theory doesn't explain why PDA avoidance persists if rational triggers are removed. It's the illogical part of PDA avoidance that separates it from other demand avoidance



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