



# Welcome to The PDA Space

**Founder: Nicola Reekie**

[www.thepdaspace.com](http://www.thepdaspace.com)

The page features several decorative abstract shapes. In the top left, there are purple and green concentric lines with small green dots. In the top right, there is a large purple circle and some green lines. In the bottom left, there is a green circle and some orange lines. In the bottom right, there is a purple line and a cluster of orange dots.

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# Welcome

**Hello,**

I am Nicola Reekie, a parent to a young autistic person who has a PDA profile.

PDA is an abbreviation for Pathological Demand Avoidance or, as some prefer, Pervasive Drive for Autonomy.

My mission is to raise awareness of PDA and make a positive difference for families across the globe.

I'm a solution-focused therapist supporting families and professionals with their emotional well-being and helping to create calm in often challenging situations.

I developed The PDA Space as a community for families and professionals to share their experiences, strategies, and information about PDA.

I collaborate with many amazing families, education and healthcare professionals to provide you with information and an excellent support network.

**I look forward to welcoming you in to The PDA Space.**

# What is PDA?

## **PDA is a Profile of Autism**

PDA stands for Pathological Demand Avoidance. Some may prefer Tomlin Wilding's interpretation: Pervasive (or Persistent) Drive for Autonomy.

Whilst autism is a well-recognised term, our understanding of the full breadth and complexity of what it means to be autistic is still developing.

Autism is fluid and multidimensional.

Autism has many overlapping strengths and challenges that present differently from one individual to another and in the same individual over time in different ways in different environments.

A cluster of traits can be called a presentation or a profile. In some cases, this can be quite different from what some people think autism looks like'.

Recognising these profiles helps to signpost the approaches or support that will be most helpful for each individual.

The approach required for PDA individuals can differ significantly from the approach that may be taken with other autistic profiles. So it is beneficial for families, educators, social and health care workers and practitioners to recognise and understand the nuances of PDA.

# PDA & Anxiety

## **PDA is driven by high anxiety and the need for control**

- This may lead to intense mood swings.
- Resisting ordinary demands that are asked or unsaid.
- Often leaves people unable to do activities and hobbies they actually enjoy.
- PDA can make transitions through the day really hard.
- PDAers often use 'social strategies' to avoid demands.
- Children or young people may appear sociable but may lack understanding.
- Many traits may be covered by subconsciously or consciously masking to try to fit in.
- PDAers are often happy and comfortable in role-play, pretence or fantasy.

# PDA Positives

## Let's talk about some positives

This list describes my PDAer.  
What would your list look like?



You could discuss this with your child or young person and create a strength-based list or drawing together.

- Wonderful problem solver
- An absolute eye for detail
- Determined to do or finish a project
- Follows the instructions if interested and motivated (e.g. Lego / Gaming)
- Smart, funny and thoughtful
- Creative and talented.



# Experience of PDA

## My experience as a parent

- My son used social tactics to avoid demands. For example, by saying he couldn't put his dirty plates away as his 'arms didn't work', I know that to people outside of our family, this looked like he was trying to be 'manipulative' or was 'spoilt, ' but we knew this wasn't the case.
  - The anxiety my son often experienced before seeing a friend for a playdate was heartbreaking. He was often conflicted as he desperately wanted to play with his friends, but the demand was often too much for him, so he missed out. This further impacted his mental health.
  - We saw the extremes in behaviour, from the utter devastation of losing a game to the absolute delight when he won.
  - Family life was a roller coaster, and not understanding PDA has severely impacted his education, school attendance, and mental health.
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# What is The PDA Space?

## **The PDA Space Portal**

We deliver monthly live workshops and pre-recorded webinars for families and professionals who want to become informed when supporting neurodivergent children and young people.

## **Holistic Courses**

We offer a variety of different courses to support learning new ways to enjoy life for yourself and your family. Everything you need for more calm in your life.

## **The PDA Summit 2023**


The world's largest FREE PDA Space Summit. In May 2023, we hosted our 4th ANNUAL weekend with 30+ webinars presented by the most amazing educators, health and social care professionals, neurodivergent advocates and those with lived experience of PDA. Our speakers brought a variety of topics for discussion and learning, as well as raising awareness around PDA.






# The PDA Space


At The PDA Space, we aim to be fully inclusive. We are passionate about providing ease of access to resources to those who may not always find this so easy. Whether this is due to disability, geographical, political or socio-economic restrictions, we want to attempt to remove some of the barriers you may face when seeking information and access to professionals and resources.



Through our events, we work to ensure that all communities, from all backgrounds, regardless of location or financial situation, have access to valuable and productive resources to enhance the lives of those living with PDA.



Please contact us if you require more information or if we can provide further support.



# The PDA Space

For a small membership fee, you can join The PDA Space Portal, which provides exclusive webinars and even more resources for families/ parents/ carers with children who are neurodivergent and specifically to support PDAers.

Many professionals also join The PDA Space Portal to improve their knowledge and gain a deeper understanding of how they can support the families and children they are working with.

We provide monthly webinars and workshops exclusive to our members. Webinars and workshops are interactive and live. However, we know life can be unpredictable and busy, so everything is recorded. We will give you a member's login to catch up and watch in your own time.

We currently offer a free e-book to accompany each webinar covering various topics. We will support you in building your personal library of resources and information so you can advocate for your child and share information with others.

There is also a complimentary e-book version of the Amazon Number 1 Teaching and Parent Reference Best Seller, *Neurodiversity Glossary of Key Vocabulary*, by Helen Edgar (Autistic Realms), for all members to download when they join.

# The PDA Space Portal Webinars & Workshops

The PDA Space membership gives you access to a wide range of monthly webinars and workshops, all of which aim to support families with children who are neurodivergent. There are all delivered by professionals and those with lived autistic / PDA experience.

## **Previous webinars and workshops have included:**

Laura Hellfeld (The Neurodivergent Nurse) - PDAERS AND SLEEP

Catrina Lowri (Neuroteachers) -  
A NEURO AFFIRMING WAY TO EXPLAIN AN  
AUTISM/PDA DIAGNOSIS TO YOUR CHILD

Tigger Pritchard (Bridging the Neurodivide) -  
SENSORY NEEDS THROUGHOUT THE SEASONS

# The PDA Space Portal Events

## **Diary of Events**

All live workshops take place via Zoom and are then uploaded to The PDA Portal for you to watch on demand. Zoom links will be emailed to you before each workshop/

We know how hard it is to keep up with daily demands, so we hope our email reminders are beneficial. We recommend using the Kajabi app (the platform we host the portal on) so you can listen on the go from your phone - search Kajabi in your app store and log into The PDA Portal.


**Workshops:** Live every 2nd Friday of every month at 1pm (BST/GMT)

**Webinars:** Released 4th Friday of each month

We cover a wide range of topics in our workshops and webinars with helpful tips and advice while providing a community full of support.



# Reading, Research and Resources



The PDA Space has a monthly blog where we share up-to-date research and lived experiences from professionals and advocates within the neurodivergent community.

Previous blogs have included:

**Helen Edgar, Autistic Realms -**

Looking at Holidays Through a Sensory Lens,  
Considering Everybody's Energy Beans

**Kyra Chambers, The Prism Cat -**

Where's the Support?

**Nicola Reekie, The PDA Space -**

Masking and The Fizzy Bottle!



# Holistic Courses

A variety of different courses are available to support learning new ways to enjoy life for yourself and your family.

**Everything you need for more calm in your life.**

## **Free 7 Day Well Being Course**

Seven short videos packed with simple techniques you can implement immediately

## **7 Weeks of Simple Well-Being Techniques**

An affirmation and positive mindset course to help build resilience and self-care

Please sign up here for more information and upcoming availability for new courses:

[www.thepdaspace.com/holisticcourses](http://www.thepdaspace.com/holisticcourses)

# The PDA Space Summit 2023

This is the world's largest annual free PDA Space Virtual Summit. It is a wonderful opportunity for families and professionals to further their knowledge of Pathological Demand Avoidance.

The event was held live in May 2023 with over 30 webinars and workshops from leading education, health and social care professionals and amazing advocates sharing their lived experience and in-depth knowledge about PDA and being neurodivergent.

Everything was fully recorded, so everyone can still gain access and benefit from this amazing event!

Click here for further information:

[www.thepdaspace.com/summit-2023](http://www.thepdaspace.com/summit-2023)

# Feedback & Reviews

“ Feedback  
★★★★★

This was brilliant - I'm feeling so much more confident about future activities, and it's got me reflecting on where we've struggled in the past. Thank you so much.

The PDA Space Summit 2023

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[www.thepdaspace.com/summit-2023](http://www.thepdaspace.com/summit-2023)



“ Feedback  
★★★★★

Deep, heartfelt thanks

The PDA Space Summit 2023

”

[www.thepdaspace.com/summit-2023](http://www.thepdaspace.com/summit-2023)



“ Feedback  
★★★★★

Thanks very much for this its so empowering.

The PDA Space Summit 2023

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[www.thepdaspace.com/summit-2023](http://www.thepdaspace.com/summit-2023)




“ Feedback  
★★★★★

Thank you this was so wonderful. So interesting to hear real life, lived experiences. Now I need to try and work out a way for my PDA 12 year old to see this. I want her to know that she is not alone.

The PDA Space Summit 2023

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[www.thepdaspace.com/summit-2023](http://www.thepdaspace.com/summit-2023)



“ Feedback  
★★★★★

Another really interesting and relevant talk - I really enjoyed it and learned a lot too! A lot resonates with what I have witnessed with my PDA son.

The PDA Space Summit 2023

”

[www.thepdaspace.com/summit-2023](http://www.thepdaspace.com/summit-2023)



“ Feedback  
★★★★★

Great, clear explanations, thank you 😊  
Thank you, this was really interesting and helpful. Some really useful insights gained 😊

The PDA Space Summit 2023

”

[www.thepdaspace.com/summit-2023](http://www.thepdaspace.com/summit-2023)





# Finding out more...

If you are interested in finding out more about Pathological Demand Avoidance please join our newsletter here:

[www.thepdaspace.com](http://www.thepdaspace.com)

We will add you to our weekly newsletters and share information about:

The PDA Space Portal Webinars  
Holistic Courses  
FREE online live talks  
Training & Workshops  
The PDA Space Summit

We are looking forward to welcoming you to our wonderful online community support network.

# Connections



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