Under the Oak

Training

Persistent Drive for Autonomy (PDA)

Checklist

**otherwise called Pathological Demand Avoidance*

PDA describes experiences of distress when others make our choices or dictate our actions. People with PDA may attempt to mitigate this distress by maintaining a sense of control. They may reject or avoid real or perceived demands. Masking or internalising these responses can increase risk of shutdowns, meltdowns, inertia (getting stuck) and burn out.

Name and Date of Birth:

Date completed:

In the setting below, how do you feel the need to establish control?
Are there demands that are easier or harder to meet and why?
Work -

Study -

Health/hygiene -

Relationships -

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(cont.)
Hobbies -

Housework -

Societal rules-

Other -

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BROADLEAF

Do you perceive demands when you are:

- Asked questions
- Invited to something
- in the company of others
- Given praise
- Told about plans
- Feeling a body need (e.g. hunger)
- Feeling an emotional need
- Given a deadline

Other:

Responses

- Fight/argue
- Flight/leave
- Freeze/shut down
- Substance use
- Declining task
- Passive resistance
- Playful resistance
- Redesign task (your way)

Notes:

Helpers

- Autonomy
- Demand free time
- Humour
- Communicating needs
- Reframing demands
- Activism
- Unconventional solutions
- Focus on reason (over compliance)

Notes:

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Reflection

Describe a teacher, mentor or leader who has inspired or engaged you. What was their approach to including you?

Let's celebrate the time and effort you have taken to complete this checklist!
It is understandable if you are grieving the times that your actions have felt misunderstood, even by yourself. I hope it also helps make life easier and gives you language to advocate for necessary accommodations. Take your time with this new self knowledge and consider if you might like to share this information with trusted loved ones, community, peers or neurodiverse affirming caring professionals.

Further support documents you might wish to explore:

- *Supporting a Person with PDA*
- *Glimmers Checklist - stimulus/experiences that generate awe, joy or peace*
- *Triggers Checklist - stimulus/experiences causing pain or distress*

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**Dana and Rasa are cousins*