Helpful approaches for a PDA profile of autism

Conventional support strategies, including those often recommended for ASD, are often ineffective and counter-productive with a PDA profile. In place of structure, routine, firm boundaries, praise, rewards/consequences, is a person-centred approach based on negotiation, collaboration and flexibility.

The PDA PANDA symbolises the need to tailor the environment to meet needs and our P A N D A mnemonic is a simple reminder of helpful approaches.

For more information please visit www.pdasociety.org.uk

Pick battles
Anxiety management
Negotiation & collaboration
Disguise & manage demands
Adaptation

Pick battles

- Minimise rules
- Enable some choice & control
- Explain reasons
- Accept that some things can't be done

Anxiety management

- Reduce uncertainty
- Recognise underlying anxiety & social/ sensory challenges
- Think ahead
- Treat meltdowns as panic attacks: support throughout & move on

Adaptation

- Try humour, distraction, novelty & roleplay
- Be flexible
- Have a Plan B
- Allow plenty of time

Negotiation & collaboration

- Keep calm
- Proactively collaborate & negotiate to solve challenges
- Fairness & trust are central

Disguise & manage demands

- Word & position requests indirectly
- Constantly monitor tolerance for demands & match demands accordingly
- Doing things together helps

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