

Inclusion of PDA in Autism CRC National Guideline

Autism CRC has released an update of their “National Guideline for the assessment and diagnosis of autism in Australia”. You can go to Autism CRC’s website and download the full version.

<https://www.autismcrc.com.au/best-practice/assessment-and-diagnosis>

PDA is mentioned in the following recommendation which can be found on page 100.

“45 . 8 Practitioners should consider all plausible explanations for a client’s behaviour when establishing their strengths and support needs, as well as considering diagnostic characteristics. For example:

- A client may be engaging in behaviours that harm themselves, others, and/or property. Practitioners should consider the nature and possible functions of behaviour (e.g., what the client may be communicating through the behaviour), as well as individual and environmental factors that influence and maintain the behaviour. Consideration should also be given to aspects of the client’s health and wellbeing, including medical conditions, that may cause and/or contribute to the behaviour (e.g., a child hitting their head due to earache, unrecognised constipation).
- **A client may avoid demands and expectations in everyday life to an extreme extent. Rather than being viewed as the client being oppositional or defiant, practitioners should consider whether the behaviours are instead driven by an anxiety-based need to be in control. Pathological (or extreme) demand avoidance refers to a set of characteristics that can co-occur with autism and is recognised as a behavioural profile within autism. This profile is also referred to as persistent drive for autonomy, emphasising the function the behaviours serve.”**

The guideline recommendations were approved by the Chief Executive Officer of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) on 8 December 2023 under section 14A of the *National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992*. In approving the guideline recommendations, NHMRC considers that they meet the NHMRC standard for clinical practice guidelines.