



# Therapy with PDAers

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## Therapy

- Direct therapy is generally not the agent of change.
- The individual needs to be open to it.
- Family therapy generally is too intense and uncomfortable - one adult at a time.

## Understanding

- Help them understand how the world works - be their guide.
- But don't push back on their realities.
- "Start where the client is"
- "Non-judgmental attitude"
- Self Determination



- Self understanding.
- What increases anxiety?
- What makes you feel better - What do you need to be OK?
- Recovery cycles.
- What does anxiety feel like in your body?
- Who are your go to people?
- How to articulate your needs to others.

## For Therapists

- The focus needs to be on the relationship
- It is about building trust.
- They need to feel safe with you.
- Use a trauma focus lens.
- Join them in their interests.
- Use declarative language.
- Don't let people pressure you to pressure them.





It is not the population for everyone.

The therapist needs to be someone who:

- Is genuine.
- Is prepared to share control with the child.
- Does not seek to be viewed as an authority figure.
- Is playful or fun (it helps depending on the age).
- Has sense of humor (it helps).
- Is flexible, creative and can be spontaneous.
- Is able to react calmly to unwanted behavior.
- Practices self-care.
- Is a reflective practitioner, learning from what has worked well, as well as less well.
- Has considered view of boundaries that is integrated with priorities and a strategic overview.



Keep in mind

- It is a slow process.
- There will be many missed sessions.
- You will need a lot of reflection.
- Be genuine.
- Toss out agendas.
- Partner.
- Collaborate.
- Approach as equals.

Partnering with parents

- Understand what they have gone through.
- Their experiences with other professionals.
- Judgments and blame.
- And in some cases, worse
- Family dynamics.
- Sibling issues.



More about parents

- Help them build a village.
- Talk about self-care not boundaries.
- Be realistic in recommendations and make it collaborative.
- Tell them they don't need to process after meltdowns.
- They are in for the long haul.



Remember

- No technique, skill, strategy or therapy is more important than the relationship!
- Get consultation if needed.
- At the end of the day, people just want to feel heard, understood, and accepted.
- Be your authentic self.