

Journeys With PDA: Autistic Inertia

Autistic inertia is the difficulty or resistance an autistic individual experiences when transitioning from one task or activity to another. It is a sense of being "stuck" or unable to start or stop an action or task. Autistic people have the tendency to want to remain in a constant state.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- sensory overload
- executive functioning challenges
- anxiety
- difficulty with transitions
- hyper-focus
- demands
- expectations

CHALLENGES ROOTED IN INERTIA

- influences productivity
- causes stress/anxiety
- causes fatigue/ drains energy
- difficulty with self-care (eating/hygiene/sleep)
- social relationship difficulties
- contribute to dysregulation
- difficulty resuming tasks

WHAT DOES INERTIA LOOK LIKE...

- not feeling motivated
- feeling "stuck"
- indifferent about the task urgency
- lack of awareness of time
- indecision
- challenges with planning
- Hyper-focus
- difficulty resuming tasks after an interruption
- irritability/frustration

SUPPORTS...

- Patience & Empathy
- Allow flexibility
- Incorporate additional time for tasks
- Executive Functioning support
- Gentle prompting & reminders for essential tasks
- Break down tasks into fewer steps
- Help manage energy- Spoon Theory

It's important to recognize that inertia is part of the autistic experience and not a matter of laziness, stubbornness or defiance. Autistic inertia is a part of neurodiversity.

PDA CONSIDERATIONS...

Demands, requests & expectations can increase inertia and the feeling of being stuck.

Remember!
It's "can't" not "won't"

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- <https://autismawarenesscentre.com/what-is-autistic-inertia/>
<https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.631596/full#B38>
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/13623613231198916>

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