

STRATEGIES THAT PARENTS CAN USE TO MANAGE CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR IN NEURODIVERSE CHILDREN:

1. Build a Positive Relationship

- **Connect Through Interests:** Spend time engaging in activities that your child enjoys. Building a strong bond can make it easier to address challenging behaviours.



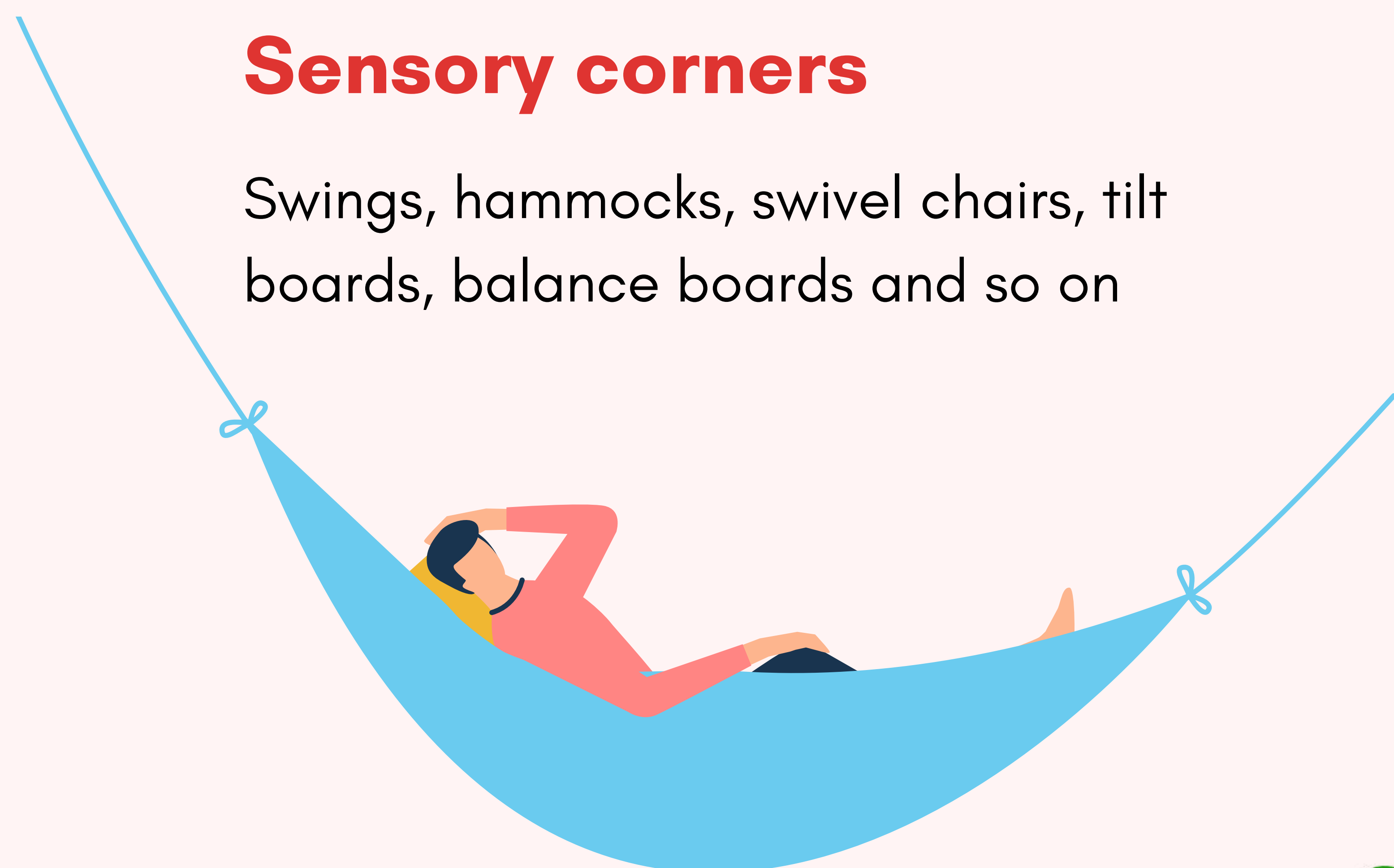
- **Use Positive Reinforcement:** Praise and reward good behavior immediately. Consistent positive reinforcement encourages the child to repeat those behaviours

classroom application

Prolonged sitting can reduce attention, concentration, and academic performance. Children who need more vestibular stimulation may benefit from:

Sensory corners

Swings, hammocks, swivel chairs, tilt boards, balance boards and so on



Brain breaks

Jumping, hopping, spinning, balance exercises, stretching, deep breaths

Outdoor activities

Outdoor walks, obstacle courses

Sensory tools

Fidgets, stress balls, weighted blankets

Seating options

Stability balls, wobble stools, balance cushions

Classroom layout

Standing desks, reading beanbag chairs



STRATEGIES THAT PARENTS CAN USE TO MANAGE CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR IN NEURODIVERSE CHILDREN:

2. Understand and Anticipate Triggers

- **Identify Patterns:** Observe when and where challenging behaviours occur. Look for patterns in the environment, sensory inputs, or transitions that might be causing stress



- **Preventive Strategies:** Once triggers are identified, modify the environment or routine to minimize these triggers. For example, if crowded places cause anxiety, plan quieter activities.

3. Set Clear, Consistent Boundaries

- **Consistent Routines:** Establish a predictable daily routine. Consistency helps neurodiverse children feel secure and reduces anxiety that can lead to challenging behaviour.
- **Simple Instructions:** Give clear, concise instructions. Use visual aids like charts or social stories to help the child understand expectations.

STRATEGIES THAT PARENTS CAN USE TO MANAGE CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR IN NEURODIVERSE CHILDREN:

4. Teach and Practice Self-Regulation

- **Calming Techniques:** Teach the child calming techniques such as deep breathing, using a fidget tool, or retreating to a quiet space when they feel overwhelmed.



- **Emotional Literacy:** Help the child identify and express their emotions through words, pictures, or other forms of communication. Understanding emotions can reduce frustration and outbursts.

5. Offer Choices and Control

- **Empowerment Through Choice:** Offer the child limited choices to give them a sense of control. For example, "Would you like to do your homework now or after a snack?"
- **Flexible Responses:** Be open to adjusting expectations based on the child's needs and preferences, especially when they are struggling.

STRATEGIES THAT PARENTS CAN USE TO MANAGE CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR IN NEURODIVERSE CHILDREN:

6. Consistent Consequences

- **Natural Consequences:** Allow the child to experience the natural consequences of their actions when appropriate, as long as it's safe. This can help them learn cause and effect.



- **Positive and Negative Consequences:** Use a mix of positive reinforcement for good behaviour and consistent, calm consequences for challenging behaviour, such as timeouts or loss of privileges.

7. Provide Sensory Support

- **Sensory Tools:** Provide tools that can help the child manage sensory sensitivities, like noise-canceling headphones, weighted blankets, or chewable jewelry.
- **Adjust the Environment:** Modify the home environment to reduce sensory overload, such as dimming lights, reducing noise, or creating a quiet space.

STRATEGIES THAT PARENTS CAN USE TO MANAGE CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR IN NEURODIVERSE CHILDREN:

8. Incorporate Visual Supports

- **Visual Schedules:** Use visual schedules or charts to help the child understand the day's activities and transitions.



- **Social Stories:** Use social stories to explain social situations and appropriate behaviours. These can help the child understand what to expect in different scenarios.

9. Collaborate with Professionals

- **Therapy and Support:** Work with therapists, counselors, or special education professionals to develop tailored strategies for managing behaviour.
- **Training and Education:** Attend workshops or training sessions to better understand your child's specific needs and how to support them effectively.

STRATEGIES THAT PARENTS CAN USE TO MANAGE CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR IN NEURODIVERSE CHILDREN:

10. Practice Patience and Flexibility

- **Be Patient:** Managing challenging behaviour takes time. Celebrate small successes and be patient with setbacks.



- **Adapt Strategies:** Be willing to adapt strategies as your child grows and their needs change. What works today may need adjusting tomorrow.

By consistently applying these strategies and working closely with your child, you can help them manage their behaviour more effectively while promoting a positive and supportive environment.

If challenging behaviours in autistic individuals, such as those with Pathological Demand Avoidance, are a result of their diagnosis and not something they can control, how do we encourage behavior change in a way that is empathetic and avoids the traditional reward system? Additionally, how do we ensure that we're not implying that these individuals can simply "get out" of these behaviours on their own?

- **Understanding the Diagnosis:** Acknowledge that certain behaviours in autistic individuals, including those with PDA, are deeply rooted in their neurological differences. These behaviours are not a choice but rather a response to overwhelming demands or stressors.
- **Empathy and Support:** Emphasize the importance of empathy in behaviour support. Instead of focusing on changing behaviour for the sake of compliance, the goal should be to understand the underlying causes of the behavior and support the individual in managing their responses in a way that respects their autonomy and dignity.
- **Alternatives to Rewards:**
 1. **Collaborative Approaches:** Involve the individual in the process of setting goals and finding strategies that work for them. This can include offering choices, creating a predictable environment, and reducing demands where possible.
 2. **Skill Development:** Focus on building skills that help the individual manage their emotions and responses, such as emotional regulation techniques, rather than relying solely on rewards.
 3. **Positive Reinforcement of Autonomy:** Reinforce behaviours that indicate self-advocacy, self-awareness, and self-regulation, which can be more meaningful than traditional rewards.

4. **Respecting Individual Differences:** Recognize that what works for one person may not work for another. It's important to tailor interventions to the individual's needs, preferences, and level of comfort, rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach.

5. **Pathological Demand Avoidance:** In the case of PDA, it is particularly important to reduce demands and offer choices in a way that feels non-threatening to the individual. Supporting their need for control and autonomy can be more effective than using external rewards, which may exacerbate anxiety and resistance.

This approach ensures that we are not dismissing the reality of the diagnosis but are instead providing support that aligns with the individual's needs and strengths.

