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**On Demand - Introduction to Pathological Demand Avoidance:
Exploring Demand Avoidant Behaviors, and Strategies and
Supports for the Autistic Community**
SPEAKER: KELSIE BACON, LCSW-S, RPT

INDEPENDENT SELF STUDY COURSE

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Pathological demand avoidance (PDA), (also known as rational demand avoidance, extreme demand avoidance, and persistent drive for autonomy) refers to the avoidance of everyday demands driven by anxiety and a need for autonomy. PDA is widely known as a profile on the autism spectrum in the United Kingdom and other countries. The United States is beginning to explore PDA and its application to autism. PDA remains an under-researched area and understanding of PDA characteristics is in its infancy. As a result, PDA remains a controversial topic in the field of autism. Despite the need for further research, many autistic individuals identify as PDAer's and find the characteristics of PDA to fit the struggles they experience. Although PDA is not clinically recognized by the IDC or the DSM, a demand-avoidant profile or a PDA profile may be noted in an autism diagnosis. Therefore, an understanding of demand-avoidant behaviors and strategies for supporting these behaviors is beneficial to autistics, their allies, and those supporting the autistic community.

Through PowerPoint lectures, videos, and quotes from those with lived experience, this webinar will explore the core characteristics of PDA, what constitutes a demand, and the socially based approaches used to avoid everyday demands. This webinar will briefly touch on the history and the current criticism of PDA. Participants will leave with an understanding of the R. U. S.A.F.E acronym and helpful strategies for supporting demand-avoidant behaviors.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

This course is suitable for anyone working or living with children or adults on the autism spectrum: parents, teachers/educators, teaching assistants, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, social workers, counselors, administrators and psychologists. This conference is open to anyone who wishes to attend and there are no prerequisites. This is an introductory level course.

If you require special assistance, please contact AEP Connections to inform them of your special needs by emailing: info@aeconnections.com or calling: 833.237.2668



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LEARNER OBJECTIVES

1. Attendees will be able to identify 3-5 of the core characteristics of Pathological Demand Avoidance.
2. Attendees will be able to explain 3-5 socially based approaches that may be used to avoid demands.
3. Attendees will be able to define the R. U. S.A.F.E acronym and its application to supporting demand avoidant characteristics and behaviors.

COURSE SCHEDULE

90 Minutes	Introduction to Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Brief History of PDA•PDA and demand avoidance•Chore Characteristics of PDA•Brief Criticisms of PDA
45 Minutes	Clarification responses & Socially based strategies for avoiding demands,
45 Minutes	R.U.S.A.F.E. acronym and support strategies & Conclusion/Wrap up



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SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY

Kelsie Bacon is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Registered Play Therapist. She is a clinical therapist and supervisor at The Treehouse in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Kelsie is multiply neurodivergent and specializes in working with children, adolescents, and families, including working with autistic children, neurodivergent children, and those diagnosed with ADHD and other developmental disabilities. She is certified in Autplay Therapy, level 1 and 2 sand tray trained, Level 3 OCN London accredited in Supporting Children, Adolescents, and Young Adults with Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA), and has her Down Syndrome Awareness Diploma. Kelsie is an integrative and prescriptive play therapist drawing from theories and modalities such as Cognitive Behavioral Play Therapy, Child-Centered Play Therapy, Experiential Play Therapy, Theraplay, Adlerian Play Therapy, Attachment theory, Sand tray, Mindfulness, Art, and DIR Floortime.

Kelsie has given national and international presentations on working with neurodivergent populations using play therapy. Kelsie is passionate about providing support and consultation to individuals, families, and therapists regarding PDA characteristics and strategies. She is a published author and co-authored the book *Supporting Autistic Ava*, with Lynn Louse Wonders. She was a guest on the Neurodiversity podcast where she spoke on depression and suicide in the neurodivergent community. She is a current board member of the Association for Play Therapy, New Mexico Branch, and is the current secretary for the Child Counseling Center and Play Therapy Institute of New Mexico board. Kelsie is a current participant in the 2023 Association of Play Therapy Leadership Academy.

Disclosures: Financial: Kelsie Bacon, LCSW-R, RPT receives an honorarium for her presentation with AEP Connections. Kelsie is on staff at The Treehouse. There are no reported conflicts of interest, financial, or non-financial relationships regarding this presentation.



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ON DEMAND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFERED:

- 1. CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE** 3.0 clock hours. Full attendance, a course evaluation and a passing score of 80% on the post test is required for satisfactory completion.
- 2. NBCC** AEP Connections, LLC has been approved by NBCC as an Approved Continuing Education Provider, ACEP No. 7173. Programs that do not qualify for NBCC credit are clearly identified. AEP Connections, LLC is solely responsible for all aspects of the programs. Full attendance, a course evaluation and an 80% on the post test is required for satisfactory completion.
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- 3. ASWB** AEP Connections, LLC, #1332, is approved as an ACE provider to offer social work continuing education by the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Approved Continuing Education (ACE) program. Regulatory boards are the final authority on courses accepted for continuing education credit. ACE provider approval period: 1/27/2025- 1/27/2028. Social workers completing this course receive 3 continuing education credits. Full attendance, a course evaluation and an 80% on the post test is required for satisfactory completion.
- 4. AOTA** - AEP Connections, LLC is an AOTA Approved Provider of professional development. Course approval ID 11660. This distance learning – interactive is offered for up to .3 CEUs (3.0 contact hours). Introductory, OT Service Delivery. AOTA does not endorse specific course content, products, or clinical procedures. Full attendance, a course evaluation and an 80% on the post test is required for satisfactory completion.
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- 6. NASP** - AEP Connections is approved by the National Association of School Psychologists to offer continuing education for school psychologists. AEP Connections maintains responsibility for the program. NASP Approved Provider #1165. A code to access the course evaluation will be provided in segments throughout the webinar, to ensure full participation. Full attendance, a course evaluation and an 80% on the post test is required for satisfactory completion.

Please note, NASW is NOT available for on-demand option. Contact AEP Connections with any accommodations.



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Strategies and Supports for the Autistic Community

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