Pathological Demand Avoidance Syndrome

Teaching style

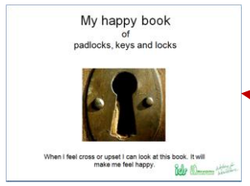
- Avoid direct instructions
  - "This group line up".
- Use more choices
  - Give two choices of tasks (both with same objective). One task should be easier than the other.
- Disguise expectations
- Be flexible and unpredictable
  - Individualised, novel, creative and vary pace of presentation
- Observation
  - Monitor child's reactions to different teaching methods.
  - Adapt teaching style.
    - Record strategies used by the child to avoid tasks etc.

Environment

- Accommodate
  - Sit child on the fringe of class.
    - Maximise incidental learning.
  - Be aware of anxiety triggers.
  - Use child's interests to motivate.

Anxiety

- Investigate /monitor anxiety and try to reduce it.
  - Use of a picture book based on child's interests.

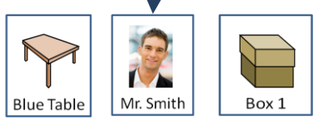


  - Allow access to stress objects.

  - Access to a 'bolthole' or 'safe space' within the classroom or somewhere in school.
  - Distract & divert on to a different activity.

Presentation of tasks

- Act incompetent
  - "I can't do this, can you?"
- Give child work without comment and leave them to it.
  - Put an activity in a box which the child can open and 'discover' the task for themselves.
- Set challenges
  - "I don't think you can do this by the time I come back!"
- Non-directive visuals



- Avoid direct commands use idea of 'team effort'.
  - "I would like the Green Group to do page 42".

Support

- 1:1 support at start and end of day
  - Oppourtunity for role play based social skills training.
- Creative use of scheduled breaks
- Establish relationship built on trust and a sense of 'fairness'.
- Try to keep calm
  - Gain support from other members of staff.
- Try to ignore negative behaviour
  - Avoid confrontations as far as possible.
- Be cautious about rewarding success
  - Use 'Golden Time' or interests to motivate.

This resource incorporates Widgit symbols and pictures (c) Widgit Software Ltd

Created by George Timlin 2009