

The Demand Triangle

What is the Demand Triangle?

The Demand Triangle is a tool we can use to look at the demand we are placing on young people. Neurodiverse people maybe more sensitive to different types of demands than neurotypical people.

Why is the Demand Triangle helpful?

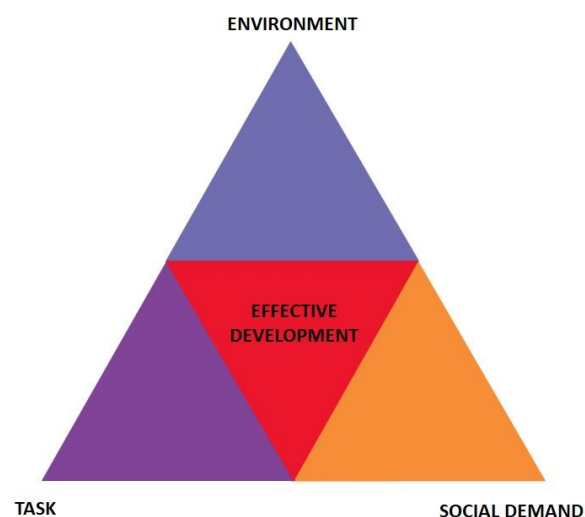
If we can understand the demands we are placing on young people, we can work to reduce them and thus reduce their anxieties, etc.

What does the Demand Triangle include?

The elements of the demand triangle are;

- **Environment** relates to the environment the individual is in, i.e., home, school and includes all the sensory information they are processing and include how much control they have over the demand and able they are to adapt it.
- **Tasks** relates to the task the individual is being asked to do, i.e., learning, activities. It also includes the persons previous experience, their understanding of the task and how able they feel to ask for help.
- **Social** relates to the social demand the individual is under, i.e., meeting new peers, having a 1:1 with a known person. It also includes the topic of conversation, how long they are having to chat and whether they are motivated to interact with others.

All 3 areas of the triangle have variable demands and these can be turned up or down depending on what is being asked of the person. You can reduce any one of these three things to reduce the demand on the young person. When any one of these three things is high, the demand on the young person increases so this should be carefully consider in young people who are sensitive to demands. When all three areas are high at the same time, this can result in the demand being overwhelming and person might show this through their behaviour.



Why would you use the Demand Triangle?

You would use the demand triangle to help you look at the demands you are placing on a young person, and to see where you can reduce this demand, and increase engagement.

How does the Demand Triangle relate to autistic people?

The Demand Triangle can be used to assess the demands we are placing on autistic people. Neurotypical people tend to prioritise just the task demand as neuro typical brains can absorb social and environmental demand more easily. However, autistic brains may find environmental and social demand to be more draining and take up more mental energy. The Demand Triangle provides a way for us to look at the balance of the demand and to consider how we can flex the demand to help a young person engage. For example, on moving to a new classroom, allow the child time to get used to just the physical space before you add in complicated tasks or social demands. Slowly increase these when the young person is more comfortable in the space.

Some top tips for using the Demand Triangle

- ❖ Use the demand triangle to evaluate if your planned activities may result in non-compliance prior to starting the activity.
- ❖ Use the demand triangle to reflect and evaluate if the task, environmental, or social elements were too high.
- ❖ There may be other ways to increase engagement, and lowering non-compliance, but keeping the demand triangle in mind can help.

Where can I find out more?

Perth Autism Support run a parent training called Practical Understanding of Autism. See our website for more information

https://www.perthautismsupport.org.uk/?page_id=8239

Young people can learn more about this in a course we run called Be Content. Please contact PAS office to find out more about this. You can phone PAS on 10738 451 081 or you can email info@perthautismsupport.org.uk