

FND Support Suggestions
**A Tip Sheet for Functional Neurological
Disorder (FND)**

Family members, friends and others in the community can have huge impacts on the development of and recovery from symptoms. Below are general ideas about what someone with FND may find helpful. We encourage you to explore this tip sheet to spark a conversation about how to be most helpful.

Suggestions:

- Facilitating and encouraging the individual with FND to seek medical and mental health care
- Reinforcing the importance of mental health services
- Supporting validity of the diagnosis and providing reassurance that providers have investigated concerns and are confident that we are on the right path
- Supporting emotional expression with validation and compassion. It is important not to minimize emotional experiences
- Seeking your own mental health care which can be healing for your needs and can model healing steps
- For family members, being open to family therapy if family dynamic/trauma concerns are expressed by the individual or their providers
- Supporting safe and stable home dynamics
- Minimizing over-reacting to symptoms. This does not mean ignoring or dismissing symptoms but rather remaining calm and being curious/supportive rather than frantic
- Reinforcing that this is a treatable condition and pointing out any positive changes
- Being open to feedback on what is helpful during symptoms and supporting their requests if possible. Do not assume what is helpful, but request the individual direct this discussion if they are able
- Encouraging independence, keeping in mind that the individual still needs support. We want to encourage slowly practicing approaching scary/uncertain environments rather than retreating. We do not want to encourage isolation or avoiding social settings
- Offer to reassure any anxious onlookers in public of the person's safety during their symptoms. Support encouraging being in the community
- Providing privacy for appointments when possible
- Attending appointments if requested by the individual or their provider (This can be particularly helpful for a Q &A format with family members)
- If the individual permits, we encourage inquiring into what emotions/thoughts/feelings might have preceded the symptom onset/worsening/improving. For ex. an individual may say that the symptom is there all day. Further exploration often points out that there are moments when symptoms are bigger/smaller. Others can help point out these variations to help build awareness. Others can then check in about what the individual might be thinking/feeling/experiencing. If the individual can't identify any causes, it might be helpful to hypothesize with them. Sometimes outside guesses from others can be very helpful. This is of course only helpful if the individual feels safe and is open to this type of support