FND EDUCATION PROJECT

Meeting a person with FND

A one-page clinical orientation for an unfamiliar encounter

Listen and make communication possible

Speak directly to the person. They may hear and understand while unable to speak or respond. Ask what helps; offer time, writing or another communication method, and less light or noise where helpful. Invite supporter observations with permission. [1, 2]

Recognise genuine, variable symptoms

Functional neurological disorder (FND) causes real, involuntary symptoms affecting movement, sensation, speech, cognition or episodes of altered awareness. Diagnosis uses positive clinical features; normal tests alone are insufficient. Psychological stress is not required. Improved function in one setting can coexist with substantial everyday disability. [1]

Assess this presentation on its own merits

Compare today with the medically assessed pattern. FND can coexist with migraine, epilepsy and other illnesses: each deserves appropriate care. Assess changed symptoms, injury and physiological stability. Suspected stroke, severe breathing difficulty or ongoing unresponsiveness requires immediate emergency assessment. [1, 3]

Use proportionate care for functional seizures

Follow the individual plan for a familiar, confirmed functional event while reassessing unexpected changes. Protect from injury and use calm communication. Avoid restraint and painful attempts to stop an event. Benzodiazepines and antiseizure medicines require another clinical indication, such as coexisting epilepsy; they are not indicated for functional seizures alone. [2, 3]

Leave a clear next step

Explain the assessment and agree what happens next, who will follow up and when reassessment is needed. Ask about everyday function, safe mobility and the help actually available. Rehabilitation and practical accommodations can support participation alongside ongoing care. [1, 2]

Clinical references

1. Bennett et al. *Clin Med* (2021). doi:10.7861/clinmed.2020-0987
2. Tolchin et al. AAN functional-seizure guideline. *Neurology* (2026). doi:10.1212/WNL.0000000000214466
3. Mcloughlin et al. Iatrogenic harm in FND. *Brain* (2025). doi:10.1093/brain/awae283

What I would like the clinician to know

My symptoms, communication needs, other conditions or questions:

For more free FND education, visit https://fndeducationproject.org

General education; individual assessment and care remain with the treating team. Updated 25 Oct 2026.