

Talking About FND: A Practical Toolkit

Talking about Functional Neurological Disorder can feel exhausting, vulnerable, or overwhelming. Many people are asked to explain their condition repeatedly, often in moments when energy, clarity, or emotional safety is already limited.

This toolkit is designed to support communication about FND in practical, flexible ways. You do not need to explain everything, educate everyone, or speak perfectly. The tools here are meant to reduce pressure and help you communicate only what feels necessary.

Deciding When to Explain and When Not To

You are not obligated to explain FND in every situation. Deciding whether to talk about your condition is a personal choice and can change over time.

It may help to consider:

- Who is asking and why
- Whether the explanation is likely to lead to support
- Your current energy and capacity
- What you feel safe sharing

Choosing not to explain is not avoidance. It is boundary-setting.

Identifying What You Want From the Conversation

Not all conversations about FND have the same purpose. Clarifying your goal ahead of time can reduce pressure and help guide what you share.

You may want:

- Understanding or validation
- Practical support or accommodations
- Clear next steps
- Reduced assumptions or judgment
- Simply to be heard

It is okay if your goal is modest. You do not need to resolve everything at once.

Simple Ways to Describe FND

Many people find it helpful to have a short, plain-language explanation ready. This does not need to be medically detailed.

Examples may include:

- “My nervous system has trouble sending and receiving signals correctly.”

- “My symptoms are real, but they do not show up on scans.”
- “My condition affects how my body functions, not its structure.”

You can adapt language to fit the situation or use written explanations when speaking feels difficult.

Responding to Common Misunderstandings

Misunderstandings about FND are common and can feel invalidating. You are not required to correct every misconception.

If you choose to respond, it may help to:

- Correct only what feels most important
- Redirect the conversation toward impact rather than explanation
- Use short, neutral statements
- End the conversation if it becomes unsafe or dismissive

Protecting your wellbeing matters more than being understood perfectly.

Using Written Supports

Written supports can reduce the need to repeat yourself and conserve energy.

These may include:

- A short written explanation saved on your phone
- A printed resource you can share
- A follow-up email after a conversation
- A note prepared in advance for appointments or meetings

Written communication can be just as valid as spoken explanations.

After the Conversation

Even helpful conversations can leave you feeling drained. It is common to notice delayed emotional or physical responses.

After talking about FND, you may want to:

- Rest or regulate before reflecting
- Acknowledge effort, not outcome
- Write down follow-up thoughts later
- Limit additional conversations until you recover

You do not need to debrief every interaction.

You Do Not Owe an Explanation

Talking about FND should not require you to defend your experience or educate at the expense of your wellbeing. You are allowed to choose what you share, how you share it, and when you step back.

Healing Horizons for FND supports communication that prioritizes dignity, boundaries, and self-respect.