

Supporting a Loved One With FND

Without Burnout

Supporting someone with Functional Neurological Disorder can involve ongoing adjustment, unpredictability, and emotional labor. Over time, caregiving can become exhausting, especially when support expectations are unclear or continually expanding.

This toolkit focuses on **practical ways caregivers can support a loved one with FND while reducing the risk of burnout**. It emphasizes clarity, boundaries, and sustainable support rather than endurance or self-sacrifice.

Recognizing Early Signs of Burnout

Burnout often develops gradually rather than suddenly.

Caregivers may notice:

- ongoing exhaustion that does not resolve with rest

- irritability or reduced patience
- difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- feeling overwhelmed by caregiving responsibilities

Noticing these signs early may create an opportunity to adjust support or ask for help.

Separating Support From Over-Responsibility

Supporting a loved one does not require managing every aspect of their life or condition.

It may help to:

- clarify what support is helpful versus what creates strain
- avoid taking responsibility for symptom control or outcomes
- focus on support rather than problem-solving

Clear boundaries help prevent role overload.

Creating Predictable Support Patterns

Unpredictable caregiving demands increase strain.

More sustainable approaches may include:

- establishing shared routines where possible
- agreeing on how support will be requested
- avoiding constant vigilance when safety does not require it

Predictability supports both caregiver and recipient.

Responding to Fluctuation Without Overreacting

FND symptoms can change day to day.

It may help to:

- if symptoms match the person's usual FND pattern and there are no signs of an emergency, respond calmly without adding unnecessary urgency.
- avoid assuming worsening means failure

- respond proportionally to the situation

Calm, situation-appropriate responses may help reduce emotional strain.

New, severe, or significantly different symptoms should not automatically be assumed to be FND. Seek urgent medical help when there may be an injury or medical emergency.

Preserving Time That Is Not Caregiving

Caregiving can expand to fill all available space.

It may help to:

- protect time that is not centered on caregiving
- maintain personal interests or responsibilities
- allow yourself to disengage when appropriate

Time away supports long-term capacity.

Asking for and Accepting Support

Caregivers do not need to manage alone.

Support may include:

- practical help from others
- respite or breaks when possible
- shared decision-making rather than solo responsibility

Accepting support strengthens sustainability.

Adjusting Support as Circumstances Change

Caregiving needs may shift over time.

It can help to:

- revisit what support looks like periodically
- reduce or redistribute responsibilities when needed
- communicate changes openly

Adjusting support may make caregiving more sustainable over time.

Supporting With Care and Sustainability

Supporting a loved one with Functional Neurological Disorder does not require constant sacrifice. When caregiving is structured, realistic, and bounded, it is more likely to remain consistent and compassionate over time.

This toolkit is intended to support caregivers in providing meaningful support while protecting their own capacity.

Explore more FND resources.

