

# FUNCTIONAL NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS

# Psychology

## Factsheet

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## **Psychologists can help you to understand and manage your FND symptoms by identifying and modifying patterns of behaviors, thoughts and emotions that contribute to and worsen symptoms.**

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### **What is a psychologist?**

Psychologists are professionals trained in the science of how people think, feel, behave and learn. Psychologists may assess areas of concern, diagnose mental health conditions, as well as provide support, advice or therapy and treatment of presenting issues.

### **How can a psychologist help FND?**

Psychologists use a range of therapies that can help you with your FND symptoms. Some of the common therapies used are: cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), psychodynamic therapy and

Dialectal Behavioral Therapy (DBT). Therapy will involve a tailored plan addressing factors that may increase vulnerability to developing symptoms, trigger symptoms or maintain FND symptoms. Together you will identify goals of treatment. Your psychologist may assess symptoms (e.g. use questionnaires) to monitor symptoms and track changes over time, this is important to know whether therapy is working. Improving understanding of symptoms, as well as developing a range of practical tools for managing symptoms are important components of treatment.

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## Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

CBT is a short term, practical style of talk therapy. It focuses on managing current symptoms and learning new skills to apply to future problems. CBT recognizes that thoughts/interpretations, emotions and behaviors are all connected and can maintain a problem.

**Example:** Jenny is planning to go to the shops, however she thought before going "I might have an episode and something bad will happen". Naturally Jenny will be feeling worried and anxious about going to the shops. Jenny may experience psychological signs of anxiety like increased breathing or heart rate, feel shaky or nauseous. These feelings might change the way Jenny goes to the shops. She may ask someone to go with her, or avoid going all together. This would result in Jenny have reduced independence and confidence in their ability to cope and may worsen anxiety and possibly increase the risk of having an episode.

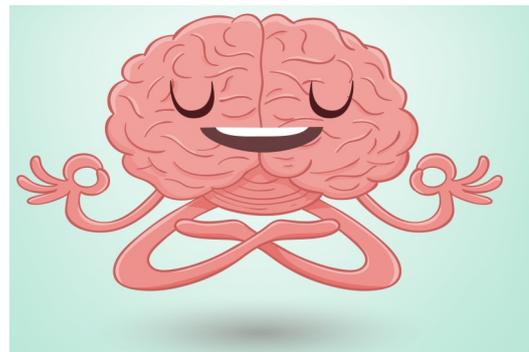
CBT can help you to identify, challenge and change unhelpful thinking patterns and behaviors that may be worsening symptoms. CBT is a structured therapy which involves a partnership between you and your psychologist. Each session may include discussion, explanation or practice of skills. Between sessions you will be encouraged to practice skills. CBT is recognized as an effective treatment for FND and many other behavioral and emotional conditions.

### In Summary

Psychologists can help treat a range of functional symptoms. Psychologists often work as part of a team to help you better understand and manage your condition. The aim of treatment is to enable you to manage your symptoms independently.

Psychologists can help you with:

- Learning and understanding more about FND
- Developing a deeper understanding of your symptoms
- Teaching strategies to manage symptoms
- Treating any co-existing psychological conditions ( e.g. anxiety, depression)
- Managing dissociation



Picture source: <https://www.freepik.com/free-photos-vectors/hand> Hand vector created by freepik - [www.freepik.com](http://www.freepik.com)

### Video Resources

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) Simply Explained  
<https://youtu.be/WhMmZJ3H1E8>

- <http://fndaustralia.com.au>

Go to:

⇒ Resources

⇒ Educational Videos