



THE INSTITUTE FOR KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION IN REHABILITATION

# **Functional Neurological Disorders: Advancing Physical Therapy with Evidence-Based Clinical Reasoning**

Includes online education, discussion sessions, group mentoring, a community of practice, and many resources and tools to support clinicians and organizations in assessment and treatment of individuals with Functional Neurologic Disorders in clinical practice.

Online course start date: September 28, 2026

Q & A Sessions (7:00 PM ET): October 20 and November 11, 2026

Mentoring Sessions (7:00 PM ET): December 8 and December 15, 2026



## ABOUT THE INSTITUTE FOR KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION

Research indicates that traditional methods of providing education, such as in-person and online continuing education courses, may improve knowledge and skill but they do very little to change the care provided in clinical practice. The Institute for Knowledge Translation (iKT) provides an innovative and evidence-based solution to maximize the impact of education and quality improvement efforts. The iKT offers a variety of evidence-based knowledge translation programs, from comprehensive educational packages to help individuals build knowledge to comprehensive solutions to assist healthcare organizations in improving clinical practice.

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Functional Neurological Disorders (FND) are one of the top five reasons people seek evaluation in neurology clinics. Despite this high prevalence, FND remains poorly understood, presenting significant challenges for physical therapists in various practice settings.

FND is recognized as a brain network disorder, characterized by disruptions within and across brain networks. Diagnosis relies on "rule-in" signs with high sensitivity and specificity, distinguishing it from other conditions. Emerging neuroscience has revealed that individuals with FND often experience impairments in several areas, including prediction, attention, interoception, and agency.

Physical therapy is a first-line treatment for motor FND, supported by consensus guidelines and emerging evidence from randomized controlled trials. However, inconsistencies in entry-level physical therapy curricula have left many clinicians grappling with clinical questions and a need for effective strategies to manage this complex patient population. This course will equip participants with foundational knowledge and clinical reasoning frameworks to enhance the assessment and management of FND, grounded in current and emerging evidence.

In addition to didactic online learning, participants will receive many resources to support implementation, including:

- FND education, assessment, and treatment resources (e.g., cheat sheets)
- Reading resource library
- "FND Essentials" supply list to enhance treatment sessions
- Two mid-course sessions to answer questions about content (2, 1-hour session)
- Two online group mentoring sessions (2, 1-hour sessions)
- Participation in an online community of practice for one year which will include quarterly meetings plus access to an online community.

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

This course offers a comprehensive approach to understanding and managing FND, equipping participants with the tools to deliver evidence-based, patient-centered care. Participants will:

- Explain the pathophysiology of FND effectively to patients and colleagues.
- Perform accurate assessments, integrating biopsychosocial principles into both subjective and objective evaluations.
- Utilize clinical reasoning frameworks to create personalized, effective plans of care for individuals with FND.
- Screen for common comorbidities such as Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS) and Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome (EDS), and understand how to adjust care plans accordingly.
- Identify when and how to refer patients to other allied health professionals for optimal outcomes.

## FACULTY



Julie Maggio is a clinical specialist for the outpatient physical therapy service at Massachusetts General Hospital as well as an affiliated researcher with the MGH Functional Neurology Research Group. She works exclusively with patients who have neurologic dysfunction and has extensive experience treating patients with Functional Neurological Disorders. Her research is focused on outpatient care of patients with FND and she actively lectures on physical therapy treatment for FND. Julie is a founding member of the FND society and is recognized as a Certified Neurologic Clinical Specialist by the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties.



Heather Salon is a clinical specialist in the outpatient physical therapy service at Massachusetts General Hospital. She is a mentor and faculty member of the MGH Neurologic Physical Therapy Residency program and provides clinical care to patients with neurological and vestibular disorders including close collaboration with the FND Clinic at MGH. She also provides coverage of specialty multi-disciplinary care clinic for Huntington's Disease. Currently, she is pursuing a Doctor of Education degree at Northeastern University with proposed research in the development of mentors in physical therapy residency programs. She is an adjunct faculty member at Northeastern University and the MGH Institute for Health Professions. She lectures in her faculty role, as well as being an invited speaker on various topics, including Functional Neurological Disorders. She is recognized as a Neurologic Clinical Specialist by the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties.

## COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

The iKT Functional Neurologic Disorder Community of Practice meets for 1-hour, quarterly at 7:00 PM ET. The meeting format includes a presentation on research or application of research to clinical practice, followed by a discussion. The registration for this course includes a 1-year membership to the Community of Practice. After the first year, clinicians can renew with a paid membership.

## REGISTRATION, PRICING, AND CEUS

The intended audience for this course includes physical therapists and physical therapist assistants. Registration is available on [knowledgetranslation.org](https://knowledgetranslation.org) for \$449 per person. The fees cover the online course, 14.5 contact hours, including 10.5 hours of asynchronous online learning, 4 hours of synchronous sessions online sessions with course faculty, 1-year membership to the community of practice, and several tools to support clinicians and organizations in assessment and treatment of individuals with Functional Neurologic Disorders in clinical practice.

Discounts are available for > 5 registrations from the same organization. Please contact [info@knowledgetranslation.org](mailto:info@knowledgetranslation.org) for details.

The course is pending approval by the Indiana Physical Therapy Association. Participants are responsible for transferring CEUs for approval in other states.

## CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellations must be provided in writing and must be provided 30 days prior to the start date for the implementation program. Refunds will be provided, however, a 15% administrative fee may be retained. The Institute for Knowledge Translation (iKT) reserves the right to change programs or cancel for due cause. If the iKT cancels the implementation program, a full refund will be provided.

## COURSE OUTLINE

Dates	Activity	Description
Sept 28 - Oct 20	Survey & Part 1 of online course	<p>Course released on February 2, 2026. Participants will complete a 15-minute survey on current knowledge, perspectives, and treatment of FND in their current practice.</p> <p>Participants will take the first component of the online course material which will take approximately 3 hours. Part 1 will include: history of FND, diagnosis of FND, pathophysiology and mechanisms, and current treatment evidence.</p>
Oct 20 7-8 PM ET	1-hour Q & A session	1-hour session with the course instructors. Participants will be asked to submit questions prior to the session.
Oct 21 - Nov 10	Part 2 of online course	Participants will take the second part of the online course which will take approximately 3 hours and include physical therapy evaluation including a framework for evaluation, subjective history, and objective assessment of all relevant systems.
Nov 10 7-8 PM ET	1-hour Q & A session	1-hour session with the course instructors. Participants will be asked to submit questions prior to the session.
Nov 11 - Dec 8	Part 3 of online course	Participants will take the third part of the online course which will take approximately 3.5 hours and include physical therapy treatment including motor control, sensory and autonomic interventions, and management of episodic symptoms. Cases provide examples of treatment and discharge planning.
Dec 8 - Dec 15	Part 4 of online course	Participants will take the 4th part of the course which will take approximately 1 hour to complete and will include a post-test. Topics covered will be addressing future directions in FND including the overlap of FND with autism, EDS, POTS, and dual neurologic diagnoses including Parkinson's disease.
Dec 8 Dec 15 7 PM ET	2 - 1 hour online mentoring sessions	<p>Participants will attend online discussions about the application of the FND education in practice (patient-related questions, application to practice, barriers, facilitators, and other participant questions will be addressed).</p> <p>Participants will be asked to submit any challenging cases, questions, or issues for discussion 1-week prior to mentoring meeting.</p>
Quarterly meetings	Online community of practice (CoP)	<p>Participants have access to an online community of practice for one year. This forum provides a location for in-depth discussion about patient cases, barriers, and KT efforts related to functional neurological disorders. Relevant literature will also be disseminated and discussed.</p> <p>*Participants in the CoP are required to have a Google account to participate in the online forum.</p> <p>*CoP meetings occur online at 7:00 PM ET quarterly.</p>

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