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Social Security Disability for PTSD

When applying for Social Security disability benefits with a diagnosis of PTSD there are some unique aspects of these particular claims.

I will discuss how SSA handles posttraumatic stress disorder in an SSD or SSI claim. I will also talk about lawyers for SSDI PTSD claims. You will also find on this page some reasons why some of these disability claims can be difficult and I will give you helpful tips to give you a better chance to win your benefits.

SSD Lawyer for PTSD

So how does the Social Security Administration handle posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) claims? To answer this you must first understand how Social Security determines if you are disabled. It is a five step process which I explain on the page that is linked in the previous sentence. First of all, unless the claimant is a veteran and treated by a VA doctor this diagnosis tends to be under diagnosed. This is because civilian doctors and SSA doctors are not confronted with PTSD on a daily basis like VA doctors are. To make my point you only have to look at the Social Security medical listings of impairments for mental conditions and you will not see the words posttraumatic stress disorder or PTSD. This does not mean you cannot meet or equal the Social Security medical listings for PTSD. You should look at the list of mental disorders and see if you feel you may meet or equal any of these listings. If you think you might, take a copy of the entire medical listings for psychiatric conditions to your psychiatrist to get his or her opinion. It is important that if they feel you meet or equal one of the listings that they state which one, why and point to the medical evidence that supports it. If you read my page on how Social Security determines if you are disabled you will know that you do not have to meet or equal a listed impairment to be found disabled. I will talk about that a little later on this page. Another difficulty with posttraumatic stress disorder claims is that many times those suffering from the condition often self medicate with drugs or alcohol. This is troublesome in a Social Security disability claim because you cannot be awarded Social Security disability benefits based on drug and alcohol addiction. So, to be successful in a PTSD claim for an individual with a drug or alcohol problem and you must be able to separate the individuals limitation caused by drug and alcohol use from the symptoms caused by PTSD that prevent the claimant from working. So if this is your situation, it is extremely important that your doctor explain what your limitations are from your posttraumatic stress disorder and separate that from the limitations caused by the drugs or alcohol. PTSD is largely thought of as a psychiatric condition of veterans but non-veterans can experience traumatic events that can cause PTSD which may cause the same or similar symptoms as veterans who suffer from PTSD. Non-military traumatic events can include car accidents, natural disasters, fires, and sexual assault just to name a few. Many people who suffer from PTSD are often misdiagnosed as suffering from other forms of anxiety, depression or other mental disorders.

Many times those applying for disability may have PTSD and this may only be part of their claim, and by itself may not prevent the individual from working. However, even if the claimant's post traumatic stress disorder is not disabling by itself in many cases it may be combined with other medical conditions to show an overall picture of disability. An example of a common claim of this sort is an individual who was in a serious car accident and has numerous physical injuries and also has symptoms of PTSD due to the traumatic experience of the accident itself. Social Security will look at all your medical conditions combined to determine if you are disabled so you will want to get your doctors opinion evidence of both your mental limitations from your post traumatic stress disorder and your physical limitations from your other medical conditions to give your self the best chance to win your claim.

Lawyers and SSD for PTSD

In much the same way as many civilian doctors are not as familiar with PTSD as other psychiatric conditions, the same applies for Social Security disability lawyers. So if you are trying to get Social Security disability benefits for PTSD it is a good idea to get a lawyer experienced in PTSD disability claims. I handle SSDI, SSI and VA compensation claims and therefore, have a lot of experience in dealing with PTSD as a disability. Although there is no such thing as a PTSD disability attorney, most disability lawyers who handle VA and SSD claims should be familiar with post-traumatic stress disorder and how to best handle your SSD or SSI claim for this condition. Another reason you may want a disability attorney familiar with both SSD and VA claims is because if you are a veteran there is a good chance you are either already getting individual unemployability (IU), or you are rated at 100% based on PTSD or you are trying to get those benefits as well. You can get both and if you are awarded these benefits it can be helpful evidence in your SSDI claim and vice versa. So having both your claims with one lawyer or at least having a lawyer that understands the difference between the two and how each claim can help the other would be an advantage. If you would like to ask me some questions or need help with your claim feel free to call me at **1-877-527-5529**.