How Someone with A Mental Health Condition Could Qualify For Social Security Disability Benefits

There are dozens of kinds of mental health conditions, and some of them can affect an individual more severely than others. If you have a severe mental health condition that keeps you from working, you may qualify for disability benefits administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA). The SSA has a set of disability listings for mental disorders that range from depression to anxiety to psychotic conditions to autism and different learning disabilities. You will need to meet the medical criteria and other requirements to have your claim approved.

Meeting the Medical Criteria

The disability listings contain criteria that must be met to prove that the condition is disabling. While most disability claims are denied during the initial review, many are approved when they are appealed and then reconsidered with additional information. Disability claims are often filed for cognitive, emotional, psychological, and psychiatric conditions. The Blue Book listings include mental disorders that the SSA consider to be disabling, but you may have a disabling condition that does not have its own listing. The disability examiner has the responsibility of reviewing your symptoms and medical records to determine if your condition meets the criteria of any specific mental disorder that has a Blue Book listing.

Some of the Blue Book listings that apply to mental conditions include schizophrenia, intellectual disorders, autistic disorders, anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, and substance abuse disorders. The disability examiner will base his or her decision on whether your condition meets the criteria of a listing. They will do this by reading clinical notes, reviewing third-party questionnaires completed by educators, friends, relatives, and caregivers, and through an activities of daily living (ADL) questionnaire.

Using A Medical Vocational Allowance

You may be disabled but not meet the specific criteria of a Blue Book listing. You can still qualify for disability benefits using a medical vocational allowance. This approach takes multiple things into consideration, including your age, work history, transferrable skills, educational background, medical conditions, limitations, and restrictions.

The key piece of evidence for a successful medical vocational allowance is a residual functional capacity (RFC). The RFC is completed by your physician and details what you can and cannot do so a clear picture of your abilities is made available to the disability examiner. It may indicate social difficulties, the inability to concentrate, difficulty with memories, difficulty focusing, unable to remain productive and finish tasks, and so forth. By reviewing the RFC, the disability examiner can determine if there are any jobs that the claimant can perform.

Applying for Disability Benefits

If you are unable to work because of a mental disorder, complete the disability claim form. You can start the process online or by calling 1-800-772-1213 and speaking with a representative. Hard medical evidence and other supporting documentation is essential to the success of your disability claim and ensuring that the disability examiner can get an accurate picture of your abilities and restrictions.
Resources Found Via:

- https://www.ssa.gov/
- https://www.ssa.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/12.00-MentalDisorders-Adult.htm#12_03
- https://www.ssa.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/12.00-MentalDisorders-Adult.htm#12_06
- https://secure.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/lnx/0425025005
- https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/forms/