



PTSD and Social Security Disability

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A number of our Social Security Disability clients suffer from post-traumatic-stress-disorder or PTSD. Individuals suffering from this disorder frequently experience the following symptoms:

- re-experiencing symptoms (for example, a car backfire reminds a veteran of gunfire from battle),
- avoidance of situations that remind a person of the traumatic event (for example, avoiding television shows with natural disasters after one survives an earthquake), and
- feeling keyed-up or hyper-aroused.

The course of prescribed treatment can include cognitive-behavioral therapy, exposure therapy, and medications such as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs). While not all individuals who have been diagnosed with PTSD will be found disabled under Social Security rules, one source of information for people with PTSD that we recommend is [WebMD.com](#). This is a Web site full of information and resources for those suffering from PTSD.

Recently we have assisted individuals with PTSD in getting Social Security Disability and Supplemental Security Income. Their cases were among the more severe of those suffering with the disease. The degree of frequency and severity of an individual's symptoms are unique in each case and will determine, to a large degree, whether an individual claim will be granted benefits.

Some diseases are included in Social Security's Listing of impairments. In some instances, a disease, while not Listed, is addressed in a Social Security Ruling. The Rulings offer guidance but do not set out specific criteria for an award of benefits. Other diseases are not in the Listings or recognized in a Social Security Ruling.

Regardless of the disease, you and your lawyer should have the following:

- a good working list of your symptoms,
- a knowledge of the degree of certainty of your diagnosis,
- a general understanding of the consistency between your symptoms and your diagnosis,
- a good understanding of what evidence might best support your contention that your symptoms are disabling, and
- which legal theory will most likely be accepted by the Social Security Administration given the particular facts of the entire case.

If you, or someone you know, is suffering from severe PTSD, consider visiting WebMD for additional information on the disorder. If you are considering a Social Security Disability claim, we advise you to speak with an attorney. We handle cases throughout the state of Texas, but we are always happy to give you a referral if we are unable to assist you.