Are People With Bipolar Disorder Eligible for Disability Benefits?

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Disability for Bipolar

Many health-related issues can impact one’s life on a wide variety of levels. Some of these health-related issues include disabilities. These disabilities can have physical or psychological effects. Unfortunately, disabilities can have adverse effects on one’s everyday life and often assistance may be required to get through the day.

Is Bipolar Disorder a Disability?

Bipolar disorder is considered a disability. However, you must meet certain criteria to be considered disabled in the eyes of the ADA.

According to Disability Benefits Help, “Any individual with bipolar disorder can be eligible for disability benefits if he/she meets the evaluation criteria listed in the Social Security Administration’s Blue Book, and if he/she has received a medical vocational disability endorsement based on the person's residual functional ability, education and age.”

What Is the ADA?

The ADA, or the Americans With Disabilities Act, is a civil rights law passed in 1990 that prevents discrimination against people with disabilities in all areas of public life. It’s divided into five different titles that dictate its protections in public life.

Title I covers employment protections, and it applies to employers with 15 or more employees. This title contains both the definition of disability and the clause requiring a reasonable accommodation. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission enforces these regulations.

Title II ensures there’s no discrimination within public services. The US Department of Justice requires public entities to make things accessible for individuals with disabilities. Title III prohibits public places of accommodation from discriminating against people with disabilities. This is also regulated and enforced by the US Department of Justice.

Title IV ensures that individuals with hearing or speech disabilities are able to have access to the telecommunication system. This includes closed captioning of federally funded programs and the FCC regulates this. Title V has a wide variety of miscellaneous provisions.

The Criteria for Disability for Bipolar Disorder

To meet the criteria to be eligible for public disability benefits, one must have a history of either manic episodes, depressive episodes, or both. You must also meet two of the following descriptions:

- Severe limitation of daily activity, inability to interact with others in a normal way.
- Recurring episodes of decompensation, which last for an extended period of time.

If you do not meet these requirements, but you have a documented history of suffering from a chronic disability (such as bipolar disorder), there is still a chance of you being granted benefits if you meet certain criteria. The chronic medical history must have been documented for at least two years.

If you are struggling with basic tasks of work even while undergoing treatment, if your condition is resulting in persistent decompensation, or if, “the residual illness process has caused a subsidiary adjustment that even a nominal boost in mental demands would cause the claimant to decompensate,” you may be eligible for disability benefits.

You must also be incapable of functioning outside of a “supportive livelihood for any foreseeable time period.”

How To Apply for Disability for Bipolar Disorder

Sometimes dealing with bipolar disorder can become extremely overwhelming. Even the emotional rollercoaster that accompanies bipolar disorder can make coping with everyday functions difficult. This can include work.

When it becomes difficult to work, it becomes difficult to maintain a consistent income. This is where applying for disability for bipolar disorder could help you. The Social Security Administration recommends that you apply as soon as you become disabled.

Their decision as to whether or not you’ve been approved for benefits will be sent to you in the mail. Keep in mind it’s important to have access to your medical documentation because your approval largely relies on that.

This is why it’s important to see your doctor throughout your treatment process. Seeing your doctor not only ensures you’re getting the proper professional treatment, but it also ensures that you’ll have the documentation you need just in case your episodes become more severe.

What If You’re Not Approved?

There is an appeals process that one can go through however, it can be challenging to go through on your own without prior knowledge of the system at hand. This is why it may be recommended to reach out to a disability benefits lawyer for this process if you’re able to. Some of these attorneys can be paid by up to 25 percent of the benefits owed to you during the appeal process.

Getting the Help You May Need

There’s no shame in receiving assistance when it’s needed. That’s what it’s there for. This is no different for disability benefits. If you’re in need and you’re eligible to receive benefits, it’s recommended that you apply as soon as you can. The sooner you apply, the sooner you may be able to receive your benefits and focus on the treatment you need.