

How Someone with a Mental Health Condition Can Qualify for Social Security Disability Benefits

Have you ever wondered if you can receive Social Security disability benefits for a mental health condition and not a physical health condition? You can. The [Social Security Administration](#) recognizes debilitating mental health conditions as well as physical conditions. In fact, depression is the second most common reason why people receive disability benefits. So, if you're unable to work because of a mental health condition and you thought that you couldn't file a claim for disability benefits you should know that you can absolutely file a claim for benefits. The only requirements are that you have worked and paid taxes in the past, and that you expect that you won't be able to work for at least a year because of your mental health condition.

How to Medically Qualify

The Social Security Administration has an official book called the [Blue Book](#) which lists every condition that is eligible for disability benefits including mental conditions. This book is searchable online if you want to see if your condition is listed. Before your claim can be approved you will need to [provide proof](#) that you meet the requirements in the listing for your condition. For example, if you are filing a claim for benefits because of depression you would need to show that you have at least [five of these symptoms](#):

- depressed mood
- decreased interest in almost all activities
- appetite disturbance (poor appetite or overeating) resulting in a change in weight
- thoughts of death or suicide, and/or
- a slowing of physical movement and reactions, including speech, or increased physical agitation, such as hand wringing or pacing.
- sleep disturbance (insomnia or oversleeping)
- difficulty concentrating or thinking
- feelings of worthlessness or guilt

You also need to have proof that you have an extreme limitation in one of these areas, or a severe limitation in two or more of them.

- interacting with others (the ability to use socially appropriate behaviors)
- concentrating, persisting, or maintaining pace in performing tasks (the ability to complete tasks)
- understanding, remembering, or applying information (the ability to understand instructions, learn new things, apply new knowledge to tasks, and use judgment in decisions)
- adapting or managing oneself (having practical personal skills like paying bills, cooking, shopping, dressing, and practicing good hygiene).

Proof can be any medical documentation that you have including statements from a counselor or psychiatrist, a case worker, your former boss, teachers, or anyone that speak to your limitations.

How to Qualify Without Using the Blue Book

What can you do if you don't meet the requirements in the Blue Book but you can't work? This is a very common scenario. In this case you need to file for [Medical Vocational Allowance](#). It's an exception that will make you eligible for disability benefits. To get it you need your doctor to fill out a Residual Functional Capacity evaluation, which is available on the SSA's website. In the [RFC evaluation](#) you doctor should detail all of your symptoms and how they limit your ability to work. If the SSA reviews the RFC evaluation and decides that there really is no work that you can do with the skills that you have then you will be eligible for benefits.

Filing A Claim For Disability Benefits

You can file a claim for disability benefits directly through the [SSA's website](#) if you aren't able to easily leave the house. But if you have questions or need help filing the claim make an appointment at the SSA branch closest to you. When you go to the appointment take all of your medical documents. The staff at the SSA will help you fill out and file a claim.

Resources Found Via:

- <https://www.ssa.gov/>
- <https://www.ssa.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/general-info.htm>
- <https://www.disabilitybenefitscenter.org/glossary/acceptable-medical-source>
- https://www.ssa.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/12.00-MentalDisorders-Adult.htm#12_04
- <https://www.disabilitybenefitscenter.org/glossary/medical-vocational-allowance>
- <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/poms.nsf/lrx/0424510006>
- <https://www.ssa.gov/applyfordisability/>