



Don't Dismiss Your Mental Health!

How Seeking Treatment Can Strengthen Your Disability Claim

Most people think of disabilities as physical struggles — missing limbs, long-term illnesses, and other chronic mobility problems that make daily life difficult. However, in my years working with Social Security and VA disability claims, I've seen that mental and emotional battles can be just as crippling and just as worthy of disability benefits.

I'd estimate that 75% of the clients I work with have mental or emotional struggles that are part of their disability claims. Depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and PTSD are all common, particularly among veterans dealing with the fallout of returning to civilian life. Often, these struggles go hand in hand with physical problems. When a person develops back pain or diabetes, for example, it will affect their quality of life, keeping them from doing things they love until depression eventually sets in.

In cases like those, the mental struggle can quickly become more disabling than the physical one. Unfortunately, I've noticed that my clients are prone to dismissing their mental and emotional problems, sweeping them under the rug and hiding them from their loved ones and even themselves! To be honest, I think our society is to blame for this mindset. We're taught to be embarrassed about mental health issues, and soldiers in particular are told to look at emotions as weaknesses. They're trained to be tough, to deal with things alone, and to keep quiet about what's going on in their heads. I've noticed that many of the men and women I work with hang onto that mindset even after leaving the military. The same is often true for my clients filing for Social Security disability benefits — they keep their problems to themselves because they're afraid of looking old, feeble, or helpless.



Here's the truth: Mental and emotional struggles are nothing to be ashamed of. And if you're dealing with them, pushing your feelings aside is actually the worst thing you can do, both for your health and your claim. In my experience, both the VA and the Social Security Administration are much more likely to take your disability claim for depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, or PTSD seriously if you're in treatment specifically tailored to tackle those issues. That means the smart thing to do is to start seeing a psychiatrist or psychologist. You might also want to consider seeing a counselor. If you're taking your battles seriously, the organization you're appealing to will, too. The claims of people getting consistent, specialized treatment and regular counseling are taken very seriously, and, in my experience, are much more likely to be approved for benefits. The reverse is true, too!

If you're dealing with depression, anxiety, or another mental health roadblock and don't know where to start, turn to your lawyer. It's vital that you're transparent with your lawyer

about these struggles. Not only can they help you craft the strongest possible claim, but a good attorney can also even recommend a path for treatment. Here at The Injury and Disability Law Center, we have a host of contacts in the mental health field who we send clients to for help, and we consider that list just as important as the roster of chiropractors, physicians, and physical therapists we keep on hand for clients with physical injuries. When I have a client battling PTSD or something similar, I constantly touch base with them, working to see they get the treatment needed to get better and to prove their problems are serious.

If you're sitting at home right now wondering whether your own struggle would qualify you for disability benefits, please give me a call. In just a few minutes, my team and I can talk you through your potential claim and let you know if it's viable. You might be surprised how strong your case is! Dial 575-300-4000 to find out.

-Josh Worley

Meet Conan

THE DOG WHO HELPED TAKE DOWN AL-BAGHDADI

On Oct. 28 last year, President Donald Trump tweeted a photo that quickly went viral. It showed an adorable snapshot of a bright-eyed Belgian Malinois, tongue lolling, still wearing its camo military vest. In the caption, President Trump explained that the pup, Conan, was a national hero who was instrumental in taking down ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

With four years in special operations forces and roughly 50 missions under his collar, Conan was selected to be part of the team that pursued al-Baghdadi through a network of underground tunnels in northwest Syria, where the terrorist ultimately died. It's unclear whether Conan was there to track al-Baghdadi or to spot improvised explosive devices that may have been planted on the route, but either way, he performed well.

According to NBC News, Conan was injured by some live electrical cables during the mission, but he recovered quickly and was back on duty within the week. Meanwhile, President Trump invited the brave pup to the White House and tweeted out a doctored photo that showed him awarding Conan a Medal of Honor.

President Trump captioned the photo "AMERICAN HERO!" and he's not alone in his appreciation for the hardworking dogs that have been helping our military since World War II.

"To me, they're the first line of defense," United States War Dogs Association President Ron Aiello told Vox after the news about Conan came out. "They're such a great asset to our military today."

Military dogs are put up for adoption after 6–8 years in the service, which means a lucky civilian could take Conan in as early as 2022! Meanwhile, dozens of other smart canine heroes are looking for homes. To learn more about military and other working dog adoptions, visit MissionK9Rescue.org.



Solving the Unsolvable

THE BEST CONSEQUENCE EVER FOR ARRIVING LATE TO CLASS

In college, arriving late to class might earn you a stern look from your professor, and turning in homework late normally results in a docked grade. For one student, however, these actions resulted in veneration from the academic community and a story that has become legend.

George Dantzig, a doctoral candidate at the University of California, Berkeley, arrived late for a graduate statistics class one day in 1939. He saw that his professor, Jerzy Neyman, had written two problems on the board, and guessing they were the homework assignment, he wrote them down to solve later. A few days later, Dantzig delivered his answers to Professor Neyman. He apologized for turning them in late, remarking that they seemed more difficult than usual. When Neyman told him to just throw the answers on his desk, Dantzig reluctantly did so, fearing his homework would be lost forever in the sea of papers already there. He couldn't have been more wrong.

Six weeks later, Neyman went to Dantzig's house and excitedly asked him to read the introduction he had written on one of Dantzig's papers. Of course, Dantzig had no idea what he was talking about. Over the course of the conversation, however, he found out that the two difficult problems he had thought were homework were actually examples of famous unsolved statistical proofs — and Dantzig had solved them!

Neyman published the first of the two proofs soon after. Then, a year later when Dantzig was struggling to decide on his doctoral thesis topic, his professor just shrugged and told him to wrap the two problems in a binder. Neyman said he would accept them as his thesis.

Dantzig's story has been retold in various versions over the years often as an illustration of what a person is capable of when they think positively. After all, Dantzig may not have solved these proofs if he believed they were "unsolvable!" However, even though some versions might lean more toward urban legend, it's still an impressive story of the best consequence a student ever received for arriving to class and turning in homework late.



TAKE A BREAK

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EASY SHRIMP SCAMPI

Make date night simple with this easy shrimp scampi recipe.

Ingredients

- 4 tbsp butter
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp minced garlic
- 1 lb shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 1/2 tsp oregano
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 8 oz cooked linguine
- 1/4 cup parsley

Directions

1. In a skillet over medium heat, melt 2 tbsp of butter with 2 tbsp of olive oil. Add garlic and cook for 2 minutes.
2. Add shrimp and oregano, stirring frequently until shrimp is pink. Remove shrimp from skillet.
3. Add wine and lemon juice to skillet and bring the mixture to a boil.
4. Stir in remaining butter and olive oil and cook until butter is melted.
5. Add cooked shrimp to skillet and cook for 1 minute, stirring occasionally.
6. In a serving bowl, top cooked linguine with shrimp mixture. Garnish with parsley and serve.

Inspired by The Blond Cook

FROM ZERO TO 300

Meet the Women Who Pioneered Motor Sports

While Danica Patrick and Courtney Force are well known as modern faces in motor sports, they're far from the first women to cross the finish line. Since the early 1900s, women have been a constant fixture of automotive racing, including the following three who each left their marks on the sport.

SHIRLEY MULDOWNEY

Shirley Muldowney is professionally known in the drag racing community as "The First Lady of Drag Racing." In 1973, she was the first woman to earn a Top Fuel license from the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) and, despite backlash from competitors, went on to win the NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series an unprecedented three times. Twentieth Century Fox documented her trials and accomplishments in the 1983 biopic "Heart Like a Wheel." Muldowney famously loathed her own characterization but still lauded the film as required viewing for anyone interested in the sport of drag racing.



JANET GUTHRIE

Janet Guthrie had her sights set on the stars from day one. A skilled aerospace engineer, she began her racing career in 1963. After taking home two class wins in the famed 12 Hours of Sebring endurance race, Guthrie became a well-known figure among racing gurus. In 1976, she became the first woman to compete in the NASCAR Cup Series when she finished 15th in the Coca-Cola 600, then called the World 600. To date, Guthrie's storied career has landed her in the International Women's Sports Hall of Fame, the International Motorsports Hall of Fame, and the Automotive Hall of Fame.

DOROTHY LEVITT

Dorothy Levitt is known for her driving skills on both land and water, setting the first water speed record and an early women's world land speed record. Her motor racing career started slow in 1904 due to illness and various car troubles, but Levitt eventually went on to garner a reputation for her speed and earn the nickname "The Fastest Girl on Earth." When she wasn't racing, she spent her time writing. In her book "The Woman and the Car," Levitt recommended that women carry a small mirror with them for driving in traffic, effectively inventing the rearview mirror five years before it went into production.

If you want to learn more about these women and others in motor racing, pick up Todd McCarthy's book "Fast Women: The Legendary Ladies of Racing."



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STEALING MISS HELEN 'OCEAN'S 3' ATTEMPT A HIGH-STAKES HEIST

On a hot summer day in late July 2018, three people entered Miss Helen's home, forcibly removed her, put her in a stroller, and ran toward their getaway vehicle. This might sound like a typical kidnapping story, but Miss Helen is no ordinary person. She is a 16-inch horn shark living at the San Antonio Aquarium.

Fortunately, their fishy behavior didn't go unnoticed, and someone alerted the aquarium staff. One perpetrator drove away with Miss Helen in tow, but the other two were stopped by aquarium staff, later confessing to their involvement. Thanks to some observant witnesses and aquarium surveillance, police were able to identify the third thief and obtain a warrant to search his house. As it turned out, he had an extensive aquarium in his home and possibly hoped to add Miss Helen to his collection. After being identified, Miss Helen was returned home safely.

The aquarium staff was grateful to have Miss Helen back unharmed, despite her ordeal. "She's a tough little horn shark, I'll tell you that," affirmed Jamie Shank, the assistant husbandry director at the aquarium.

NO MINOR CRIME

While many animal lovers might disagree, animals are considered personal property, so stealing them is a crime of theft, not kidnapping. The penalties for stealing animals vary depending on each state's laws, and some states have specific laws regarding animal theft.

In Texas, larceny law designates the theft of property valued between \$1,500-\$20,000 as a felony. In the case of Miss Helen, who's valued by the aquarium at \$2,000, the thieves committed a felony. Also, transporting certain animals requires special permits, which led to additional charges against the three thieves.

The Animal Welfare Act, which was adopted in 1966, is the only federal law that regulates the treatment of animals in research, exhibition, transport, and by dealers. Interestingly, it only applies to warm-blooded animals, so if Miss Helen had needed further protection, she would be left out in the cold.

