

Depression and Social Security Disability: The Top Things You Should Know

Major Depressive Disorder affects over 3 million Americans over 18

1. Depression is addressed by the Social Security Administration (SSA) under Section 12.00 Mental Disorders. Section 12.04 Affective Disorders lists the criteria that applicants must meet.
2. Your depression must be severe enough to prevent you from performing any “substantial, gainful activity” as defined by the SSA in order to gain benefits.
3. One of the ways the SSA can determine if you qualify for disability is:
*If you have a medically documented presences of four of the following:
 - loss of interest in activities
 - change in appetite with a change in weight
 - trouble sleeping
 - difficulty concentrating or thinking
 - decreased energy
 - lack of physical movement
 - paranoia, delusions or hallucinations
 - thoughts of suicide**AND**

*Whether your depression causes two of the following: severe difficulty in daily living activities, social functioning, focusing, or repeated, expended episodes of decompensation.

4. The other way the SSA can determine your eligibility is:
*If you’ve had a medically documented history of depression for at least two years that has caused severe limitations to your ability to do basic work activities, with symptoms that are not improved by medication or psychosocial support and one of the following:
 - extended periods of repeated decompensation
 - a residual disease process that an increase in mental demands or change in environment is predicted to cause you to decompensate
 - a history of a year or more in which you’ve been unable to function outside of a highly supportive living arrangement, and that will continue
5. Medical documentation is key to winning your case. There must be a record of medical diagnosis of your depression and consistent treatment for your condition.

Average Monthly Social Security Benefits for 2015

