Veterans & Individuals Living with Mental Health Conditions Face Disability Benefit Challenges, Says Marc Whitehead

Disability attorney explains why PTSD, depression, anxiety, and other invisible illnesses are frequently denied despite significant impact on life & employment.



HOUSTON, TX, UNITED STATES, September 1, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Mental health conditions remain among the most misunderstood disabilities, leaving many veterans and civilians facing unnecessary obstacles when applying for disability benefits, according to nationally recognized disability attorney Marc Whitehead.

Whether seeking Veterans Affairs (VA) disability benefits, Social Security Disability, or long-term disability insurance benefits, individuals living with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety disorders, bipolar disorder, and other psychiatric conditions often encounter denials despite experiencing symptoms that substantially interfere with work and everyday life.

> “Unlike a broken bone or visible injury, mental health disabilities often cannot be seen. The symptoms are real, the limitations are real, and the impact on a person's ability to work can be profound.”
>
> *Marc Whitehead, Managing Partner, Marc Whitehead & Associates*

More than 1.75 million veterans currently receive Department of Veterans Affairs disability compensation for service-connected PTSD, making it one of the most common service-connected disabilities among former service members. (VA Annual Benefits Report) Yet many veterans continue to face lengthy claims processes, requests for additional evidence, and disability ratings that may not accurately reflect the severity of their condition. Civilian claimants experience many of the same challenges when seeking disability benefits through employers, insurance companies,

or Social Security.

"Unlike a broken bone or visible injury, mental health disabilities often cannot be seen," said Marc Whitehead, founder of Marc Whitehead & Associates. "The symptoms are real, the limitations are real, and the impact on a person's ability to work can be profound. Unfortunately, many deserving individuals are forced to fight for benefits they have earned."



PTSD and other mental health conditions can affect every aspect of daily life. Individuals may experience:
- Intrusive memories or flashbacks
- Severe anxiety or panic attacks
- Depression
- Hypervigilance
- Sleep disturbances and chronic fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Emotional numbness or withdrawal
- Challenges maintaining employment and relationships
- According to Whitehead, many disability claims involving mental health conditions are initially denied for reasons that include:
- Insufficient medical documentation
- Gaps in treatment history
- Limited psychiatric or specialist evaluations
- Inconsistent reporting of symptoms
- Insurance company disputes regarding functional limitations
- Lack of evidence demonstrating how symptoms affect the ability to work

Whitehead also cautions that insurance companies sometimes review publicly available social media content during disability investigations, potentially using posts or photographs to challenge the severity of a claimant's reported limitations.

For veterans, PTSD claims may become even more complex when accompanied by other service-related conditions such as traumatic brain injury (TBI), chronic pain, depression, anxiety disorders, or sleep disorders. Successfully documenting how these conditions affect occupational and social functioning is often critical throughout the claims process.

"Every disability claim tells a different story," Whitehead said. "The strongest claims are supported by comprehensive medical evidence that clearly demonstrates how mental health symptoms affect daily functioning, employment, and quality of life. An initial denial should never discourage someone from pursuing the benefits they deserve."

Although many applicants receive an initial denial, Whitehead emphasizes that appeals frequently result in favorable outcomes when additional medical evidence and legal advocacy are presented.

Marc Whitehead & Associates has represented disabled individuals nationwide for more than three decades, helping clients pursue long-term disability insurance benefits, Social Security Disability benefits, Veterans Disability benefits, and ERISA disability claims.

As conversations surrounding mental health continue to grow, Whitehead hopes increased awareness will reduce stigma surrounding invisible disabilities while encouraging individuals to seek treatment, understand their legal rights, and pursue the benefits available to them.

About Marc Whitehead & Associates

Marc Whitehead & Associates is a nationally recognized disability law firm based in Houston, Texas, representing clients throughout the United States in long-term disability insurance, Social Security Disability, Veterans Disability benefits, and ERISA disability claims. For more than 30 years, the firm has been dedicated to helping individuals obtain the benefits they deserve while advocating for those living with life-changing illnesses, injuries, and invisible disabilities.

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