

# HOW DISABILITY RATINGS WORK

The VA determines a disability rating after reviewing your service medical records (“SMR”), C&P exam report and any other evidence submitted to them in support of your claim based upon the criteria below. You may have one or more symptoms in a higher disability rating, but still receive a lower rating that reflects where MOST of your symptoms are present. If you have multiple injuries, disability ratings are not added together (60% + 40% ≠ 100%). The VA has an internal ranking system of injuries that will determine your final disability rating.

## GENERAL RATING FORMULA FOR MENTAL DISORDERS (including Schizophrenia & Bipolar Disorder):

### PERCENTAGE

### DESCRIPTION

# 100%

**Total occupational and social impairment.** Due to such symptoms as:

- Gross impairment in thought process or communication
- Persistent delusions/hallucinations
- Grossly inappropriate behavior
- Disorientation to time or place; memory loss for names of close relatives, own occupation, or own name
- Persistent danger of hurting self or others
- Intermittent inability to perform activities of daily living (including maintenance of minimal personal hygiene)

# 70%

**Occupational and social impairment, with deficiencies in most areas, such as work, school, family relations, judgment, thinking, or mood.** Due to such symptoms as:

- Suicidal ideation
- Obsessional rituals which interfere with routine activities
- Speech intermittently illogical, obscure, or irrelevant
- Spatial disorientation
- Near-continuous panic or depression affecting the ability to function independently, appropriately and effectively
- Impaired impulse control (such as unprovoked irritability with periods of violence)
- Neglect of personal appearance/hygiene
- Difficulty in adapting to stressful circumstances (including work or a worklike setting)
- Inability to establish and maintain effective relationships

# 50%

**Occupational and social impairment with reduced reliability and productivity.** Due to such symptoms as:

- Flattened affect
- Circumstantial, circumlocutory, or stereotyped speech
- Panic attacks more than once a week
- Difficulty in understanding complex commands
- Impairment of short- and long-term memory (e.g., retention of only highly learned material, forgetting to complete tasks)
- Impaired judgment
- Impaired abstract thinking
- Disturbances of motivation and mood
- Difficulty in establishing and maintaining effective work and social relationships

# 30%

**Occupational and social impairment with occasional decrease in work efficiency and intermittent periods of inability to perform occupational tasks (although generally functioning satisfactorily, with routine behavior, self-care, and conversation normal).** Due to such symptoms as:

- Depressed mood
- Anxiety
- Suspiciousness
- Panic attacks (weekly or less often)
- Chronic sleep impairment
- Mild memory loss (such as forgetting names, directions, recent events)

# 10%

**Occupational and social impairment due to mild or transient symptoms which decrease work efficiency and ability to perform occupational tasks only during periods of significant stress, or symptoms controlled by continuous medication**

# 0%

**A mental condition has been formally diagnosed, but symptoms are not severe enough either to interfere with occupational and social functioning or to require continuous medication**

## WHAT DO I DO IF I DISAGREE WITH MY RATING?

Speak to your VSO/VSR first. They will have the most information to determine if a rating may be incorrect. You have a limited amount of time to appeal your rating and preserve the effective date of your claim.

**VLG**

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