

Service Dogs Assisting Mental Health Patients

Service dogs can assist people with bipolar illness and PTSD. They are trained to bring medication or to remind patients to take their prescribed medications. Service dogs, for a long time, have assisted people with physical disabilities but are now utilized more today than ever for people with mental illness.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on disability. This institution sets all requirements and regulations for disabled people and is instrumental in assisting patients with mental illness.

My service dog was trained by me starting at the age of six months. By the time she was one year old, she was able to alert me when I needed to administer my prescribed medication. It is not uncommon for service dogs to be trained by their owners. In my case, I conditioned my service dog to bark twice a day, once in the morning and once at night, to alert me to take my medications. Dogs, in particular, have the capacity to react when taught and are typically easy to train. Having patience in training a service dog is essential for a successful outcome.

Dogs can provide a sense of purpose to a mentally ill person because he/she must take care of the animal. In return, the service dog provides a bond that is undeniable and can be compared to the bond between a mother and her child.

Under the ADA, you are allowed to take your service dog just about anywhere. Your service dog is not a pet and should not be handled by anyone but you. Some places require documentation that your dog is a service animal, especially the airlines.

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