

Can Personal Injury Be Mental?

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After suffering an accident or other personal injury, the focus is usually on the victim's physical condition. While physical injuries can be quite severe, not enough attention is always given to the victim's mental state. The fact is, personal injuries can affect the entire body, including the mind. Failure to take non-physical aspects into account risks denying critical compensation to the victim. Here, the injury attorneys at Rosen Hagood explain some of the mental aspects of personal injury cases.

Traumatic Brain Injuries

According to the Brain Injury Association of South Carolina, a traumatic brain injury (TBI) is "a blow or jolt to the head or a penetrating head injury that disrupts the function of the brain." Depending on the severity of the TBI, victims may experience any of the following mental conditions:

- Loss of consciousness
- Confusion
- Agitation, irritability, or other mood changes
- Memory or concentration difficulties
- Difficulty multitasking
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

The Brain Injury Association reports that approximately 175,000 South Carolinians suffer from a TBI-related disability. Survivors will often need treatment for months or even years to manage their condition. These treatments can be prohibitively expensive. However, a traumatic brain injury attorney can help you demand the compensation you deserve if your injuries were caused by another person's negligence.

Emotional Trauma

Another category of mental injury is emotional trauma. Experiencing a personal injury can take a toll on one's emotional health. This is particularly true if the injury was dramatic or graphic in nature. A violent car accident, for example, can scar you both physically and emotionally. Memories become difficult to deal with or even impossible to confront.

A victim who suffers emotional trauma stemming from a personal injury may have to contend with the following:

- Fatigue
- Insomnia
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Fear
- Humiliation
- Anger
- Extreme and unexpected emotional outbursts

Inability to Adjust

Finally, a victim may simply not be able to cope with his or her experiences in a healthy way. Particularly violent injuries can result in physical conditions that, in turn, affect one's mental state. As an example, during an accident a victim may lose a limb or become permanently disabled. The victim might have been active in a hobby or other interest, like hiking, that he or she can no longer enjoy. Or the victim's daily routine may be irreversibly altered by a disability.

Adjusting to the new realities of an injury can be exceptionally challenging. Many victims are unable to do so or do so well. This can lead to distress, psychological problems, and many of the same complications that people with emotional trauma experience. These, in turn, may lead to additional physical problems. For instance, an inability to cope can lead to extreme weight fluctuations (loss or gain).

Mental Injuries Are Compensable

Every victim's mental injuries are different, but they can qualify for compensation. A victim suffering from any of the above complications may need the following to address their mental injuries:

- Counseling or therapy
- Prescriptive drug medications
- Psychiatric treatment

Putting a dollar figure on mental injuries can be difficult. Loss of enjoyment of life or pain and suffering, for example, are more complicated than simply adding up how much income the victim has lost. An expert witness may be required to explain the impact your mental injuries have had on your life. Your attorney can then present a dollar figure that fairly accounts for those injuries.

In some cases, the mental injuries can manifest themselves in ways that are more prone to a dollar calculation. Your injuries may prevent you from being able to work the same job as before, which may mean a significant loss in future income. Again, an expert witness may be needed to help explain that loss.

The most important thing you can do after suffering a mental injury is to get the treatment you need. Then, give Rosen Hagood a call. We will fight to win you the compensation you deserve.