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10 Traits of Successful Psychiatric Service Dog Users

by Bradley W. Morris, MA

A psychiatric service dog is a long-term commitment for disability mitigation, requiring hands-on training and the right dog. Most people make mistakes, but those who tend to minimize their mistakes and set themselves up for success often have certain histories and personality traits. They are...

...dedicated to finding and sticking with their best recovery path for the long haul.

...not using a service dog as a first resort; most have *sincerely* tried medications, therapy, and/or other remedies for years with limited results.

...willing and able to learn about their rights and responsibilities as service dog users under federal and state laws.

...[respectful](#) of members of the public, gatekeepers, and other service dog users.

...people who feel a healing connection with dogs.

...experienced amateur dog trainers, or likely to gain sound experience quickly through sessions with a good professional trainer.

...ready to ask for help from others, using resources such as our [online support group](#) and website to get things right.

...concerned with the health and wellbeing of their (prospective) dog, demonstrating that care by being financially prepared for the future before obtaining a service dog prospect and through regular healthcare maintenance, exercise, and mental stimulation once a prospect is brought home.

...patient lovers of learning and [charters of progress](#), doing their research and not jumping into service dog training with a poor prospect (or pushing a good prospect too hard or too fast).

...supportive of others in the service dog community, whether through peer support, [advocacy](#), or just plain setting a good example and spreading the word when out and about.

Psychiatric Service Dogs Partners' purpose is to promote the mental health of people using service dogs for psychiatric disabilities by educating, advocating, providing expertise, facilitating peer support, and promoting responsible service dog training and handling.

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