

The Art and Law of Rest: A Legal Guide to Paid Medical Leave for Mental Health

Andy Chu,

Nimsa Press

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The Art and Law of Rest is a handy reference text for those navigating the complications of mental health-care systems.

Legal guidance abounds in Andy Chu's book *The Art and Law of Rest*, which covers the process of getting paid medical leave or disability for mental health issues.

Chu, a public interest lawyer with experience representing low-income people with their disability claims and health insurance, advises workers who need time off to address mental health issues on what they need to do to secure it. Empathetic but full of expertise, the book is thorough and informative regarding what people's rights are, sharing advice for navigating systems that can seem confusing, indifferent, and even hostile. It includes personable anecdotes as well, as with Chu's story about helping his aunt get disability benefits when "she could have killed herself from overwork."

The book is divided into two parts. The first covers mental disability and initial treatments; the second is about the procedures related to getting disability coverage or paid medical leave. The chapters are topical and sequential, and their internal subsections drill down on subjects like long-term disability, applying for benefits, and finding a supportive doctor. The book breaks down byzantine policies and procedures with an authoritative level of detail, too, covering the confusing bits of insurance paperwork and advising people on how to answer specific questions in Function Report questionnaires to leave little room for error. It itemizes all the jurisdictions that provide certain benefits as well.

The book intones that people are "not heartless, but society demands productivity and discourages humaneness." It uses real people's stories to illustrate the general situations that workers face when they're dealing with mental health struggles or are looking to take recuperative time off, giving audiences a more concrete idea of what to expect. And it encourages self-support with methods like chronicling one's disability with a diary, sharing one's struggles with a doctor, and filling out claims, establishing comfortable familiarity with the whole process. Still, it cautions people about the limitations of the process, warning that income protection does not give job and health insurance protection. It goes over options for maintaining insurance during breaks, anticipating common needs in a pragmatic manner.

Encouraging people to do what they need to do in order to recover from illness, *The Art and Law of Rest* is a thorough and useful guide through the legal labyrinth of employee protections.

JOSEPH S. PETE (February 24, 2023)

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