

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF WISCONSIN

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CAMERON KAISER,

Plaintiff,

v.

OPINION AND ORDER

19-cv-643-wmc

ANDREW M. SAUL,  
Commissioner of Social Security,

Defendant.

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Plaintiff Cameron Kaiser seeks judicial review of a final decision denying his application for supplemental security income under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g). More specifically, Kaiser argues that the ALJ failed to accurately encapsulate the findings of consultative psychological examiner Dean Saner into Kaiser's residual functional capacity. For the reasons that follow, the court will reverse the denial of benefits and will remand for further proceedings consistent with this opinion.

## BACKGROUND

### A. Medical Record<sup>1</sup>

Kaiser suffers from various medical impairments, including Ehler-Danlos syndrome,<sup>2</sup> depression, and anxiety. (AR at 15.) Kaiser maintains that as of December 1,

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<sup>1</sup> The following facts are drawn from the administrative record, which can be found at dkt. #8. The discussion of the medical records, which are substantial, is relatively brief in light of the narrow issue presented on appeal.

<sup>2</sup> "Ehlers-Danlos syndrome is a group of disorders that affect connective tissues supporting the skin, bones, blood vessels, and many other organs and tissues. Defects in connective tissues cause the signs and symptoms of these conditions, which range from mildly loose joints to life-threatening complications." U.S. National Library of Medicine, *Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome* (accessed May 1, 2020) <https://ghr.nlm.nih.gov/condition/ehlers-danlos-syndrome>.

2015, these impairments prohibited him from maintaining gainful employment. (AR at 13.) Medical treatment notes from May and December of 2015 indicate that Kaiser had been diagnosed with Ehler-Danlos syndrome, which explained his groin, thigh, and hip pain. (AR at 308-09, 299.) On February 3, 2016, Kaiser also completed a function report in which he reported that his Ehler-Danlos syndrome left him in constant pain and caused his joints to dislocate “several times every day.” (AR at 240.) He further reported being able to read and watch TV daily, but only being able to do so for short periods and getting migraines. (AR at 244.) He next explained that while struggling sometimes with understanding written instructions, he could follow spoken instructions if told one step at a time. (AR at 245.) Finally, he claimed not to handle stress very well, but was “ok” with changes. (AR at 246.)

Then, on April 14, 2016, Dean Saner, Psy. D., completed a psychological consultative examination of Kaiser after a referral by the Disability Determination Bureau. (AR at 420-25.) Psychologist Saner diagnosed Kaiser with major depressive disorder of moderate severity. (424.) Kaiser also told Saner that he enjoyed reading, watching TV, and playing games on his phone, but without any reported attention or concentration difficulties. (AR at 421.) At the conclusion of Saner’s report, he rendered the following “statement of [Kaiser’s] work capacity”:

The claimant’s ability to understand, remember and carry out simple instructions is somewhat limited, with him needing one to two-step instructions to avoid confusion. He may tend to be somewhat passive in terms of responding to supervisors and coworkers, but when stressed out by more negative feedback, the claimant will have difficulty in managing his emotions to some degree. Concentration and attention would be seen as somewhat limited and work pace would be variable. The

claimant would have difficulty withstanding routine work stresses with pressures and demands being difficult for him to cope with. He would also benefit from having a structure[d] routine and work task as well as environment.

(AR at 424.)

On October 20, 2016, Kaiser next underwent a neurologic consultation with Ronald Zerofsky, M.D., at the request of his primary care physician, Shawn Sedgwick, M.D. (AR at 495-98.) Dr. Zerofsky's report noted that Kaiser suffered from pain as a result of his Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, social phobia, headaches, depression and anxiety, among other complaints. (AR at 496.) Dr. Zerofsky also evaluated Kaiser's mental status using an assessment tool, scoring him 27 out of 30 points, "which is considered normal." (AR at 497.) Dr. Zerofsky similarly concluded that Kaiser's "[a]ttention and concentration [were] intact." (AR at 497.)

On February 27, 2017, Kaiser had a follow up appointment with Dr. Sedgwick, at which he reported a continued depressed mood and chronic pain related to Ehler-Danlos syndrome. (AR at 465-66.) In a follow-up appointment on April 2, 2017, Dr. Sedgwick wrote that Kaiser "feels like depression and anxiety are particularly well controlled at this point," but that he "is very frustrated from the standpoint of chronic pain." (AR at 468.)

## **B. ALJ Decision**

Kaiser's application for supplemental security income was denied initially and on reconsideration, at which point Kaiser requested a hearing before an ALJ. (AR at 13.) A video hearing was held on June 7, 2018, at which Kaiser appeared personally and by counsel before ALJ Michael Schaefer, along with vocational expert Allen Searles. (AR at

13.) Two months later, ALJ Schaefer issued a written determination denying Kaiser's application. (AR at 13-28.)

In assessing Kaiser's claim, the ALJ followed the five-step sequential framework set forth in the regulations. (AR at 13-28.) At step one, the ALJ found that Kaiser had not engaged in substantial gainful activity since his alleged onset date. (AR at 15.) At step two, the ALJ found that Kaiser had the following severe impairments: Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, depression, and anxiety. (AR at 15.) The ALJ next concluded at step three that none of Kaiser's impairments, singly or in combination, met or medically equaled the severity of a listing-level impairment. (AR at 16.)

Then at step four, ALJ Schaefer considered Kaiser's residual functional capacity ("RFC"). In doing so, the ALJ thoroughly considered plaintiff's medical evidence, including the various medical opinions outlined above. (AR at 19-26.) In evaluating Psychologist Saner's opinion, the ALJ accorded it "some weight." (AR at 25.) Ultimately, the ALJ found that Kaiser could perform sedentary work subject to numerous, additional limitations. (AR at 19.) Of particular relevance to plaintiff's appeal, the ALJ included the following in Kaiser's RFC:

The claimant is limited to understanding, remembering, and carrying out simple instructions and routine, repetitive tasks requiring that he make only simple work-related decisions or judgments. The claimant is limited to working in an environment without fast-paced production requirements and few changes in work duties. He is limited to performing only occasional interaction with coworkers, supervisors, or the public.

(AR at 19.)

At step five, given Kaiser's RFC, the ALJ relied on the VE's testimony that there

were still jobs in the economy in significant numbers which he could perform. (AR at 27.) Accordingly, the ALJ found that a finding of not disabled was appropriate and denied Kaiser's application. (AR at 28.)

## OPINION

The standard by which a federal court reviews a final decision by the Commissioner of Social Security is well settled. Findings of fact are "conclusive," so long as they are supported by "substantial evidence." 42 U.S.C. § 405(g). Substantial evidence means "such relevant evidence as a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to support a conclusion." *Richardson v. Perales*, 402 U.S. 389, 401 (1971). When reviewing the Commissioner's findings under § 405(g), the court cannot reconsider facts, re-weigh the evidence, decide questions of credibility or otherwise substitute its own judgment for that of the ALJ. *Clifford v. Apfel*, 227 F.3d 863, 869 (7th Cir. 2000). Thus, where conflicting evidence allows reasonable minds to reach different conclusions about a claimant's disability, the responsibility for the decision falls on the Commissioner. *Edwards v. Sullivan*, 985 F.2d 334, 336 (7th Cir. 1993).

At the same time, the court must conduct a "critical review of the evidence" before affirming the Commissioner's decision. *Edwards*, 985 F.2d at 336. If the Commissioner's decision lacks evidentiary support or adequate discussion of the issues, then the court must remand the matter. *Villano v. Astrue*, 556 F.3d 558, 562 (7th Cir. 2009). Indeed, even when adequate record evidence exists to support it, the Commissioner's decision will not be affirmed if it does not build an accurate and logical bridge from the evidence to the

conclusion. *Berger v. Astrue*, 516 F.3d 539, 544 (7th Cir. 2008); *Sarchet v. Chater*, 78 F.3d 305, 307 (7th Cir. 2006).

On appeal, plaintiff raises three arguments, all of which relate to the ALJ's treatment of Saner's medical opinion regarding Kaiser's mental limitations. First, plaintiff argues that the ALJ's restriction of Kaiser to "fast-paced production" did not adequately encapsulate Saner's opinion that Kaiser would require a "variable work pace," nor did the ALJ adequately define "fast-paced" work. Second, plaintiff argues that the ALJ's RFC did not properly incorporate Saner's opinion regarding Kaiser's difficulty coping with work stresses. Third, and finally, plaintiff contends that the ALJ improperly converted Saner's narrow limitation of Kaiser's ability to follow to one- or two-step instructions into the ability to perform "simple, routine, and repetitive instructions."

## **I. Pace Limitations**

Plaintiff argues that the ALJ erred in formulating Kaiser's pace limitations. Psychologist Saner specifically concluded in his report that Kaiser's "work pace would be variable." (AR at 424.) While the ALJ purported to give Saner's overall opinion "some weight," he specifically wrote as to Kaiser's pace limitation that: "Dr. Saner also found the claimant would have variable work pace, which I find consistent with limiting the claimant from fast-paced production requirements." (AR at 25.) On its face, plaintiff argues that this meant that the ALJ "erroneously equated variable work pace with fast-paced production." (Pl.'s Br. (dkt. #13) 13.) Similarly, the court can find no explanation for the ALJ equating these seemingly distinct concepts -- plaintiff's need for being able to vary his pace of work, whether slow, moderate, or fast paced, as opposed to a simple restriction

against fast work. Tellingly, there is *nothing* in the medical records, including the opinions of any of the psychologists, that would support this equivalence, meaning that the ALJ was essentially “playing doctor” in doing so on his own.<sup>3</sup> See *Rohan v. Chater*, 98 F.3d 966, 970 (7th Cir. 1996) (ALJ may not “play doctor” by substituting his own judgment for that of a doctor without medical evidence).

According to the Commissioner, this was still not error because the ALJ only accorded Dr. Saner’s overall opinion “some weight” (a decision plaintiff does not contest) which, the Commissioner argues, is enough to explain the ALJ’s decision not to adopt Dr. Saner’s “variable work pace” opinion verbatim. (Def.’s Opp’n (dkt. #15) 12-13.) To be sure, an ALJ need not rely on any given opinion regarding an individual’s limitation. Instead, it is the ALJ’s duty to weigh *all* of the evidence and craft an appropriate RFC. *Diaz v. Chater*, 55 F.3d 300, 306 n.2 (7th Cir. 1995). Nevertheless, an ALJ still must build a logical bridge from the evidence to his opinion. See *Berger*, 516 F.3d at 544. Here, the ALJ states that Saner’s “variable work pace” limitation is “consistent” with a limitation to “fast-paced production requirements.” (AR at 25.) Yet there is *no* obvious, logical equivalence between variable work pace and non-fast-pace work, and the ALJ simply fails to explain his reason for drawing that equivalence.<sup>4</sup> Further, the ALJ does not elsewhere cite to evidence

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<sup>3</sup> Plaintiff also cites to cases holding that a claimant’s concentration, persistence, and pace (“CPP”) limitations were not adequately accounted for by a fast pace work limitation. *Varga*, 794 F.3d at 815; *O’Connor-Spinner v. Colvin*, 832 F.3d 690, 698-99 (7th Cir. 2016). Although not entirely inapposite, these cases are distinguishable from the present one. Here, plaintiff is not arguing that the ALJ erred by translating a CPP limitation to a fast-paced limitation, nor could he; rather, he contends that the ALJ erred by translating a finding by Saner that Kaiser’s “work pace would be variable” into a restriction from fast-paced production requirements.

<sup>4</sup> To support his position that variable work is not the same as non-fast-pace work, plaintiff cites to the Occupational Requirements Survey, which includes a category on control of workload and

to support his decision to limit Kaiser to fast-paced work as opposed to variable work.<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, while the court agrees with the Commissioner that the ALJ was not *required* to accept Saner’s psychological opinion verbatim, the ALJ *was* required to explain his reason for translating Saner’s “variable work pace limitation” -- an opinion that the ALJ at least partially accepted -- into a “fast-pace work” limitation. He did not do so here, nor is there any other record support for doing so, and that failure amounts to reversible error.

While this is grounds enough to remand this action for further proceedings, as plaintiff also points out, there is a separate problem with the ALJ adopting a vague “fast paced” limitation. In *Varga v. Colvin*, 794 F.3d 809 (7th Cir. 2015), the Seventh Circuit found it “problematic that “the ALJ failed to define ‘fast paced production’.” *Id.* at 815. According to the court, “[w]ithout such a definition, it would have been impossible for the VE to assess whether a person with Varga’s limitations could maintain the pace proposed.” *Id.* Since the *Varga* decision, other courts have recognized that a failure to define “fast paced production” is error, at least requiring remand in part. *See, e.g., Minger v. Berryhill*, 307 F. Supp. 3d 865, 871 (N.D. Ill. 2018); *Mischler v. Berryhill*, 766 F. App’x 369, 376

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another category on the pace or speed of work. (Pl.’s Br. (dkt. #13) 11.) While plaintiff seems to fall into the same trap as the ALJ -- a claimant’s control over his or her workload is not obviously equivalent to “variable work pace” -- neither is it obviously without any arguable equivalence. Regardless, that the Occupational Requirements Survey distinguishes between types of pace work is of little to no legal significance on the facts here.

<sup>5</sup> The Commissioner suggests that the ALJ supported his pace limitation by considering Kaiser’s intact attention and concentration, ability to read, watch TV, and play games, and ability with serial three tasks and subtraction. (Def.’s Opp’n (dkt. #15) 13.) Plaintiff responds that none of this evidence relates to Kaiser’s *pace* limitations. (Pl.’s Reply (dkt. #16) 8-10.) The court agrees that the evidence cited by Commissioner appears to relate more to Kaiser’s attention and concentration capabilities, rather than any pace limitations; moreover, the ALJ himself did not discuss pace in his consideration of any of this evidence.



(7th Cir. 2019); *Michael E. v. Saul*, No. 18 C 5307, 2019 WL 3002971, at \*4 (N.D. Ill. July 9, 2019); *Zupan v. Berryhill*, No. 2:17-CV-122-WTL-MJD, 2018 WL 1357544, at \*2 (S.D. Ind. Mar. 16, 2018); *see also, Saunders v. Berryhill*, No. 17-CV-616-BBC, 2018 WL 4027030, at \*6 (W.D. Wis. Aug. 23, 2018), *aff'd sub nom. Saunders v. Saul*, 777 F. App'x 821 (7th Cir. 2019) (ALJ's failure to define "fast paced" task limitation was not error where there was no evidence showing was specific pace claimant could tolerate; the ALJ's inclusion of more restrictive limitations was therefore not error).

In response, the Commissioner attempts to analogize this case to *Cihlar v. Berryhill*, 706 F. App'x 881 (7th Cir. 2017), in which the Seventh Circuit upheld an ALJ's limitation to "no production or pace rate work." *Id.* at 883. However, a limitation of "no production or pace rate work" is very different from limiting "fast paced" work. Regardless, the *Cihlar* decision never addressed whether or not the ALJ adequately defined this pace limitation; it is simply not discussed in the court's opinion. *See id.* Accordingly, *Cihlar* does not effectively refute the line of case law holding that the ALJ's failure to define "fast paced" work was error.

## II. Stress Limitations

Plaintiff next faults the ALJ for not explicitly mentioning "stress" in the RFC despite psychologist Saner's finding that Kaiser would have difficulty with workplace stress. (Pl.'s Br. (dkt. #13) 9-10.) Although the ALJ acknowledged Saner's limitation, the Commissioner argues that this limitation was accommodated by limiting Kaiser to simple, routine, repetitive work, with only simple work-related decisions, no fast-paced production requirements, few changes in work duties, and occasional social interaction. (AR at 19.)

According to the Commissioner, these limitations *did* effectively restrict Kaiser to a low-stress environment, albeit without specifically using the term “stress.” (Def.’s Opp’n (dkt. #15) 11-12.)

As a general matter, an ALJ need not “use a particular term when setting forth the plaintiff’s residual functional capacity” so long as “language he uses . . . reflect[s] all of the limitations that the plaintiff has.” *Coleman v. Colvin*, No. 13-CV-216-BBC, 2014 WL 910334, at \*5 (W.D. Wis. Mar. 10, 2014) (citing *O’Connor-Spinner v. Astrue*, 627 F.3d 614, 619 (7th Cir. 2010)). For example, in *Simila v. Astrue*, 573 F.3d 503 (7th Cir. 2009), a claimant’s “moderate difficulties with concentration, persistence, and pace stemmed from his chronic pain syndrome and somatoform disorder.” *Id.* at 522. The ALJ did not expressly mention a concentration, persistence, or pace limitation, but did limit the claimant to sedentary work and also stated that “because of the allegations of pain, I would also further limit it to unskilled.” *Id.* at 519. The Seventh Circuit upheld the ALJ’s decision, finding that although the specific terms “concentration, persistence, or pace” were not mentioned in the hypothetical, the claimant’s actual limitations were included. *Id.* at 522.

Here, in posing the hypothetical to the VE at the hearing, the ALJ stated: “This person, due to the need for a low stress work environment, can only occasionally interact with the general public, coworkers, or supervisors.” (AR at 74.) And in his opinion, he also explained that: “Dr. Saner opined that the claimant would benefit from having a structured routine and work tasks, which I interpret as consistent with limiting the claimant to unskilled, low stress work.” (AR at 26.) The court generally agrees with the

Commissioner that by limiting Kaiser to simple, routine, repetitive work, with only simple work-related decisions, no fast-paced production requirements, few changes in work duties, and occasional social interaction, the ALJ may well have effectively limited Kaiser to low stress work. Certainly, plaintiff has not persuasively demonstrated that the litany of limitations the ALJ included in the RFC did not adequately address Kaiser's work stress limitations.

Still, the ALJ's explanation leaves something to be desired, and again begs the question why the ALJ did not simply adopt a straightforward limitation to "low stress work," something a VE is in a better position to translate into appropriate jobs based on his or her experience is an ALJ. Moreover, while the ALJ suggested in the hearing that Kaiser's stress limitations were accommodated by the proposed social restrictions, the written decision does not follow up on this train of thought. Rather, by stating that Saner's psychological recommendation that Kaiser have a structured routine was "consistent with limiting the claimant to . . . low stress work," he suggests that "low stress work" *was* a part of the RFC, when in fact it was not, at least not expressly. While the ALJ was not required to use the term "stress" expressly in the RFC, and may not have been a basis for remand on its own, his failure to explain his claimed accommodation of Kaiser's stress-related limitations logically *and* to point to some medical support for purportedly adopting multiple limitations as an equivalence was error and it should be addressed more fully on remand.

### **III. Instructions Limitations**

Finally, plaintiff argues that the ALJ did not adequately accommodate Kaiser's

psychological limitations in being able to carry out more complex instructions. After examining Kaiser, Saner concluded that his “ability to understand, remember and carry out simple instructions is somewhat limited, with him needing one- to two-step instructions to avoid confusion.” (AR at 424.) Again, the ALJ purported to give Saner’s overall opinion “some weight.” (AR at 25.) As to the instructions limitation in particular, the ALJ wrote:

Dr. Saner found that the claimant was “somewhat limited” [in] his ability to understand, remember, and carry out simple instructions. He suggested that the claimant would need to have instructions broken down into one or two steps to avoid confusion, which I have incorporated into the claimant’s residual functional capacity finding this is consistent with limiting the claimant to understanding, remembering, and carrying out simple instructions and routine, repetitive tasks.

(AR at 25.) According to plaintiff, the ALJ’s replacement of Dr. Saner’s one- to two-step instructions limitation with a more generic limitation to simple, routine, and repetitive instructions was error. (Pl.’s Br. (dkt. #13) 8.)

As a result of the ALJ’s improper formulation of Kaiser’s instructional limitations, plaintiff further argues that the VE proffered jobs that Kaiser was incapable of performing. Specifically, plaintiff points out that all three occupations the VE said that Kaiser could perform involved a reasoning level of 3, which plaintiff says exceeds Kaiser’s one- to two-

step instructional limitation.<sup>6</sup> A reasoning level 3 requires an ability to: “Apply commonsense understanding to carry out instructions furnished in written, oral, or diagrammatic form. Deal with problems involving several concrete variables in or from standardized situations.” Appendix C -- Components of the Definition Trailer, 1991 WL 688702. In contrast, a level 1 reasoning level requires an ability to: “Apply commonsense understanding to carry out simple *one- or two-step instructions*. Deal with standardized situations with occasional or no variables in or from these situations encountered on the job.” Appendix C -- Components of the Definition Trailer, 1991 WL 688702 (emphasis added).

At the outset, the court is persuaded that Saner’s one- or two-step instructions limitation reflected a greater limitation than that included in the final RFC. Indeed, Saner’s limitation indicates that Kaiser would be limited to jobs with a reasoning level of 1, yet the ALJ’s RFC permitted jobs with level 3 reasoning levels. Specifically, the representative vocations identified by the ALJ -- order clerk, callout operator, and surveillance system monitor -- all require level 3 reasoning. (*See* AR at 27 (citing Dictionary of Occupational Titles 209.567-014, 237.367-014, 379.367-010).)

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<sup>6</sup> Plaintiff seems to suggest that even the “simple, routine, and repetitive instructions” limitation adopted by the ALJ was not compatible with occupations requiring level 3 reasoning. (Pl.’s Br. (dkt. #13) 8.) This argument implies an error not in the ALJ’s RFC formulation, but in the VE’s testimony. To support this position, however, plaintiff cites only to cases outside of this circuit. In contrast, as the Commissioner points out, plaintiff’s argument is foreclosed by Seventh Circuit case law, which has held that a job requiring level 3 reasoning is not necessarily inconsistent with a limitation to simple instructions. *See Terry v. Astrue*, 580 F.3d 471, 478 (7th Cir. 2009); *Sawyer v. Colvin*, 512 F. App’x 603, 610 (7th Cir. 2013).

That being said, whether or not the ALJ actually erred in failing to limit Kaiser to tasks involving one- or two-step instructions is a much closer question. On the one hand, the Commissioner contends that the ALJ explained that he gave only “some weight” to Dr. Saner’s opinion (a conclusion that plaintiff does not challenge) and, therefore, signaled that he was not accepting wholesale Dr. Saner’s opined limitations. (Def.’s Opp’n (dkt. #15) 8.) Given this context, the ALJ’s assertion that he “incorporated” Dr. Saner’s one- or two-step instructions limitation into the RFC could arguably be understood as an explanation that he considered and partially accepted it. On the other hand, the ALJ’s assertion that he “incorporated” the one- or two- step instructions limitation into Kaiser’s RFC at least suggests that the ALJ accepted and agreed with this limitation. There is no logical bridge between accepting a one- or two-step instruction limitation and the ALJ’s ultimate conclusion because, as discussed above, the one- or-two step limitation reflected a greater limitation than that included in the final RFC.

The Commissioner further attempts to bolster its position by arguing that the ALJ relied on other evidence to reach his final RFC. (Def.’s Opp’n (dkt. #15) 9.) Specifically, unlike the limitations discussed in parts I and II above, the Commissioner points out that the ALJ considered Dr. Zerofsky’s opinion that Kaiser’s attention and concentration were fully intact. According to the Commissioner, the ALJ properly considered all of the evidence -- including Saner’s partially credited one- and two-step instructions limitation and Zerofsky’s finding of normal attention and concentration -- then distilled them down into an appropriate limitation to only simple, routine, and repetitive instructions. This is somewhat persuasive, although the ALJ himself did not explain his reasoning with such

clarity. See *Kastner v. Astrue*, 697 F.3d 642, 648 (7th Cir. 2012) (“[T]he Commissioner’s lawyers cannot defend the agency’s decision on grounds that the agency itself did not embrace.”) (citing *SEC v. Chenery Corp.*, 318 U.S. 80, 87-88 (1943)).

More persuasive, but not addressed by the ALJ or the parties, is the fact that the state agency psychologists’ opinions give some support to the ALJ’s RFC formulation. Specifically, the first state agency psychologist concluded that Kaiser “is capable of remembering short and simple instructions” and “doing simple, routine tasks on a sustained basis.” (AR at 99.) The second concluded that Kaiser is “able to understand and remember simple instructions.” (AR at 114.) But again, the error identified by plaintiff is not that the ALJ’s instructions limitation was not supported by evidence in the record; rather, the problem is with the ALJ’s failure to build a logical bridge between the evidence and his conclusion. Here, the ALJ did not even discuss whether he was giving *any* weight to the state agency psychologists’ opinions. Indeed, the only place he brought up their opinions was at step three.<sup>7</sup> Accordingly, since remand is necessary anyway, the ALJ

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<sup>7</sup> In total, the ALJ stated at step three that:

I considered the assessments completed by state disability psychological consultants Drs. Ellen Rozenfeld, Psy.D., and Therese Harris, Ph.D., at the initial and reconsideration levels on May 4, 2016 and October 14, 2016, respectively. Although they completed their “paragraph B” assessments using criteria that was significantly revised effective January 2017, I was able to extrapolate from their reasoning and apply it to this revised criterion. Although Drs. Rozenfeld and Harris found the claimant had mild difficulties maintaining social functioning (Exhibits 2A, 4A), I have given his allegations of social anxiety additional weight, concluding that he has moderate difficulties in this area. Moreover, the totality of evidence suggests that the claimant lacks confidence and exhibits hesitancy in his interactions, which I find consistent with moderate limitations.

(AR at 16.)

is instructed to revisit his conclusion regarding Kaiser's instructions limitation to better explain the RFC finding.

ORDER

IT IS ORDERED that the decision of defendant Andrew M. Saul, Commissioner of Social Security, denying plaintiff Cameron Kaiser's application for supplemental security income is REVERSED AND REMANDED under sentence four of 42 U.S.C. 405(g) for further proceedings consistent with the opinion set forth above.

Entered this 6th day of May, 2020.

BY THE COURT:

/s/

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WILLIAM M. CONLEY  
District Judge