

Psychological Consequences of Equine Injury

Equestrians traumatized by an equine injury often experience some psychological distress. Some examples of the psychological consequences of trauma are nightmares and flashbacks of the injury, avoidance of horse-related activities, and sleep disturbances. When these last a long time they can result in considerable social, occupational and interpersonal difficulties.

Equestrians often avoid dealing with psychological trauma. Talking about the injury without adequate help can cause additional distress. Also, equestrians may erroneously think themselves weak or inadequate if they are unable to deal with their distress on their own. One other danger is that the fear and anxiety caused by the injury can negatively influence their riding skills and communications with their horse and may result in repeated riding accidents.

To recover from trauma related to equine injuries:

1. Seek support from family, friends.
2. When necessary, seek professional help.
3. Think of the injury as an opportunity to learn and grow both as a person and as an equestrian.
4. Consider working with an instructor or attending a clinic that addresses issues related to fear and recovery from equine injury.

Dr. Fernanda C. Camargo and her friend Skye.

