

“KEEP CALM & RIDE ON: OVERCOMING ANXIETY ISSUES”

SEMINAR OUTLINE

- *Anxiety stems from one basic underlying fear, the fear of not being in control/of losing control, this is with anything in life, not just equine activities.*
 - Understand this concept and how it affects you and your decisions.
 - Do you avoid certain situations and environments?
 - Do you ride with a tight rein, nervous, “ready” body posture, tension, and tightness in your body?
 - Come to terms with the fact that you are never 100% in control.
 - At no time in your life are you 100% in control, you learn to take control of what you can and accept what you cannot. You will not move forward without coming to terms with this reality.
 - Working with horses can exacerbate this fear as the horse has a mind of its own and is capable of making decisions we do not like/are not comfortable with thus increasing our perception of lack of control.
 - What situations/scenarios intimidate you the most?
 - What situations do you tend to play over in your head?
 - Where/when did you first come up with these negative thoughts?
 - Do you trust your horse? Do you trust yourself? Why or why not?
 - Should you trust yourself/your horse? What level are you at? Are you and your horse a good match/fit?

➤ *Learning to reprogram yourself and improve the situation.*

- Train in body control and get as much nose to tail control of your horse as possible. This increases your confidence in being able to handle any situation.
 - Emergency brake, complete steering control, ingrained whoa, train in reasonable reactions to stressful situations.
- Accomplish new things/achieve new goals slightly outside your comfort zone.
 - Do not avoid certain situations you are capable of handling due to nerves.
- Distract yourself when you become uncomfortable.... talk, sing, whatever it takes to NOT focus on negative thoughts.
- Visualization techniques
 - Ingrain positivity, erase negativity
 - Watch only positive videos online, don't click on the "wrecks"
 - Embrace your awesomeness, realize you and your horse can have fun and do things you previously thought impossible.

➤ *Be smart about realistic expectations of you and your horse. Honest evaluation of where you are at and where your horse is at can avoid confidence shaking scenarios for you and your horse.*

- You/your horse may not be ready to take on certain situations and scenarios.
- There is a fine line between confident and crazy.....
- Just because you want to doesn't mean you should.
 - There are certain situations that require more experience and training than you/your horse may have, be smart and don't put yourself and your horse in a losing predicament.

BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND GETTING RID OF ANXIETY

The ability to trust your horse and yourself is the key to being confident when working with and riding your horse. Here are a few tips to help you out to help you build that trust relationship.

- You cannot always control your environment! Learn to control yourself and your horse. Avoiding certain situations out of fear or insecurity is detrimental, it will stunt your relationship with your horse. Gaining experience in multiple different situations is productive. It will improve your bond.
- Teach your horse how to react reasonably when scared/upset. Discourage over reactions but do not expect no reactions at all.
- Learn how to move your horse's feet to regain control. Yielding the head and the hindquarters, teach this on the ground first, then under saddle at the walk, trot, and canter. Challenging yourself and your horse with multiple different steering exercises is helpful.
- If you want your horse to trust you and be confident you must first trust yourself and have confidence, if not you are destined for failure. A calm, confident rider puts their horse at ease that they are in control and can be trusted.
- Your horse does not want to hurt you, they react only to avoid doing something they find scary, upsetting, difficult, unpleasant or intimidating. Do not take their actions personally.
- Practice visualization exercises daily. Start by envisioning the perfect ride. Do not entertain negative thoughts. Practice until this becomes easy and no negative situations try to pop into your head.
- When you are ready to advance, visualize negative situations occurring that are turned around by your correct thinking and actions. Things WILL NOT always go smoothly, learn to rise to the challenge and handle adversity calmly and with confidence.
- The key to a happy, healthy equine relationship is relaxation and experience. When you and your horse are relaxed you will succeed. The more you go through together the stronger your bond and mutual trust will become.
- If you are unsure of how to complete any of these steps or simply cannot seem to get past your anxieties consult a professional. We enjoy helping people regain their confidence and learn to love riding again!!