

The Psychological Effects of Dog Bite Injuries

No matter if someone is a full-grown adult or just a child, a dog bite can be a disturbing event. Not only can dog bites cause severe injuries, they can effect long-lasting, traumatic neuroses that can negatively impact a person's life for years afterward.

Cynophobia

In short, Cynophobia is the fear of dogs. Cynophobia is often listed as the most common animal phobia and is seen as one of the most debilitating due to the huge population of dogs found in virtually every city and town. Cynophobia typically leads to persistent and excessive fear while in the presence of a dog, avoidance of social situations, and immediate and rising anxiety which could produce panic attacks, palpitations, trembling, dizziness and nausea. Up to 30% of dog bite victims eventually seek treatment for cynophobia.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Similar to any other trauma that causes extreme levels of stress, a dog bite injury can trigger Post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD. According to the Mayo Clinic, symptoms of PTSD include intrusive memories, avoidance, negative mood swings, recurring nightmares, loss of sleep, and memory problems. Dog bites can often leave scars and disfiguring blemishes which serve as a constant reminder of the attack and can even give rise to self-image impairments and low self-esteem. Feelings of guilt and self-blame, where victims see themselves as deserving of the attack, are also common. If severe enough and left untreated, PTSD can eventually lead to long-term problems as the common symptoms may grow more intense with time.

Agoraphobia

Dog bite injuries have been known to cause agoraphobia in some cases. Agoraphobia is the persistent fear of leaving one's house. This fear occurs by the overwhelming presumption that one might encounter a dog in public and suffer an additional attack. Agoraphobia often leads to fear of open spaces, public transit, crowded malls, public buildings, or any wide-open space with frenetic activity.

Dog Bites and Children

Dog bite injuries produce outsized effects in children since the difference in size between a child and a dog is far less than that of an adult. To better understand a child's reaction to a dog bite, an adult should imagine being attacked by a larger animal such as a bear. Children, also, are unable to process emotions and trauma as openly as adults do. Children typically internalize trauma and can suffer from PTSD as a result.

Contact The Advocates

If you've been the victim of a dog attack, you may be entitled to compensation for the long-term and negative impacts upon your mental health. The injury attorneys at The Advocates have decades of experience helping dog bite victims recoup their losses and get their lives back on track. Contact The Advocates for a free evaluation of your case and start down the road to recovery today.

References:

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/post-traumatic-stress-disorder/home/ovc-20308548>