

## **Three types of people that cause Barn Drama (BD)**

If you've been riding for some time you've probably experienced it by now. Barn Drama (BD). That sneaky insipid beast that worms its way into every barn at some time or another: the rumors, the back stabbing, the snarky comments and the chaos and confusion that follows. We all know it when we see it but how did it get here? Who let in the dreaded BD?!!

There are a few specific types of people in the world that create BD. Psychologists refer to them as Personality Disordered individuals. These individuals do not think, feel or act the way most of us do on this planet. They seem to have their own internal code for behavior that goes against what most of us think of as "Acceptable Social Behavior". They say and do the things that make the rest of us scratch our heads and sometimes tear out our hair in frustration. Individuals with Personality Disorders make up about 6-20% of the general population and you've probably met several in your life so far. All you need to do is turn on Reality TV or watch the News and you'll see these folks in full colour. In fact, if you stay on their good side these individuals can be very charming, charismatic and fun to be around. But watch your back because the minute you upset them the tables turn.

Here are three of the most common types of people that create Barn Drama.

1. **The Barn Star** – These are the people who are rock stars in their own minds. They see themselves as better than everyone else and never miss an opportunity to talk about themselves. At first, these folks are fun to be around because they usually have lots of stories (all about themselves) and can be quite charismatic. Barn Stars choose whom to associate with very carefully and usually pick the best of the best because they only want to be associated with the best. These individuals don't really care about other people's thoughts and feelings unless you dare to disagree with them. If you do, then you will experience what psychologists call their Narcissistic Rage. They switch from fun charismatic story teller to angry indignant aggressor in a flash. Once on their bad side it's hard to get back in their good books because you've damaged their ego.

**Barn Star life motto:** I am here to be admired and served.

**How you probably feel around the Barn Star:** dismissed unless you have something he/she wants then you will feel important

**How to avoid drama with the Barn Star:** make sure that he/she is always the center of attention. If you flatter them enough you can usually get them to behave themselves.

- 2. The Barn Wobble Board** – These types are the ones who create the most chaos in any barn. They are emotionally volatile and switch from one extreme emotion to another very quickly. Nothing with these types stays the same for long. Just like a wobble board they are continually wobbling back and forth on everything from what they believe to what they feel. The only thing stable about the wobble board type is their chronic instability! These individuals are emotionally intense with an underlying tone of hostility. They often feel victimized by others and tell lots of stories in which other people have treated them unfairly. If you offer these folks compassion and validation they will be your best friend. But, if you question their victim role or suggest they have the power to change their situation, the tables will turn, and you will become their arch enemy. These individuals can be very vindictive, and they tend to hold grudges for a very long time. You may have failed to say hello to them in the warm up ring at a show and this is all it takes to set them off. They will hold it against you forever and you may never know why. Wobble Board people have great difficulty managing and regulating their emotions and they will either tell everyone at the barn how they are feeling or they will be completely closed up and unable to communicate about feelings at all. Either way they are boiling over with emotion inside.

**Wobble Board life motto:** I'm a victim

**How you probably feel about the Wobble Board:** you either feel like you should rescue them, or you feel emotionally overwhelmed by them (depends on your personality)

**How to avoid drama with the Wobble Board:** keep all interactions relatively neutral in tone and light and fluffy. Keep conversations about the weather and always use a

friendly upbeat tone. You don't want them to feel like they can share their life with you too much or you will get drawn into their drama zone.

3. **The Barn Boa** – These individuals are the snakes of the barn. They are manipulative and deceitful con artists. Boas in the wild move slowly, and silently, entrapping their prey in a deadly squeeze. This is what the Barn Boas do in your barn. They suck you in by appearing to be the perfect client/trainer/coach etc. Somehow, they know exactly what you need when you meet them. For awhile they are great, and you look up to them as a mentor and even a friend. But slowly the real Boa begins to show, and you begin to see lies and deception everywhere. The Barn Boa has no empathy for you and does not respect the rules or policies that everyone else seems to follow in life. Boas only look out for their own best interests and they don't care who they must squeeze to get what they want. If you call them out on their lies they somehow manage to make it your fault and you walk away feeling badly about yourself. It's a super snake trick! Barn Boas often have a posse of people that are currently under their snake spell and these individuals unknowingly do the Boa's bidding until their eyes are opened by a lie that hurts them. It may look safer to be in the Boa's posse but to stay there you must be willing to hurt others without guilt or remorse.

**Barn Boa life motto:** If you are stupid enough to get conned by me then you deserve it.

**How you probably feel around the Barn Boa:** at first you feel special while he/she is grooming you for his/her posse but later when the blinders come off you feel manipulated and angry

**How to avoid drama with the Barn Boa:** stay away; this slick character cannot be trusted.

The Barn Star, Wobble Board and Boa are three personalities you may encounter in your barn. If you learn to recognize them early on you can side step any potential drama. If you need more help managing BD Dr. Megan Pinfield PhD RCC is a clinical counsellor

Dr. Megan Pinfield PhD RCC 2018

who specializes in helping coaches, trainers and barn owners to manage difficult people.

You can contact her at <https://pccc.ca/>.