

See it. Say it. Sorted!

Reducing daily drama in our practices

So many of us experience daily dramas within our teams. In some ways, it can be very destructive to label these situations as drama, especially when it sometimes feels like the only way to be heard by the so-called "dramatic" person.

The definition of drama itself can be: attention seeking, ridiculous, childish, inappropriate.

It is vital that we look past some of the dramatisations and understand what is at the centre of it, and how we are sometimes playing a part. If you observe the following behaviours, the first thing we should do as managers is ask ourselves, could this demonstration be born from ineffective management or leadership?

Behaviours sometimes being:

- Aggressive or depressive traits – slatting, slamming, "poor me"
- Temper tantrums – raised voices, sulking, disrespectful communication
- End of the world outlook – "I hate work, this job is awful, I can't believe we've got three RCTs in this morning, I'm sick of it all..."
- Unable to self-moderate or problem solve themselves – "I'm the only person that cares; if they aren't doing it, then neither am I!"
- Gossipy and coercive – behind back chats, getting others onside

The following questions are steps to how we could deal with overly dramatic people:

- Am I creating or adding to the drama?
- Do I need to change my point of view?
- Can I be firmer or clear in my communication and how I want my team to communicate?
- Do I create a culture where we learn from the drama?

Often, we encounter people, at work and in our personal lives, who are inclined to gravitate towards drama and will take any opportunity to get that thrill and dramatised even the simplest of situations. We can't always change this but, from a management viewpoint, we can try to minimise the opportunities presented.

Communication

Practice meeting where the team feels able and encouraged to discuss problems, challenges and problem solving together.

Job descriptions

Define roles with a clear organisation chart. When people know what is expected of them and the standard to work to, as well as what other people's roles are within the team, it can minimise conflict and confusion.

Conflict Management

Teach your team to communicate and manage conflict positively. Ensure they understand active listening, empathy and effective problem-solving techniques.

Policies and procedures

Clear, defined policies should be given, and understood by the team. Setting rules will provide a clear pathway to a happier team.

Professional development and opportunities

Providing your team with transparent, clear career progression opportunities will instil confidence, minimise competition and help with petty jealousy.

Lead by example

My team understands my personality and leadership style. Fair but firm goes a long way. I get particularly upset if any of my team behaves in a way that I don't. No raised voices, always respectful and always directly. I expect them to be the same.

I am a firm believer that, sometimes, relationships formed in our teams can be toxic. Misery breeds misery. In the same way, positive people breed positivity within the team. Let's try to be open about negative behaviours and address them directly.

Prompt action is the best way to overcome any drama. People butt heads, disagree and easily put up walls towards each other if any niggles aren't dealt with quickly. Become the mediator if they can't find a way forward.

Ensure your team understands what is appropriate to bring into the workplace. I am a manager that doesn't expect my team to leave all their problems at the door. If they need support, I'm there if they want to talk. However, there needs to be boundaries and outside dramas can't affect everything!

Consider team dynamics when recruiting. Will this person fit with your team? Where will they sit in your organisation structure?

Talk to your team about conflicts or drama situations. Discuss how it could have been handled and managed better by those involved.

I receive almost daily frustrations from owners and managers who are sick to death of drama disrupting their practices and (without sounding dramatic) their own mental wellbeing.

We can't always escape it. We can run but we can't hide. It comes down to a healthy culture and rationalising dramas with our teams contributes to a drama-free zone. ■

About the author

Lisa Bainham is President at **ADAM** and practice management coach at **Practice Management Matters**.



BADN AGM

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the British Association of Dental Nurses (BADN), the UK's professional association for dental nurses, was held on Friday 24 November 2023 at 55 Broadway, London – the former Transport for London offices above St James's Park Tube station – as well as virtually by Zoom.

The AGM was preceded by the Inauguration of Honorary President Joan Hatchard, who was presented with the BADN chain of office by Past President Jacqui Elsdon.

Despite a few initial technical hitches, the AGM approved the 2022 AGM Minutes, the 2023 Executive Committee Report and the 2022



BADN Executive Committee 2024 with Jacqui Elsdon: Chairman Michelle Brand, Jacqui Elsdon, Honorary President Joan Hatchard, Education Representative Anita Stanforth, President-elect Preetee Hylton

Audited Accounts (all of which are available in the members' area of our website); as well as a Motion that the

Association allow non-clinical practice managers and receptionists to join as Associate Members (see page 5). This means that practice managers and receptionists can take advantage of the benefits of membership – such as the Legal Helpline, the Health & Wellness Hub and the money-saving offers and discounts in BADN Rewards, although not the CPD or indemnity cover, which of course they will not need as they are not GDC registrants, and they will not be able to speak or vote at AGMs.

Practice managers/receptionists wishing to join BADN may do so from 1 December 2023 at www.badn.org.uk, or – if colleagues are already BADN members – through our Refer A Colleague scheme <https://www.badn.org.uk/Member/Refer-a-Colleague.aspx>.



Past President Jacqui Elsdon (2019-2022) presents Honorary President Joan Hatchard (2023-2024) with the BADN chain of office

The members of the Executive Committee were introduced to the AGM by Joan, Chairman Michelle Brand, President-elect Preetee Hylton, Treasurer Ruth Garrity, and Education Representative Anita Stanforth, as were the members of the Panel of Representatives (see <https://www.badn.org.uk/NewPublic/NewPublic/Executive-Committee.aspx> for biographies). ■

About the author
Pam Swain is Chief Executive of BADN



Neni Irvanipour, Maja Marsh, Sherilee Banerjee, Rebecca Silver, Anita Stanforth, June Longdon, Preetee Hylton outside the Wellington Hotel