

## Overview

The following system is an update for the rules for fear, horror, and madness checks found in Chapter Six of Domains of Dread, written by William W. Connors and Steve Miller, and utilizes rules found in the Dungeon Master's Guide and the Monster Manual. Terms sufficiently detailed in those sources have not been repeated here.

In Dungeons & Dragons, Fear, Horror, and Madness checks are considered Will saves in all respects. In fact, the terms "Fear check," "Horror check," and "Madness check" are just shorthand to differentiate between the different causes and effects of these three Will saves. Anything that modifies a Will save likewise modifies Fear, Horror, and Madness checks.

Fear, Horror, and Madness checks all use the same basic mechanic. When the situation calls for a character make any of the three types of check, make a Will save against a specified DC. Specific DCs depend on the situation and type of check being made, and are provided in the following sections.

If the character succeeds at the Will save, then there is no effect (the character is not frightened, horrified, etc.), and she is immune to that specific source of fear, horror, or madness (depending on the successful check) for one day.

If the character fails the Will save, then the result is determined by how much she failed the saving throw. Subtract the number rolled (including modifiers) from the DC; this result determines whether the character suffers a minor, moderate, or major effect.

<u>Failure Margin</u>	<u>Effect</u>
1–5 points	<b>Minor</b>
6–10 points	<b>Moderate</b>
11–15 points	<b>Major</b>
16+ points	<b>Major, plus additional effect</b> (see below for specifics).

When determining the results of failed Horror and Madness checks, the player will also need to roll 1d4 to select a specific effect.

Characters cannot take 10 or take 20 on Fear, Horror, or Madness checks. They can take 10 on any attempts to recover from failed checks, however.

Creatures without Intelligence scores are immune to fear, horror, and madness.

Lastly, remember that Fear, Horror, and Madness checks are always optional. If players roleplay the terror of their PCs without prompting, no check is needed.

## Fear Checks

A character should make a Fear check when facing overwhelming odds and/or immediate, dire physical danger. Fear checks can also be used to test the morale of the PCs' foes. Some common fear triggers are:

- The party is badly outnumbered or outclassed by monsters. (The EL is 4+ higher than the party level.)
- The most powerful character in the party or half of the party's members are killed.
- A menacing monster is immune to the party's weapons and spells.
- A menacing monster is at least two size categories larger than the biggest member of the party.
- A menacing monster has the Fearsome Presence special quality.
- The character is threatened by immediate death and seems to be helpless. (A character trapped underwater; a character who looks up to see a massive deadfall trap hurtling towards her.)

Remember that appearances are everything; if characters don't know that they're in dire peril, then they have no reason to make a Fear check. Likewise, if the players think their PCs are doomed, even if they aren't, a Fear check may be warranted.

### Determining DC

When a Fear check is prompted by a menacing creature, the DC is equal to **8 + ½ the creature's HD + the creature's Charisma modifier**. (If the threat has the Fearsome Presence special quality, add 10 instead of 8.) If the DM is in a rush or doesn't want to bother with the math, she can just set the DC to the menacing creature's CR + 8, which will net a roughly similar target.

When a Fear check is prompted by multiple creatures or a menacing situation, the DC is equal to the obstacle's EL + 8. This requires some judgment calls on the part of the DM; while a simple pit trap won't send anyone into a wild panic no matter how wide it is, having sliding walls slowly push the PCs into a pit filled with whirling, gnashing blades might.

Situational modifiers often factor into Fear checks. All situational modifiers apply to the die roll and stack with each other.

### **Fear Check Modifiers**

- +4 Character or party possesses a weapon, form of magic, or bit of lore which has been proven to be useful against the threat.
- +2 Character or party possesses a weapon, form of magic, or bit of lore which is believed to be useful against the threat.
- +4 A loved one is endangered.
- +2 A friend or ally is endangered.
- +1 An innocent is endangered.
- +1 Character defeated a similar threat in the past.
- +1 Character is in close quarters (no place to run).
- 2 Character has faced and been defeated by a similar threat within the past 24 hours.
- 1 Character has faced and been defeated by a similar threat in the past (but not within the past day).
- 1 Character is alone.
- 1 Character has lost more than half of his or her maximum hit points.

### **Failure Results**

<u>Failure Margin</u>	<u>Effect</u>
1-5 points	<b>Shaken</b>
6-10 points	<b>Frightened</b>
11-15 points	<b>Panicked</b>
16+ points	<b>Panicked, plus Horror Check</b> (see below for specifics).

(See Chapter Three of the Dungeon Master's Guide for further explanation of these terms.) If the character fails the Fear check by 16+ points, she is Panicked and must make an immediate Horror check at (failed Fear check DC - 5).

### **Additional Failures**

Fear effects are cumulative, as detailed in Chapter Three of the Dungeon Master's Guide.

## Recovering from Failure

Fear effects have a duration of 5d6 rounds, after which time the character returns to normal. If the character fails additional Fear checks while suffering Fear effects, add the durations together. Numerous spells and magical effects (such as modify memory or remove fear) can also remove all Fear effects.

## Horror Checks

Choosing exactly when to make a Horror check can be a delicate affair; see Domains of Dread for guidelines. As a rule of thumb, make a Horror check when a character witnesses scenes of terrible cruelty or betrayal, or beholds events which simply should not be.

Examples: Seeing someone burned at the stake; watching a friend transform into a werebeast; realizing that you murdered someone while possessed by an evil spirit.

### Determining DC

Horror checks are typically prompted by unusual, unique situations rather than creatures, so unlike Fear checks there's no quick formula to determine the DC. Instead, the DM should use her best judgment to apply a DC to the scene. As a rule, the more gruesome, abnormal, and/or insane the scene, the higher the DC should be. A few examples follow:

<u>DC</u>	<u>Horrific Scene</u>
5	<b>Signs of violence</b> (a drying pool of blood, a splintered door, etc.).
8	<b>Finding a decaying body.</b>
10	<b>Witnessing a scene of pain or suffering</b> (a beggar ravaged by disease).
12	<b>Finding a freshly slain corpse.</b>
15	<b>Witnessing a scene of terrible agony</b> (torture, involuntary transformation).
20	<b>Witnessing a scene of evil, cruelty, and madness</b> (finding dismembered bodies that have been turned into marionettes).
25	<b>Malign paradigm shift</b> (see below).

A "malign paradigm shift" is a situation where a character discovers that an important element of their surroundings is not only drastically "wrong," it has been so all along, unbeknownst to the character.

Examples include PCs realizing that they are the only people in a crowded inn who aren't evil shapeshifters, or discovering that the carriers of a plague epidemic are actually all the victims of rampant vampiric feeding—and are all still under the vampires' control.

Situational modifiers often factor into Horror checks. All situational modifiers apply to the die roll and stack with each other.

### **Horror Check Modifiers**

- +4 A loved one is clearly endangered by the threat.
- +4 The victim of the threat is a despised foe.
- +2 A friend or ally is clearly endangered by the threat.
- +2 The victim of the threat is a foe.
- +1 An innocent is clearly endangered by the threat.
- 1 An innocent is participating in the scene (but not threatened).
- 2 A friend or ally is participating in the scene (but not threatened).
- 4 A loved one is participating in the scene (but not threatened).
- 4 Character is inadvertently responsible for the scene.
- 1 Character is of good alignment.
- +1 Character is of evil alignment.
- 1 Character is in close quarters (no place to run).
- +1 Character is in an open area (room to run away).
- +2 Character has been warned about what he or she's about to see.
- +1 Character has overcome or endured a similar event in the past.
- 2 Character has failed a Horror check prompted by a similar scene within the past 24 hours.
- 1 Character has failed a Horror check prompted by a similar scene in the past (but not within the past 24 hours).
- 1 Character is alone.
- 1 Character has lost more than half of his or her maximum hit points.

The DM will have to make judgment calls when applying some of these modifiers. For example, if a villager suddenly grabs a PC's betrothed and starts to transform into a werewolf, the DM should apply a +4 bonus to the PC's roll (loved one threatened). On the other hand, if the PC's betrothed suddenly starts to involuntarily transform into a werewolf, the DM may apply a -4 penalty (loved one involved) instead.

Characters typically do not need to make Horror checks when witnessing the aftereffects of their own intentional actions. As an example, if PCs defeat a band of goblins in battle, they do not need to make Horror checks when examining the slain bodies. The same is true for monsters with their victims.

### **Failure Results**

#### Failure Margin

#### Effect

1–5 points

**Minor**

6–10 points

**Moderate**

11–15 points

**Major**

16+ points

**Major, plus Madness Check**  
(see below for specifics).

If a character fails a Horror check by a margin of 1–5 points, she suffers a minor effect. If a character misses the DC by 6–10 points, she suffers a moderate effect. If a character misses the DC by 11–15 points, she suffers a major effect. If a character fails a Horror check by 16+ points, she suffers a major effect and must make an immediate Madness check at (Horror check DC – 5).

Once the effect category is determined, the player should roll 1d4 to select a specific symptom of Horror.

**Player Tips:** You can speed up Horror checks by rolling the d20 and the d4 at the same time. (If you succeed at the Horror check, you can just ignore the d4 roll.) Alternatively, if you and the DM both agree that a specific Horror effect in the category you rolled is particularly suited to the scene, you can ignore the d4 roll and simply select that effect.

**DM Tip:** When a character fails a Horror check, you should make a note of the cause of the failed check, the failed check's DC, and the date in your campaign's calendar. (A sample note might read: "Rotting body, Oct. 31, DC 8.") Horror checks have long-term results, and this information will come in handy later.

## Minor Horror Effects

1d4Effect

1d4Effect

- |   |            |   |        |
|---|------------|---|--------|
| 1 | Aversion   | 3 | Frozen |
| 2 | Fearstruck | 4 | Nausea |

## Moderate Horror Effects

1d4Effect

1d4Effect

- |   |            |   |           |
|---|------------|---|-----------|
| 1 | Nightmares | 3 | Rage      |
| 2 | Obsession  | 4 | Revulsion |

## Major Horror Effects

1d4Effect

1d4Effect

- |   |             |   |              |
|---|-------------|---|--------------|
| 1 | Fascination | 3 | Mental Shock |
| 2 | Haunted     | 4 | System Shock |

### Aversion

The character is Frightened. Although the Fear effect only has a duration of 5d6 rounds, for as long as the character suffers from this Horror effect she is automatically Shaken whenever she comes within 50 feet of the location where she failed this Horror check or any identical places.

### Fearstruck

The character is Panicked. This Fear effect has a duration of 5d6 rounds, but the character suffers no further effects.

### Frozen

The character is momentarily overwhelmed by the scene before her, and can take no action for 3 rounds. She also loses any Dexterity bonus to AC for the duration.

### Nausea

The sight causes the character to become physically ill. She suffers an effective decrease of 1d4+1 points of Constitution. For an equal number of rounds, she cannot cast spells and can only take partial actions as she struggles to retain her last meal. The character regains these lost Constitution points at the rate of 1 per hour.

### Nightmares

For the moment, the character is merely Shaken. This Fear effect has a duration of 5d6 rounds. However, the next time the character tries to go to sleep, the horrific events of this scene will begin to play themselves out again, causing the character to wake with a

scream after only 5d6 minutes. The nightmares return every time she tries to sleep, preventing rest. For as long as this Horror effect lasts, the character cannot regain arcane spells, and each full day without rest incurs a cumulative –1 penalty to all attack rolls, saving throws, ability checks, and skill checks, to a –4 maximum penalty.

Lack of sleep also wears down the character's health. Without rest, she cannot regain hit points through natural healing.

The sleep spell can grant dreamless rest, allowing the character to regain spells and negate accumulated penalties. If the character does not receive a sleep spell every night, however, the nightmares begin again.

Elves neither truly sleep nor dream, and thus are immune to this effect; they should reroll the d4 or choose another moderate effect instead.

### **Obsession**

The character is unable to shake this horrific memory. She continually replays the events in her mind, mumbles about them under her breath, and tries to bring all conversations back to this terrible topic.

Her obsessed mind becomes clouded, and she seldom sleeps. With each day of restless obsession, she suffers a cumulative –1 penalty to initiative and to Listen, Search, and Spot checks, to a maximum penalty of –4.

The character ignores her health while obsessed. She cannot regain hit points through natural healing, and each full week without rest also inflicts 1 point of effective Constitution decrease. Once the character recovers from Obsession, lost Constitution points return at the rate of 1 per day. (See Recovering from Failure, below.)

### **Rage**

The character's mind reverts to a primitive, mindless fury, directed towards the source of horror. She must drop anything in her hands that is not a weapon, then rush forward to attack the object of her hatred in melee. This blind fury acts as a barbarian's rage ability, with the following exceptions:

Unlike a barbarian, the character is not in control of her actions. She cannot retreat from battle and will not stop attacking the subject of her rage even if it is destroyed. She must also move towards the subject in the shortest distance possible, even if this means passing through threatened areas. If anyone—even an ally—tries to block her path and she cannot move around them, the character must fight her way through them.

The rage lasts a number of rounds equal to 3 + the character's (heightened) Constitution modifier. When the rage ends, the character comes to her senses (regaining control of her actions), but she is fatigued (as detailed under the Barbarian in the Player's Handbook).

### **Revulsion**

As with Aversion, except that the character is Shaken if exposed to anything that merely reminds her of the horror scene.

### **Fascination**

This "Renfield effect" remains largely unchanged from Domains of Dread. Don't make a Madness check if either Wisdom or Charisma drops below 3, however. Instead, the character becomes a Lost One (see Additional Failures for Madness Checks).

### **Haunted**

Witnessing the horrific scene shatters the character's ability to see any good in the world. She suffers the Obsession effect, and in addition suffers an effective decrease of 1d6 points of Charisma as her spirit becomes hardened and withdrawn. Once the character recovers from the Haunted effect, these lost Charisma points return at the rate of 1 per day. (See Recovering from Failure, below.)

### **Mental Shock**

The character's mind simply shuts down, unable to comprehend what it is witnessing. While suffering from mental shock, the character loses any Dexterity bonus to AC and can take no actions. She will walk if dragged along, but cannot run.

Mental shock has a duration of three rounds. At the end of that duration, the character must make another Horror check at the same DC to escape the effects. If she fails, she can keep retrying the save once every three rounds until she succeeds. If the horrific scene is no longer present, the character gains a cumulative +1 morale bonus to each retry until she succeeds.

### **System Shock**

The shock proves to be too much for the character's heart; she must make an immediate Fortitude save against the same DC or suffer 3d6 points of Constitution damage. Lost Constitution points return at the rate of 1 per day.

### **Additional Failures**

Some Horror effects (such as Rage or Mental Shock) have outburst durations that can be measured in rounds, but all Horror effects actually linger for days. (See "Recovering from Failure" for long-term durations.)

A character can only carry a single Horror effect at a time. If an additional failed Horror check indicates a result of equal or lesser severity, use another outburst of the existing effect. If a failed Horror check indicates a result of greater severity, remove the existing effect and default to the greater one instead. Horror effects do not stack.

Examples: A character fails a Horror check, resulting in Rage (a moderate effect with a duration of two weeks). During these two weeks, any additional failed Horror checks indicating a minor or moderate effect automatically default to another bout of Rage. If the character fails a Horror check indicating a major result, then determine it normally. (In

this case, a d4 roll comes up with Haunted.) The Rage effect is then removed, and Haunted becomes the new default.

Horror effect durations superimpose; the duration is measured from the time of the latest failed Horror check.

### **Recovering from Failure**

Minor Horror effects have a duration of one week. Moderate effects have a duration of two weeks. Major effects have a duration of 30 days. At the end of this period, the character rolls another Horror check. Use the DC of the original Horror check with a  $-2$  modifier, since time and distance heals all wounds. If the character succeeds at this check, the Horror effect is removed. If she fails, the Horror effect persists for another duration period (another 7 days for a Minor effect, for example). A character can retry failed attempts to recover from Horror each time she reaches the end of a duration period. The  $-2$  DC modifier is cumulative with each attempt.

Example: A character making a Horror Check at DC 18 rolls a 14, including modifiers: a failure. Since the character failed by four points ( $18 - 14 = 4$ ), this results in a minor effect. After one week, the character can make another Horror check at DC 16 (DC  $18 - 2$ ) to shake off the effects. If the character fails this check, she can try again in another week at DC 14 (DC  $18 - 4$ ), and so on, until the character succeeds.

Numerous spells and magical effects (such as modify memory or remove fear) can also remove all horror effects.

## **Madness Checks**

Failed Madness checks can cripple a character; fortunately, they're also the rarest type of effect. Make a Madness check in the following three situations:

- The character makes mental contact (using spells, special abilities, etc.) with any domain lord, aberration, elemental, ooze, outsider, plant, or an insane mind (a character suffering from any Madness effect). Druids and clerics with the Plant domain need not make Madness checks when contacting plants.
- The character is the victim of "gaslighting," a purposeful attempt by another party to drive her insane.
- The character suffers a total catastrophe. This can include witnessing the brutal destruction of the rest of the party, leaving the character to face the threat alone; a paladin being stripped of her powers for her misdeeds; suffering an involuntary alignment change; being subjected to a horrific physical transformation (such as being turned into a broken one).

### **Determining DC**

A Madness check's DC is determined on a case-by-case basis.

### **Mental Contact**

If a Madness check is prompted by contact with an alien mind, the DC is  $(10 + \frac{1}{2}$  contacted creature's HD + contacted creature's Wisdom modifier).

### **Gaslighting**

Gaslighting comes in two varieties. If an opponent tries to drive a character mad with a spell or other magical effect (such as bestow curse or wish), then default to the saving throw indicated by that spell (typically a Will save). This saving throw stands in for the Madness check.

One character can also gaslight another through nonmagical means. To do this, the perpetrator must gain the victim's trust and remain in close proximity to the victim for 30 days, using that time to slowly convince the victim that her sanity is slipping away.

At the end of the 30 days, the perpetrator and the victim must make opposed Will saves. If the victim fails this opposed save, she has been driven mad; as with other Madness checks, the degree of failure determines the result. (Subtract the victim's Will save result from the perpetrator's.) If the victim succeeds at the opposed Will save, she is unaffected. If she succeeds by a margin of 10 points, she immediately becomes aware of the perpetrator's failed gaslighting attempt. If the perpetrator is not detected, he can try again (with each retry taking another 30 days).

### **Total Catastrophe**

Lastly, Madness checks prompted by "personal catastrophes" can be thought of as a particularly shattering form of Horror check. The DM should use the recommended DCs and modifiers listed under Horror checks, though this will often require the DM to make a judgment call.

### **Failure Results**

Failed Madness checks can quickly hinder or cripple a character. In addition to the effects listed below, all failed Madness checks cause effective ability decreases to Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. (Roll separately for each ability score).

If a character fails a Madness check by a margin of 1–5 points, she suffers a temporary decrease of 1d6 points per ability. In addition, the player should roll 1d4 to determine a minor Madness effect. The character regains one point in each ability score per hour.

If a character fails a Madness check by a margin of 6–10 points, she still suffers an effective decrease of 1d6 points per ability, but these points cannot be regained without effort. (See Recovering from Failure, below.) The player must also roll 1d4 to select a moderate Madness effect.

If a character fails a Madness check by a margin of 11–15 points, she suffers an effective decrease of 1d10 points per ability. These points cannot be regained without effort. (See Recovering from Failure, below.) The player must also roll 1d4 to determine a major Madness effect.

If a character fails a Madness check by 16+ points, her mind is shattered. Unable to function, she immediately drops to -1 hit points (and is dying). If she survives this shock to the system, she suffers an effective ability decrease of 1d12 points per ability and must roll 1d4 to select a major Madness effect.

### **Minor Madness Effects**

1d4Effect	1d4	Effect
1	Blackout	3 Horrified
2	Denial	4 Unhinged

### **Moderate Madness Effects**

1d4Effect	1d4	Effect
1	Delusions	3 Hallucinations
2	Depression	4 Paranoia

### **Major Madness Effects**

1d4Effect	1d4	Effect
1	Amnesia	3 Schizophrenia
2	Multiple Personalities	4 Suicidal Thoughts

All Madness effects described below are in addition to the effective ability decreases detailed above. As a note, minor Madness effects tend to be forgiving, and pass within a few hours. Moderate effects can be troubling, but typically PCs can continue to function. Characters suffering from major Madness effects often pose a danger to themselves and to others, and require close supervision.

#### **Blackout**

The character is merely Shaken at first. However, she will not recall anything in the time period between (and including) the scene that prompted the Madness check and when she regains the last of her decreased ability scores. (Thus, she'll remember nothing from a period of 1–6 hours.)

If the character is alone, the DM may simply cut to when she "comes to," wandering and alone, with no memory of how she came to be in her current location. Some spells, such as modify memory, can restore lost memories.

### **Denial**

The character's mind refuses to accept the existence of the threat that prompted the Madness check. Until she regains all decreased ability scores, she acts as if this threat simply does not exist. This provides the character with an effective +4 bonus to any Will saves against that threat's attacks, but otherwise offers no protection. When all ability scores are regained, the character once again acknowledges the existence of the threat (but loses the Will save bonus).

### **Horried**

The character suffers a moderate Horror effect (determined randomly). This Horror effect's duration lasts only until the character regains all decreased ability scores, rather than the usual two weeks.

### **Unhinged**

The portion of the character's mind that should have gone mad simply shuts down instead. This leaves the character able to function but affects her personality. She receives an effective +2 morale bonus to all Fear and Horror checks, but her alignment changes (roll 1d8 to randomly select a new alignment, omitting the character's original alignment from the options). A Sense Motive check at DC 20 can reveal that the Unhinged character is "not quite herself" (assuming this isn't obvious). The character regains her normal alignment (but loses the morale bonus) when all decreased ability scores are restored.

### **Delusions**

The character believes something about herself which is simply not true. The nature of this delusion is usually tied into the event that provoked the Madness check. Examples include: a character who believes she has endless wealth (paying for services with pebbles she insists are rubies); believing she transforms into a wolf under the light of the full moon (and insisting she must be caged); believing that she is a specific NPC ("I'm Ivana Boritsi! Bow before me!"). The character can only perform actions if she can rationalize them within the context of her delusion. For example, a character who believes she is actually a vampire would not be willing to expose herself to sunlight.

If a character ever performs an action that should be "impossible" within the context of her delusion (in other words, the player cannot immediately provide a rationalized explanation for the action), the character must make an immediate Horror check at DC 15.

### **Depression**

The character is overcome by a deep melancholy, sapping away her will to live and her interest in the world around her. Such a character just wants to be left alone; she will not suggest ideas, give commands, or otherwise "lead" other characters. In fact, in any given situation, the character must make a Will save at the same DC as the failed Madness check to take any action whatsoever. If the character fails this Will save, she will do nothing at all, even in dangerous situations; in a combat situation, she loses any Dexterity bonus to AC and cannot take attacks of opportunity.

Even if the character can be motivated to act, she does so listlessly and reluctantly. She can follow the instructions of allies, but suffers an effective  $-4$  penalty to all attack rolls and Reflex saves. On the other hand, the character's utter lack of interest in her surroundings actually provides her with an effective  $+4$  bonus to all subsequent Fear, Horror, and Madness checks.

### **Hallucinations**

The character perceives something in the world that simply does not exist. In a sense, Hallucinations can be considered the "external" companion to the "internal" Delusions effect. As with Delusions, the nature of the hallucination is usually related to the event that prompted the failed Madness check.

Examples: A character might believe that she can see ghosts, or that biting insects have infested her armor, or that illithids visit her at night, or she might even occasionally encounter an NPC who actually exists only in her mind.

In a sense, a hallucination can be thought of as a phantasm spell on the level of a major image, but one where the insane character is both caster and subject. As with illusions, the DM should present hallucinatory episodes as real events when they first manifest. Menacing hallucinations may provoke Fear or Horror checks. (DC depends on the specific scene; see the sections on Determining DC for Fear and Horror checks.) Hallucinations can even attack the character, though they can only inflict subdual damage. (The character merely believes she is being harmed.)

Characters have little mental defense against their own inner demons. Thus, a hallucinating character suffers a  $-2$  penalty to all Fear and Horror checks provoked by her own visions.

If a character somehow becomes aware that her hallucinations are just that, she must still concentrate to convince herself that the visions are not real. This works just like disbelieving illusions; to dispel a hallucination, the character must make a Will save at DC ( $13 + \text{character's Wisdom modifier}$ ). Unlike illusions, however, a hallucinating character cannot receive any bonus to her Will save from the reassurances of allies. An attempt to disbelieve a hallucination is a standard action, and can be retried each round.

If a character successfully disbelieves a hallucination, the episode still continues for another  $1d4$  rounds. That hallucination can no longer provoke Fear or Horror checks, however, nor can it inflict subdual damage.

**DM Tips:** One way to present hallucinations is to secretly inform the other players of the nature of the character's madness. Later—once those players know that the episode the DM described won't be real—the DM can present the episode to the group as a real event, and only the hallucinating character will react as if the threat is real—adding to the hallucinating character's confusion.

The DM can then enhance this "rubber reality" scenario by letting the hallucinating character see a real threat that mimics a recurring vision. As an example, a character who hallucinates about monstrous wolves might be on watch, alone, when she spots a real pack of worgs skulking around the campsite. The other characters would then have to guess whether she was merely "crying wolf" again.

### **Paranoia**

The character believes that she is at the center of a conspiracy dedicated to her destruction. No amount of rational argument can convince her otherwise. Although the character's madness does not extend to actual hallucinations, the DM should present all NPCs and conversations with other characters in a menacing light. The DM might drop subtle visual clues that other characters are inhuman, or thread vague threats into NPC conversations. (Think of all the different ways to deliver the line, "I would hate to see you get hurt.")

As with hallucinations, the DM may want to give the other players secret signals that the scene is not being presented quite as it actually exists, or the DM may want to focus on the paranoid character's interaction with NPCs only when alone. (This avoids the extra work of explaining what's really happening to the other players.)

The paranoid character must succeed at a Will save with a DC equal to that of the failed Madness check in order to place any trust in any other characters. If the character fails the Will save, she must refuse all offers of help (for being "obvious traps").

If a paranoid character ever does come upon actual evidence that she has been betrayed or that others are conspiring against her, she must make an immediate Horror check at (DC 12 + character's Wisdom modifier).

### **Amnesia**

A much more disabling form of the Blackout effect, Amnesia is the result of an affected mind's desperate attempt to shield itself from the memory that provoked the Madness check. Throwing the baby out with the bathwater, the amnesiac character immediately blocks out all memory of the maddening event—along with many of the months or years that came before it.

If a failed Madness check ends in an Amnesia result, the DM should roll d%. Multiply this percentage times the character's total levels (rounding down). The character then receives that many negative levels.

Although an amnesiac character still has access to all of her skills, the character loses all memory of events since gaining those levels. A character who acquires a number of negative levels equal to her character level regresses to childhood.

Example: A 15th-level fighter fails a Madness check, resulting in Amnesia. The DM rolls d%, with a result of 48. The fighter then acquires seven ( $15 \times 48\% = 7.2$ , rounded down)

negative levels. This fighter would not remember any events he has witnessed or any people he has met since becoming an 8th-level fighter.

Restoration spells cannot remove these negative levels; they are caused by memory loss, not negative energy.

### **Multiple Personalities**

The character's psyche makes a desperate attempt to contain the mental trauma it has suffered by splintering into separate identities.

The Multiple Personalities effect remains largely unchanged from Domains of Dread; the character retains a core personality, 10d10 fragments, and 2d10 alter egos.

The core personality is the character's original persona. It has access to all of the character's memories, skills, and abilities.

Fragments are partial personas, easily described in a single phrase, such as "coin collector," "sleepy child," or "talented dancer." The player can assign a single skill or ability to each fragment. Fragments can use their one talent if called upon, but they always ignore anything that has no relation to their single subject.

Alter egos are fully formed personalities. Each alter considers itself a distinct individual, but alters often believe that their race, class, or even gender differs from the core personality. As with Delusional characters, these alters cannot be convinced that they are not as real as the core personality. The player should flesh out the persona of each alter, using Tables 11–14 in Chapter Six of Domains of Dread for ideas. Alter egos also have access to all of the core personality's skills and abilities, but they will not use them if doing so is "out of character." For example, a wizard's alter that believes itself to be a simple-minded ogre would not cast spells.

The player should write a numbered list of her character's fragments and alters for ease of reference.

Whenever a character suffering from Multiple Personalities has to make a Will save (including Fear, Horror, and Madness checks), she must also make an immediate Will save equal to the failed Madness check's DC or randomly switch personalities (as a free action). The character should also make a Will save (DC 15 + character's Wisdom modifier) each time she rests. If the character succeeds at the Will save, she wakes up as the core personality. If she fails, she switches to a random persona.

The core personality has no conscious memory of time spent in other personalities, but the character does not acquire negative levels as with Amnesia. Alters typically are aware of each other, and can "leave messages" for each other if they wish. It is not uncommon for alters to dislike each other or the core personality.

## **Schizophrenia**

The character's personality suffers a serious collapse. As the character's sense of "self" erodes, she can suffer drastic and unpredictable personality shifts. Once every week, and whenever the character makes a Will save of any kind (including Fear, Horror, and Madness checks), the character must succeed at a Will save (DC 15 + character's Wisdom modifier). If the character fails this save, her alignment immediately and randomly changes. Use Table 10 in Chapter Six of *Domains of Dread* to determine the character's new alignment. A character might be a saint one moment, a monster the next.

## **Suicidal Thoughts**

This is a more serious form of the Depression effect. In addition to all of the effects detailed under Depression, the character's will to live hangs by a thread. If the character fails any subsequent Fear, Horror, or Madness checks, she must soon (within an hour) make an attempt to take her own life. The character makes the suicide attempt via the most efficient means at her disposal: leaping off a high balcony, drinking poisonous chemicals, flinging herself into a river, etc.

A character can also use a piercing or slashing melee weapon to inflict a coup de grace against herself. (This may also be possible with some ranged weapons, such as crossbows and firearms.)

## **Madness and Campaign Styles**

To gain their full effect, Madness effects depend heavily on the players' willingness to roleplay various forms of mental damage. This probably won't be a problem in a campaign utilizing a great deal of personality and character development (the "Deep-Immersion Storytelling" style of play mentioned in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). On the other hand, if your group prefers "Kick in the Door" gaming, many Madness effects run the risk of actively impairing the fun of the game. If the players aren't interested in roleplaying Madness effects, it's best to simply remove those effects from the game. In this case, failed Madness checks only cause effective ability decreases, as described above.

## **Additional Failures**

If a character fails another Madness check while suffering the effects of a previous failure, do not roll 1d4 to determine a new effect; the character's mind, already insane, will merely sink deeper into its existing dementia. Ability score decreases are cumulative with multiple failed Madness checks, however.

If any of the character's mental ability scores ever drop below 3, she becomes what is commonly known in Ravenloft as a "lost one"—a walking catatonic whose mind was shattered by memories too horrible to bear. The character becomes an NPC until she has at least a 3 in all mental ability scores; until then, the character will eat and drink if fed, will walk if led, and may occasionally mumble some gibberish, but otherwise can take no actions.

The DM can shape a lost one's personality by looking at which ability score has dropped to 1 or 2. A lost one with minimal Intelligence may seem like a cheery and friendly fellow—but he might have absolutely no short-term memory, never remembering anything about anyone from one minute to the next. A lost one with minimal Wisdom might remember conversations he had years ago, but could be completely stymied by any kind of external task, such as opening a door latch or changing his clothes. A lost one with minimal Charisma might wander in a daze, writing strange poetry to himself, but seemingly unable to register the presence of other people.

If any ability score drops to 0, the character slips into complete catatonia (see Chapter Three of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). If all three ability scores are raised above 0 again, the character wakes up as a lost one.

### **Madness and Alignment**

Some Madness effects like *Unhinged* and *Schizophrenia* can cause a character's alignment to temporarily change. This is an involuntary alignment shift, but does not require an additional Madness check. Some classes require specific alignments, such as the lawful good paladin or the non-lawful barbarian. In these cases, the insane character should be considered an effective "Ex-" member of that class, and may or may not lose class abilities. (For example, an ex-barbarian loses the ability to rage, whereas an ex-monk still retains all abilities.)

This loss of class abilities is only temporary; because the alignment change is involuntary, the character is not considered to have actually abandoned the class. When the Madness effect causing the alignment change is removed, the character's original alignment is restored and she can continue to gain levels in that class as normal. Some religious classes, such as the druid or paladin, may be required to atone first, however.

### **Recovering from Failure**

In most cases, the road from madness to recovery is long and difficult. All Madness effects are removed when all ability points lost to the failed Madness check are regained. In the case of minor Madness checks, this period is mercifully short: never longer than six hours, as detailed above. Moderate and major effects require much more effort to shake off. Several methods are available to characters in need of recovery:

### **Peace and Quiet**

If the character rests for 30 days without failing any subsequent Will saves (including Fear, Horror, and Madness checks), she can make another Madness check against the same DC. If this check succeeds, she regains one point in one of her decreased ability scores. While the player can choose which ability score to place the point in, the fastest road to recovery typically lies in restoring Wisdom to normal first.

The character can attempt a new Madness check once per restful month against the original DC until Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma return to normal. However—particularly if the character's Wisdom score was drastically lowered by the Madness

check—the DC may be so high that the character cannot succeed. In these cases, the character will need to turn to outside help.

### **Magic**

If available, magic is the quickest and most efficient method of recovery. Restoration can restore drained ability scores, but requires three castings to remove a Madness effect (one casting to restore each ability score), while the spells greater restoration and heal can each cure madness at a stroke. Note that of these spells, only heal can restore memories lost to a Blackout or Amnesia. Modify memory can also restore lost memories, but may require multiple castings to recover all lost memories.

### **Hypnosis**

If the character does not have access to magic, having access to a character with the Hypnosis skill is the next best option. The hypnotism spell can be used in the same way; use this system, but the spell's increased efficiency grants the subject a +2 bonus to her Madness check.

Hypnosis is a new technique, first developed (and still largely limited to) the doctors working in Ravenloft's handful of asylums and sanitariums. Were magic more plentiful in Ravenloft, this skill would be even less known—it is primarily a non-magical substitute for the hypnotism spell.

When curing madness, the DC of a Hypnosis skill check is equal to the DC of the subject's failed Madness check. The hypnotist may benefit from the modifiers listed on Table 15 in Chapter Six of Domains of Dread. If the hypnotist has at least 5 ranks in Healing, she gains a +2 synergy bonus to the skill check.

Characters can retry Hypnosis checks once per week (per subject) until the subject recovers. (This means that the aid of a successful hypnotist can give the insane character four chances to make recovery attempts each month, rather than just one.) A character cannot use Hypnosis on herself.

A successful Hypnosis check garners two results. First, the subject can attempt an immediate Madness check to regain a single ability point, as detailed under Peace and Quiet, above. Second, each successful use of Hypnosis reduces the DC of the Madness check by 1 point.

Example: A villager has failed a Madness check at DC 24. Sadly, the villager's total bonus to his Will save is only +2; it was +3, but he lost 2 points of Wisdom when he failed the original Madness check. Even if he rolls a 20 on his Will save, the best he can do is a 22; without help, he'll never recover from his madness.

Fortunately, a local doctor (and skilled hypnotist) takes the villager under his wing. In their first treatment session, the doctor makes a Hypnosis check against DC 24. With his total bonuses, he rolls a result of 27; a success. Future Madness checks on the villager's road to recovery will now only be DC 23. The villager still can't make that, but another

successful hypnosis session the next week would reduce the DC to 22, and so on—and the villager's chances for recovery would start to grow.

### **Sanitariums**

A few sanitariums are scattered across Ravenloft. While their purpose is to lift the affliction of madness, more often they simply serve as prisons for the insane. Recovery in a sanitarium works just like hypnosis (in fact, that's the typical method of recovery used), but the sad truth is that a patient in a sanitarium is unlikely to receive the careful attention she requires. Each sanitarium offers a flat 1d8–5 (between –4 and +3) modifier to all Madness checks made on the road to recovery in their care. As the modifier indicates, many patients in Ravenloft's sanitariums would be better off locked in their nephews' attics.

Patients in a sanitarium can make one Madness check per month, adding the modifier above. Each success restores one point in one decreased ability score (player's choice) and reduces the DC of future Madness checks made in that recovery process by 1 point. (This bonus is cumulative.)

### **New Skill**

Hypnosis (Cha; Trained Only)

You have studied the hidden workings of the human mind and can unlock its secrets. Hypnosis is a class skill for monks, sorcerers, and wizards. Experts can choose Hypnosis as one of their class skills if they wish.

**Check:** You can use hypnosis to induce a deep, calming trance in your subject. The effects of a hypnotic trance are identical to those created by the hypnotism spell. Unlike the spell, however, the skill only allows you to hypnotize one subject at a time (who does not receive the –2 penalty to her Will save). The subject need not be willing, but each attempt to use hypnosis requires one hour, so this skill cannot be used in combat, and an unwilling subject might need to be restrained.

To hypnotize a subject, you must make an opposed roll: your Hypnosis check against the subject's Will save. (Willing subjects can always voluntarily fail their saving throw.) Loud or distracting surroundings grant a +2 situational modifier to the subject's Will save.

Once the subject is hypnotized, you can either plant a suggestion (as per the hypnotism spell), or you can aid in the recovery of a subject who is suffering from the effects of a failed Madness check. The latter option is detailed under the "Recovering from Failure" section of Madness checks, above.

**Retry:** Yes, but if you fail a hypnosis check, the subject automatically realizes that you were attempting to lure her into a trance (if she didn't already know). Additional attempts to hypnotize unwilling subjects generally don't work. Retries are a vital part in the process of helping subjects recover from Madness effects, however; see above.

**New Feat**

Courage [General]

You are particularly fearless in the face of danger.

Benefit: You get a +4 bonus to all Fear checks.