



## Fun Madness and Sanity Rules

The following rules are meant to make the game more fun and imaginative from a roleplaying perspective, rather than imposing psychiatric labels and mechanical penalties.

The goal is to add an unexpected twist to a character’s outlook, providing players and GMs with a temporary opportunity to engage with strange and/or dangerous eccentricities. The focus is on the journey, the slow descent into madness, rather than the final destination.

### Sanity Checks

On a failed a Sanity check (typically a Wisdom check or save), the PC develops a madness trait. The table below provides some examples, but GMs and players are encouraged to devise their own, tailored to the PC and relevant events. Players should be creative about how exposure to horror changes the thoughts and actions of their PCs.

1d20	Madness Trait
1	“Do not be alarmed. The tremors and flashbacks come upon me every nightfall. They will subside by the morning.”
2	“Something sinister is following us. Sometimes I catch a glimpse of it from the corner of my eye.”
3	“I am the greatest warrior who ever lived. There is no obstacle I cannot overcome.”
4	“I must close every door I walk through. It keeps the Malevolent One at bay.”
5	“This is no ordinary spider web, it is an omen. Five trapped insects struggling to be free, just as we five are trapped here in this forsaken ruin. We must turn back.”
6	“My apologies, please forgive my laughter. In recent times my sense of levity has become skewed. I understand this is a very serious situation. Do continue.”
7	“I cannot abide the smell of beastmen any longer! The stink makes me wretch. I must leave this place.”

8	"I can't put my finger on it, but ever since [insert event] there has been something very wrong with [insert ally name]. Keep a close eye."
9	"I grow weary of being exploited and taken advantage of all the time. From now on, I give the orders."
10	"Who is this burly dwarf with the broad axe? I think I would remember her if she were our ally. What sorcery is this?"
11	"From time to time I lose the power of speech. Some say I am cursed, others mad. I suspect a bit of both."
12	"If I must draw my sword, one of us must die. Such is the price that Fate demands, and I dare not disobey."
13	"It is a curious thing, but the more I lie and exaggerate, the more others respect me."
14	"The more people I meet, the more I care only for myself."
15	"I keep my dead friend's ear with me always. As long as I have it, I know he can still hear me."
16	"I am whispering because even here they are probably listening. You would be wise to do the same."
17	"Can you not see her? The cloaked lady in the shadow of the trees? Is she saying something, I can't make it out?"
18	"Bloodshed unleashes the demon within me. Keep well clear and loose the nets if I cannot shake the bloodlust once the last of our foes is dead."
19	"Sometimes I black out and wake up elsewhere, with no memory of how I got there."
20	"I don't feel anything anymore. Not since [insert event]."

### Madness Severity and Penalties

A madness trait is initially Minor and tends to present infrequently and at low intensity. Each additional failed Sanity check however tends to increase the frequency and severity of a current madness, or to manifest as an entirely new madness trait, at the GM's discretion (in consultation with the player).

From time to time, the GM may determine that madness imposes a penalty on a current action. For example, a PC distracted with flashbacks or hallucinations at the wrong moment may have a penalty to spot enemies waiting in ambush. The table below is meant as a ballpark guide only and GMs are encouraged to apply adverse effects in a restrained and organic manner. In many instances, particularly social encounters, players might instigate their own penalties.

<b>Severity</b>	<b>Madness Frequency &amp; Intensity</b>	<b>GM Penalty Frequency</b>
Minor	Rarely presents and/or weak compulsion.	Once/adventure
Moderate	Occasional presentation and/or moderate compulsion.	Once/session
Serious	Commonly presents and/or strong compulsion.	Once/day

Pervasive	Near continuous presentation and/or extreme compulsion.	Multiple times/day
Incapacitating	Complete mental shutdown. The PCs adventuring career is either on hold or at an end.	NA

### Natural Progression or Remission

Between adventures, a PC makes a Sanity check for each current madness trait. A success reduces the trait by one severity level or removes a Minor trait entirely. An unsuccessful check generally increases the severity by one level. A PC whose madness reaches Incapacitating goes into compulsory retirement until they are able to recover (if ever).

GM's might rule that extended personal care from an experienced apothecary allows the PC to roll twice and choose the highest result on their check, or that a failed check does not increase the severity of the madness, instead stabilising it at the current level.

### Magical Healing

If your game system does not already have a spell curing madness, I suggest modifying the common *Cure Disease* spell to *Cure Disease or Madness*, which removes a Minor Madness or reduces Madness severity by one level.

I recommend modifying *Potions of Cure Disease* in the same way. You might also consider allowing more powerful healing potions the option of curing madness in lieu of restoring hit points.