

STEINHARDT'S MADNESS SYSTEM

Steinhardt's Guide to the Eldritch Hunt contains numerous aberrations that can assail creature's minds. The following rules and effect detail the myriad ways that characters' minds can be debased, debauched, or otherwise defiled.

Madness Effects

Madness can be short-term, long-term, or indefinite. More mundane effects, like the ones presented here, impose short-term madness, which lasts for just a few minutes. More horrific effects or cumulative effects can result in long-term or indefinite madness.

A creature's intellect can help it understand eldritch knowledge without breaking its mind. Characters can add their **Intelligence modifier** to saving throws they make against madness.

- When a creature becomes afflicted by madness, be it short-term, long-term or indefinite, the creature is stunned (see the condition) until the start of its next turn, and then the madness takes effect.
- A character afflicted with **short-term madness** is subjected to an effect from the Short-Term Madness table for 1d4 minutes.
- A character afflicted with **long-term madness** is subjected to an effect from the Long-Term Madness table for 1d4 × Eldritch Moons (or 1d4 × 7 days, if you aren't using Eldritch Moons in your world).

- A character afflicted with **indefinite madness** gains a new trait from the Indefinite Madness table that lasts until cured.

Madness and the Ethereal Plane

When a creature in Luyarnha enters the Ethereal Plane for the first time in a day, they must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or gain a short-term madness and immediately be returned to the plane they were last on. Creatures of the GM's choice are immune to this effect.

For each minute spent on the Ethereal Plane, a creature must repeat the saving throw.

MADNESS GUIDELINES

Madness can be caused by various effects, creatures, and situations. Use the following guidelines to know when and where to apply madness.

Short-Term Madness Guidelines

Short-term madness occurs more often than longer forms, and it can quickly trigger further madness. Short-term madness occurs when a character experiences something traumatic or mind-altering, but the effects are temporary and wear off after some time. To determine whether an event the characters encounter should cause short-term madness, consider the following guidelines:

Severity. The event should be extreme or unexpected enough to cause a psychological shock or temporary break from reality. Encountering an aberration for the first time could cause a saving throw for a short-term madness if the creature is horrifying or its presence is accompanied by a disturbing event (e.g., a gruesome murder scene). However, if the encounter is less extreme or the character is already somewhat familiar with this particular aberration, it might not result in such a saving throw.



Mental Resilience. Some characters might be more resistant to madness than others, depending on their background, class features, or experiences. For example, a seasoned adventurer or jaeger will be less likely to succumb to short-term madness than an untraveled novice.

Context and Setting. The circumstances surrounding the event play a significant role in determining whether short-term madness occurs. For example, encountering an aberration in a dark, confined space might be more terrifying than encountering it in a well-lit, open area. Similarly, discovering an aberration in the middle of a peaceful village could be more shocking than finding it in a known dangerous area, like an underground catacomb.

Madness Examples & Guidelines

The following non-exhaustive list aims to provide some examples to serve as guidelines on whether or not an effect should cause madness.

SPELLS

- *Contact other plane* (on a failed Intelligence saving throw): long-term madness.
- *Feeblemind* (on a failed Intelligence saving throw): indefinite madness.
- Osteomancy spells: short-term madness the first time one encounters the school of magic.
- *Planeshift*: long-term or indefinite madness, depending on the destination's connection to eldritch or horror.
- *Symbol, Insanity* (on a failed Intelligence saving throw): indefinite madness.

CREATURES

- First encounter with an unknown type of aberration of CR 7 or lower: short-term madness.
- First encounter with an unknown type of aberration of CR 8 or higher: long-term madness.
- First encounter with an unknown type of monstrosity of CR 5 or higher: short-term madness.
- Being swallowed by an aberration: short-term madness.
- Seeing an ally reduced to 0 hit points for the first time in a day due to a monstrosity or aberration: short-term madness.

SITUATIONS AND ENVIRONMENTS

- Attuning to cursed items: short-term (common or uncommon), long-term (rare, very rare), or indefinite madness (legendary or artifact).
- Exposure to eldritch incursions on the Material Plane (e.g., eyes on the walls or ancient scriptures made of blood appearing on walls): short-term, long-term, or indefinite madness, depending on the severity or extent.
- Traumatic events, such as witnessing a horrifying death or being tortured: short-term, long-term, or perhaps even indefinite madness, depending on the intensity and duration of the event.
- Prolonged isolation or exposure to extreme environments: short-term or long-term madness, depending on the severity and duration of the isolation or exposure.
- Entering a nightmare or other horrifying planes: short-term or long-term madness, depending on the nature of the plane and its influence.
- Ingesting or being exposed to drugs, poisons, or abusing other substances that alter perception or induce hallucinations: short-term madness.
- Witnessing or participating in gruesome, evil, or forbidden rituals: short-term or long-term madness, particularly if the characters are exposed to horrifying sights, come into contact with eldritch powers, or witness the summoning of alien entities.
- Uncovering the results of twisted magical or scientific experiments, such as mutated creatures or disturbing fusions of life and machinery: short-term or long-term madness, depending on the inhumanity of the experiments.

GM Note:

If you don't know when to apply long-term or indefinite madness, here is a rule of thumb to follow. Each time a character accumulates five forms of short-term madness in less than 48 hours, they gain a form of long-term madness. If a character gains three forms of long-term madness in less than 30 days, they gain a form of indefinite madness. Feel free to alter these numbers if you want to see more or less madness in your game.

SHORT-TERM MADNESS

When a character is afflicted with short-term madness, roll a d100 on the table below, then roll a d10 to determine the effect of that form of madness. All effects are for the duration of the madness unless specified otherwise.

D100	D10	SHORT-TERM MADNESS
1-10 Your mind is liberated from any sense of self you may possess.	1-2	Without an ego, you are immune to the charmed condition.
	3-7	You mimic the mannerisms, behaviour, and speech patterns of the creature closest to you when you gained this madness.
	8-10	Desperate to find yourself again and believing anything, you automatically fail saving throws against being charmed.
11-20 Your mind is invaded by the sound of the cosmos.	1-2	Painful sounds pale in comparison to the cacophony in your head; you are immune to thunder damage.
	3-7	Eldritch utterings scratch your brain; you hear the soft caress of whispers behind your back.
	8-10	The sound of the cosmos drowns out all other noise, closing you to the world. You are deafened and have disadvantage on saving throws made to maintain your concentration.
21-30 You have seen too much; your mind can't understand it, causing your sight to become erratic and unreliable.	1-2	Your vision expands as if you are under the effect of the <i>see invisibility</i> spell.
	3-7	Spectral forms flutter at the corners of your eyes, vanishing when you turn your head.
	8-10	You are blinded, and you can't use any special senses you use to see, such as blindsight or tremorsense.
31-40 The madness inside you bursts forth as haunting screams.	1-2	Your scream is so loud that it can cause damage. As a bonus action on each of your turns, you can scream at a creature you see within 30 feet of you. If the target can hear you, it must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 1d12 thunder damage on a failure or half as much damage on a success.
	3-7	You can't talk properly; yelling is the only way you can communicate.
	8-10	Your screams are so overwhelming that any creature within 300 feet of you can hear you talk. You also can't form coherent sentences or utter the vocal components of spells.
41-50 Your posture crumples, as you try to make sense of the insanity before you.	1-2	You become incredibly skittish. When you are the target of an attack or an effect that requires you to make a Dexterity saving throw, you can use your reaction to begin moving evasively, gaining a +1 bonus to AC and advantage on Dexterity saving throws until the start of your next turn.
	3-7	You desperately look for a parental figure that can protect you. Once you find such a person, you latch on to them and refuse to leave their side, no matter what.
	8-10	You fall prone and can't stand, as your legs refuse to obey you, and you can't use any flying speed you possess.

<p>51-60</p> <p>You realize that your hands are blasphemous tools.</p>	1-2	These tools can break the minds of your foes. Once per turn when you hit a creature with a melee weapon attack, you can deal an extra 1d8 psychic damage to it.
	3-7	You refuse to use your hands for anything, keeping them hidden from view. If someone stares at them, it makes you extremely uncomfortable and defensive.
	8-10	You shouldn't touch anything. You drop anything you are holding, and can't hold items or grapple creatures.
<p>61-70</p> <p>Your body breaks down under the insanity.</p>	1-2	You are immune to the poisoned condition.
	3-7	You start emitting a foul smell that is unpleasant even to you, and no amount of washing or magic can remove it.
	8-10	You are poisoned, even if you are immune to the condition.
<p>71-80</p> <p>The Eldritch Horrors are revealed to you, bathing you in fear.</p>	1-2	When you gain this madness, each creature within 30 feet of you must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of you for 1 minute. A frightened creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.
	3-7	You become paranoid and fearful of any movement or sound.
	8-10	You become frightened of your allies. You must take the Dash action and move away from them by the quickest available route on each of your turns, unless there is nowhere to move. If you start your turn in a location where you can't see any of your allies, you can use your action to end the madness.
<p>81-90</p> <p>The madness breaks your mind.</p>	1-2	You realize your mind has been holding back your body, and you can now act freely. You have an additional action on each of your turns. That action can be used only to take the Dash, Disengage, Hide, or Use an Object action.
	3-7	You burst into spontaneous fits of laughter randomly, even at the most inappropriate times.
	8-10	You are incapacitated. This effect ends early if you take damage equal to twice your level or if a <i>greater restoration</i> spell is cast on you.
<p>91-95</p> <p>The revelations from beyond afflict you.</p>	1-2	Your body ignores all pain; only the Eldritch Truth matters. You are immune to the stunned condition.
	3-7	You speak to others of the Eldritch Truth in a way that seems limpid to you, but is perhaps not so clear to others. Your sentences are cryptic for the unascended mind.
	8-10	You are stunned. This effect ends early if you take damage equal to your level or if a <i>greater restoration</i> spell is cast on you.
<p>96-100</p> <p>The beast within you awakens and attempts to take control.</p>	1-2	Your body releases its animalistic instincts, without the influence of your mind to restrain it. You are under the effect of the <i>haste</i> spell, although it doesn't require concentration. The spell ends when the madness does.
	3-7	Your speech is slurred, as if you're intoxicated, and you punctuate your sentences with animal noises.
	8-10	You fall unconscious, your mind fighting its hardest to not let you become a beast. This effect ends early if you take damage equal to your level or if a <i>greater restoration</i> spell is cast on you.

