

MADNESS SUPPLEMENT

Bardic College — Madness Revisited — New Spells



COLLEGE OF MADNESS

"We like to think our lives have meaning. But after we die, we live on through those who knew us, we will on through their memories of us, we will on through the stories they tell of us. But what happens when the last person to know you, the last person to say your name aloud, the last person to tell your story dies? Once they are gone, you are gone. You cease to exist, you are dust on the pages of a book that will never open again. Dust on top of a story that was once your story, and now the pages are blank. Dust. And what do you do when the last person to know you, the last person to say your name aloud, the last person to tell your tale lies?" - Musings of the Dreadmen.

The College of Madness has no home, no location people can seek out, no history even. Bards of Madness study their tricks, their lies, their truths within their own heads and the heads of others. Their aims, goals, plans are unknown even to themselves; seeking out truths in the broken planes of their own mind.

Madmen are a constant in the universe. Forces of chaos and evil perpetuate such behavior. Bards of Madness range from Prophets of the Forsaken to Undertakers of the Mind, from Truth Sowers to Blasphemous Storytellers. They do not appear as lunatics or psychopaths. No, they tend to look like the common man, for inside is where one hides their true self. Inside, a place of constant questions and worries, a fallible mind. A mad bard's mind is quite gone, yet they speak nothing but truth.

COLLEGE OF MADNESS FEATURES

Bard Level	Feature
3rd	Hollow Unveiling, Wordsmith's Guile
6th	Additional Unveiling
14th	Reality Distortion

HOLLOW UNVEILING

When you join the College of Madness at 3rd level, you are immediately shown worlds, powers, and entities beyond fathoming.

You gain a level 3 madness flaw of your choosing. In addition, you can spend 1 minute talking to another creature with an Intelligence score of 4 or more. If you do, they must make a madness saving throw. Upon failure, they are immune to this feature for the next month. Once you use this feature, you can not use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

WORDSMITH'S GUILDE

Starting at 3rd level, your words seem to pierce the minds of others and allows them to see the truths you have seen.

As a bonus action, you can expend one use of your Bardic Inspiration to imbue your words with extraplanar insight. When you do so, choose a number of creatures equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum of one) within 60 feet of you and roll your Bardic Inspiration die. Each of them must make a Wisdom saving throw equal to your spell save DC or be overcome with a minor aura of madness for 1 minute.

While affected by Wordsmith's Guile, the creatures have disadvantage on Wisdom (Insight) checks against you and has a penalty on the next Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma saving throw they make equal to half the result of your Bardic Inspiration die.

The amount of time creatures are susceptible to your words increases when you reach certain levels in this class, increasing to 10 minutes at 5th level, 30 minutes at 10th level, and 1 hour at 15th level.

ADDITIONAL UNVEILING

At 6th level, an invisible hand lifts a hidden shroud, enabling you to finally understand what you could not before.

You gain another level 3 madness flaw of your choosing. You may now use the Hollow Unveiling feature an amount of times equal to your madness level, divided by 3 (round down), up to a maximum of half your level before taking a short or long rest.

REALITY DISTORTION

Beginning at 14th level, reality has become relative. The world is but pieces of one's perception.

The world around you alters and fragments as a result of your presence. You may cast an illusion spell you know as a 5th-level spell, without expending a spell slot or material components. The spell lasts until you choose to dismiss it or go unconscious. Once you use this feature, you can not use it again until you finish a long rest.

MADNESS

Adventurers are only as strong as their will to continue. That same drive can be tested, bent, and broken. A broken will creates a broken man whose sanity teeters on the brink.

Madness levels are tangible effects that can be bestowed upon a character. They allow for more roleplaying experiences, possible questlines, and a hint more difficulty.

GOING MAD

Madness is the breaking of the psyche. Going mad by the breaking of the mind requires a Wisdom saving throw; breaking of the spirit requires a Charisma saving throw.

One can go mad by beholding a great terror, enduring a possession, prolonged/systematic torture, the irreversible death of a loved one, taking critical psychic damage, Dark Speech (as found on page 223 of the Dungeon Master's Guide), attempts at deciphering something beyond comprehension, eldritch magic/phenomena, resurrection, cursed magical items, specific poisons/diseases, extensive isolation, and so much more. It is up to the Dungeon Master to determine when madness would make an appropriate appearance.

The madness saving throw should be determined by a DC of 13 + the recipient's current madness levels. If it is caused by a spellcaster, it would be their spellcaster's saving throw DC instead of 13.

MADNESS EFFECTS

Madness can be short-term, long-term, or indefinite. Most people will only experience a first level madness in their life, causing them to irrationally fear a creature, place, or event.

A character afflicted with **short-term madness** is subjected to an effect from the Short-Term Madness table for 1 minute. Another character can take an action to snap them out of the minute long madness.

A character afflicted with **long-term madness** is subjected to an effect from the Long-Term Madness table that lasts until cured. The character can reroll the saving throw at the end of each week to rid themselves of it.

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

When afflicted with a madness level, they act as if affected by the antipathy effect of the *antipathy/sympathy* spell. The target is up to the Dungeon Master's discretion.

SHORT-TERM MADNESS — LEVEL 1 MADNESS

d10	Effect (lasts 1 minute)
1	The character's eyes glaze over and is blinded for the duration.
2	The character becomes charmed by the source and regards it as benign.
3	The character starts to murmur an unfamiliar language that deals 1d6 psychic damage, with an additional 1d6 per madness level, to all creatures who can hear it within 30 feet each round and is considered stunned.
4	The character becomes wide-eyed and deaf to all sounds and telepathy.
5	The character becomes frightened by the source of the madness and will start hurting itself if it can not get away.
6	The character starts to vividly hallucinate as per the Dungeon Master's discretion.
7	The character becomes paralyzed in place and forfeits their turn.
8	The character falls prone in agony and takes 1d6 psychic damage each round. They are unable to get up on their own and will fall again if left alone.
9	The character becomes dumbfounded by the source and is stunned for the duration.
0	The character falls unconscious as if by fainting and remains asleep for the duration.

LONG-TERM MADNESS — LEVEL 2 MADNESS

d10	Effect (lasts at least 1 week)
1	The character feels compelled to repeat a specific activity over and over again, at least once per hour.
2	The character is haunted by an image that fills them with guilt or dread.
3	The character suffers from extreme paranoia. The character has disadvantage on Wisdom and Charisma checks.
4	The character experiences a powerful delusion. Roll another d10 for the Delusion table.
5	The character becomes attached to a "lucky charm" or "safety blanket," and has disadvantage on all rolls while more than 30 feet from it.
6	The character suffers from partial amnesia. The character knows who he or she is and retains racial and class features, but does not recognize other people or remember anything that happened before the madness took effect.
7	The character develops a restlessness that keeps the the character always active and unable to sit still. Short rests take twice as long for this character and levels of exhaustion are not removed after a long rest.
8	The character insists he or she is playing host to something within them. The character hears a voice, feels scratches, pinches, or crawling under their skin, and attempts to tear it out whenever he or she fails their reroll to cure this madness.
9	The character suffers from a major detoxification. They are prone to bouts of anger and reclusiveness. The character craves anything remotely edible, yet nothing satisfies.
0	The character feels like their actions are no longer their own, as if puppeted from an unseen source. Whispers ring in their head as if someone is narrating their entire lives.

INDEFINITE MADNESS — LEVEL 3 MADNESS

d10 Flaw (lasts until cured)

- 1 “I am convinced that powerful enemies are hunting me, and their agents are everywhere I go. I am sure they are watching me all the time.”
- 2 “There is only one person I can trust. And only I can see this special friend.”
- 3 “Sleep is a foreign and long forgotten concept. I now spend my nights working on my special projects.”
- 4 “I see the world clearly for what it is; not what *they* want you to believe.”
- 5 “Blood is everything. To see it, to shed it, to drink it, all in revelry of it. Blood must not be greedily encased. Instead it must be put on display.”
- 6 “Killing others means nothing. Similar to breathing, it only comes natural.”
- 7 “I refuse to part with any of my possessions.”
- 8 “These people who say they know me, are nothing more than liars. I will find out what they know.”
- 9 “I cannot die. Nor do I feel pain. I only laugh in the face of danger.”
- 0 “I speak vaguely, for riddles are the answer. The best answers solve more than one riddle.”

DELUSION

d10 Delusions of...

- 1 Bizarre Implausibility (e.g. alien invasion)
- 2 Control
- 3 Existence (i.e. does not exist or has died)
- 4 Grandeur
- 5 Guilt
- 6 Jealousy
- 7 Love
- 8 Persecution
- 9 Plausibility (i.e. if it could happen, it is happening)
- 0 Reference (i.e. everything pertains to them)

CURING MADNESS

Characters always keep their madness levels unless they are cured. A *calm emotions* spell can suppress the effects of madness, while a *lesser restoration* spell can rid a character of a short-term or long-term madness. Depending on the source of the madness, *remove curse* or *dispel evil* might also prove effective. A *greater restoration* or more powerful magic is required to rid a character of indefinite madness.

Attempting to cure, or even suppress, madness outside of magical means is a long and arduous process that rarely succeeds. Characters can spend a year downtime to care for the mad and allow them another chance to save on their madness saving throw. On a success, their overall madness drops by one level.

MADNESS LEVELS

When a character with level 3 madness gains another madness level, its madness level becomes 1. This cycle repeats allowing a character to potentially gain more than one level 3 madness flaw. While the level does “reset” when a character goes from level 3 to level 1, it technically counts as level 4 and should be counted as such when it comes to curing madness or Dark Speech.

CREATING A NEW MADNESS FLAW

Insanity is not explicitly defined in Dungeons and Dragons and instead covers a broad scope of mental issues one may encounter. As either a player or Dungeon Master, you may not feel like the current indefinite flaws may fit a certain character, event, or theme.

Creating a new madness flaw can be a slippery slope. The flaw should reflect an extreme that has been found common for those with a mental break. This flaw needs to represent some vice, compulsion, fear, or weakness that can be exploited by others to bring ruin or cause the character to act against their best interests. For example, “*I do the same thing over and over again until I get different results.*” is an acceptable indefinite madness flaw. It is an extreme compulsion that can be easily exploited by a foe to distract or delay.

Additionally, one could take a base flaw, as found in the character’s background, and amplify it to the extreme. This sort of indefinite madness opens up possible character growth and perhaps a redemption to sanity, allowing that flaw to relax to the original, manageable state, but never truly leaving.

INDUCING INSANITY

In the ‘Going Mad’ chapter, there was a multitude of ways a character might be drawn towards mania. Of course, it is up to the Dungeon Master to freely decline anything on that list and add another approach. An example of this would be the removal of ‘*taking critical psychic damage*’ and the allowance of ‘*certain spells.*’

BEYOND MADNESS

Madness is like gravity; all it takes is a little push. What happens to those who continue to freely jump into shattered delirium echoed endlessly among the walls of their skull? Options a Dungeon Master may implement include a Sanity Break and a Mad Godhood ascendancy.

Sanity Break. Whenever a character gains a level 3 madness, the creature must roll another madness saving throw where the saving throw DC is equal to their last one. On a failure, the character takes 1d6 psychic damage with an additional 1d6 for each hit die they have. If a character goes unconscious due to the sanity break, they recede into an unwakeable comatose state. The character is affected by the slumber effect of the *imprisonment* spell. The awakening conditions are up to the Dungeon Master’s discretion.

Mad Godhood. Characters who have so many madness levels can enter the realm of becoming unplayable. Many long-term madness effects and indefinite madness flaws interweave bedlam creating difficult opportunities to roleplay or play in general.

A character whose sanity has shattered through mental meat grinders and has endured countless times, who can no longer distinguish between reality and what they experience, more so that even those around that character are unable to differentiate between reality and their power is the first step to ascendancy.

BECOMING A MAD GOD

Every game and Dungeon Master are different. The rules set for each game may differ and no Dungeon Master is alike. The path to becoming a deity of madness is a long and burdensome road that even the maddest among mortals would not attempt.

This homebrew is not going to give explicit instructions on how to become a mad god. A Dungeon Master may have different ways they would like to go about implementing such a disaster-waiting-to-happen. They may be so inclined to create a Prestige Class whose final level requires a ritual to fully ascend into a pantheon, or series of limited feats that are only accessible when a certain madness level is reached, much like Invocations, with the final feat being the ascendancy, or perhaps a series of Boons with major drawbacks and only an act of a miracle among thousands can give rise to the new deity.

Then again, that may be far too much power for a character to be a literal god and can quickly upset the balance of the game if it continues past that point. Another option could be that 'Mad God' acts as a title rather than a definition and the character ascends into an avatar-like state, who radiates entropy and distorts the world around them.

NEW SPELLS

With new madness comes new sorcery. New ideas, however insane, spark new magics and new spells are born. This supplement introduces 10 new spells relating to madness or created by cursed madmen.

The following spell lists show which spells can be cast by characters of each class. A spell's school of magic is noted in parentheses. If a spell can be cast as a ritual, the ritual tag also appears in the parenthesis.

BARD SPELLS

CANTRIPS (0 LEVEL)

Distort (illusion)

1ST LEVEL

Gaslight (transmutation)

Obfuscate (transmutation)

Wounding Word (evocation)

5TH LEVEL

Chains of Mephistopheles (illusion)

6TH LEVEL

Finger of Denial (abjuration)

7TH LEVEL

Arcane Stitch (transmutation)

9TH LEVEL

Mass Modify Memory (enchantment)

CLERIC SPELLS

1ST LEVEL

Wounding Word (evocation)

3RD LEVEL

Mind Ward (abjuration)

6TH LEVEL

Finger of Denial (abjuration)

7TH LEVEL

Arcane Stitch (transmutation)

9TH LEVEL

Hindsight (divination)

DRUID SPELLS

CANTRIPS (0 LEVEL)

Distort (illusion)

3RD LEVEL

Mind Ward (abjuration)

9TH LEVEL

Hindsight (divination)

PALADIN SPELLS

1ST LEVEL

Wounding Word (evocation)

3RD LEVEL

Protection from Minds (abjuration)

RANGER SPELLS

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SORCERER SPELLS

CANTRIPS (0 LEVEL)

Distort (illusion)

1ST LEVEL

Gaslight (transmutation)

Obfuscate (transmutation)

5TH LEVEL

Chains of Mephistopheles (illusion)

6TH LEVEL

Finger of Denial (abjuration)

7TH LEVEL

Arcane Stitch (transmutation)

9TH LEVEL

Mass Modify Memory (enchantment)

WARLOCK SPELLS

CANTRIPS (0 LEVEL)

Distort (illusion)

1ST LEVEL

Gaslight (transmutation)

Obfuscate (transmutation)

5TH LEVEL

Chains of Mephistopheles (illusion)

6TH LEVEL

Finger of Denial (abjuration)

WIZARD SPELLS

CANTRIPS (0 LEVEL)

Distort (illusion)

1ST LEVEL

Gaslight (transmutation)

Obfuscate (transmutation)

3RD LEVEL

Mind Ward (abjuration)

5TH LEVEL

Chains of Mephistopheles (illusion)

6TH LEVEL

Finger of Denial (abjuration)

7TH LEVEL

Arcane Stitch (transmutation)

9TH LEVEL

Hindsight (divination)

Mass Modify Memory (enchantment)

ARCANE STITCH

7th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: 10 feet

Components: V, S, M (a silver needle inlaid with mithril and platinum worth at least 300 gp, and a hair from the mane of a unicorn.)

Duration: Instantaneous

This spell draws on the arcane weave and you can stitch together completely broken objects or tears in the arcane weave, reality, or otherwise. As long as the break or tear is no larger than 50 feet in any dimension, you stitch it, leaving no trace of the former damage. A targeted portal is instantly dispelled and closed.

This spell can restore magic items, enchantments, and constructs that haven't been damaged or destroyed for more than one day. Constructs repair and heal up to full hit points upon completion of this spell.

CHAINS OF MEPHISTOPHELES

5th-level illusion

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, S, M (a chain)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Chains erupt from the target and must make a Wisdom saving throw. A creature takes 6d10 psychic damage and is grappled on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If they fail and the chains wrap around them, on each of your turns for the duration, you can use your action to deal 2d10 psychic damage to the target automatically. The constricted creature can make a Wisdom saving throw, as an action, to break free of its bindings. On a successful save, the spell ends. The spell also ends if the target is ever outside the spell's range.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 6th level or higher, both the initial and consecutive damage increases by 2d10 for each spell level beyond 5th.

DISTORT

Illusion cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Up to 1 minute

You twist and malform sensory indulgences, within range. You deform one of the following senses one may perceive within range:

- You cause a shadow or light to bend or blur for 1 minute.
- You alter the air to warp sound around you, making words and sounds less distinguishable inside or outside your range for 1 minute.
- You make a taste or smell admissible or sour or bitter for 1 minute.

If you cast this spell multiple times, you can have up to three of its 1-minute effects active at a time, and you can dismiss such an effect as an action.

FINGER OF DENIAL

6th-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 reaction, which you take when you are hit by an attack, targeted by the *magic missile* spell, see a creature within 120 feet of you casting a spell, or see a spell effect within range.

Range: 120 feet

Components: S, M (a mummified finger)

Duration: Instantaneous

You raise a finger and create one of the following effects within range:

- An invisible bubble of force deflects oncoming attacks and until the start of your next turn, you have a +10 bonus to AC, including against the triggering attack, and you take no damage from *magic missiles*.
- A distorting blur ripples in range and causes a spell of 5th level or lower to fail and have no effect. If the spell is of 6th level or higher, this spell fails and has no effect.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 7th level or higher, you gain a +2 bonus to AC for each spell level beyond 6th, or you cause a spell to have no effect if its level is less than the level of the spell slot you used.

GASLIGHT

1st-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: V, S, M (any material components needed to cast the chosen spell)

Duration: 10 minutes

Choose an Illusion spell that you can cast, that has a casting time of 1 action. You expend an appropriate spell slot for the chosen spell as part of casting *gaslight*. For the duration, you can cast the chosen spell as a free action without expending a spell slot or needing spell components.

Additionally, that Illusion spell can now target a single creature and appear visible only to them, or invisible to them and visible to everyone else for the spell's duration. For the next 24 hours, you gain advantage on Charisma (Deception) checks against the target about the illusion existing.

You may only cast the chosen spell once, and when you do this spell ends. You can use only one *gaslight* spell at a time. If you cast this spell again, the effect of another *gaslight* spell ends. Also, *gaslight* ends if the chosen spell's material components is ever not on your person.

HINDSIGHT

9th-level divination

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (a hummed bird feather)

Duration: 1 hour

You touch a creature and they must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, you bestow a limited ability to relive the immediate past. For the duration, the target lives through the last 6 seconds of their life each round. They have disadvantage on Constitution saving throws to maintain concentration, Wisdom saving throws and Charisma saving throws.

Additionally, if the target takes any damage other than psychic damage during the duration of this spell, the target must make an Intelligence saving throw. On a failure, they take half the damage they took the previous round as psychic damage, otherwise no damage is taken on a success. Furthermore, the target has advantage on Intelligence (Investigation) checks and Wisdom (Perception) checks for the duration.

MASS MODIFY MEMORY

9th-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: 120 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You attempt to reshape up to 10 creatures' memories. Each creature that you can see must make a Wisdom saving throw. If you are fighting any of the creatures, it has advantage on the saving throw. On a failed save, the target becomes charmed by you for the duration. The charmed target is incapacitated and unaware of its surroundings, though it can still hear you. If it takes any damage or is targeted by another spell, this spell ends for that target, and none of the target's memories are modified.

While this charm lasts, you can affect each of the target's memories of an event that it has ever experienced, but lasted no longer than 1 hour. You can permanently eliminate all memory of the event, allow the target to recall the event with perfect clarity and exacting detail, change its memory of the details of the event, or create a memory of some other event.

You must speak to the targets to describe how its memories are affected, and it must be able to understand your language for the modified memories to take root. Its mind fills in any gaps in the details of your description. If the spell ends before you have finished describing the modified memories, the creature's memory is not altered. Otherwise, the modified memories take hold when the spell ends.

A modified memory does not necessarily affect how a creature behaves, particularly if the memory contradicts the creature's natural inclinations, alignment, or beliefs. An illogical modified memory, such as implanting a memory of how much a creature enjoyed hurting itself, is dismissed, perhaps as a bad dream. The Dungeon Master might deem a modified memory too nonsensical to affect a creature in a significant manner. If a creature has a madness level, they are more likely to accept things they would not do.

A *remove curse* or *greater restoration* spell cast on the target restores the creature's true memory.

OBFUSCATE

1st-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: 1 mile

Components: V, S

Duration: 1 round

You can hide or teleport an Illusion spell you are concentrating on up to the range of the Illusion spell's range. Your illusion is suspended for 1 round when you choose to hide it. If the illusion spell targets another object or creature, it appears exactly as it did before it teleported or hid.

MIND WARD

3rd-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (a piece of tin)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You touch a creature. If it is afflicted by madness, the charmed condition, or a *confusion* spell, you suppress it and they are immune to those effects for the duration. The creature is also resistant to psychic damage, cannot have its mind read, and cannot be talked to telepathically unless they allow it first.

WOUNDING WORD

1st-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V

Duration: Instantaneous

A creature of your choice that you can see within range makes a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, they take 1d8 psychic damage, or half as much on a successful save.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d8 for each slot level above 1st.

CREDITS

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