



PSYCHOLOGY

A psychologist is one who can read, influence and even control the thoughts of others. The ability is born from the mental energies of the psychologist and sharpened by intense training.



The art and science of Psychology is the province of a gifted few. Most are those born with the Bright Mark and trained to use their inborn talents. Rarer are mutants who exhibit no physical manifestation of the Mark, yet have the talents of the Psychologist.

The Bright Mark and the Mule

There are two traits which grant access to Psychology-based power: Bright Mark and Mule. With either of these traits, the character has access to all of the potential uses of the power. Without one of those traits, the Psychology skill can be learned, but only the rules under *Psychology as a Skill* are available for use.

The Bright Mark and Mule traits may never be granted by vote during play. They must be purchased in character burning.

Psychology as a Skill

First and foremost, Psychology is a skill that's drilled into the heads of talented individuals. The skill teaches how to read, predict and manipulate human behavior, both en masse and individually. It is a rigorous academic discipline.

Psychology

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Psychologists can decipher gossamer veils of emotion, deception, clarity and purpose. Psychology is a field of related knowledge for Oratory, Persuasion, Command, Falsehood, Seduction, Suasion, Rhetoric, Intimidation, Interrogation, Etiquette, Ugly Truth and Soothing Platitudes. It may be used to help the same skills for another character. It may be tested in a Duel of Wits for the Incite action and is the primary dueling skill in the Psychic Duel mechanics. It is also used extensively in the Infection maneuvers. Psychology may also be used to read another character's emotional state and to discern his traits. Obstacles: Determining whether a subject is alive or dead, Ob 1. Reading hidden mood, Ob 2. Seeing a character trait, Ob 3. Reading a past lifepath, Ob 3.

Detecting Naiven within, Ob 3. Seeing a die or call-on trait, Ob 4. Sensing a person's intent (to deceive, for example), Ob 4. Detecting the presence of a connection, Ob 5. Reading a reputation, the obstacle is 6 minus the reputation dice. Reading an affiliation, obstacle is 7 minus the affiliation dice. Reading a Belief is Ob 7.

You must declare your intent and set the obstacle for this action before rolling the dice. The psychologist player may choose which trait his character is trying to discover.

If the psychologist character possesses the Bright Mark or the Mule trait, the Psychology skill presents him with more powerful options. See the Psychologist's Powers section.

Practice Cycle: 6 ms. Hrs/day: 3r/6d/12c

Technology: No.

A PSYCHOLOGIST'S POWERS

A psychologist with the Bright Mark or Mule trait has access to the following abilities: *Connections*, *Transference*, *Hindrance*, *Locks*, *Barriers*, *Psychological Force* and *Psychological Chemistry*. Using these abilities he may read a character's innermost thoughts against the character's will and make alterations to the character's Beliefs and traits.

Connections

A psychologist who wishes to tap into his higher-level abilities must forge a psychic connection with the character whom he wants to affect. A *connection* is the primary vehicle through which a psychologist can read the thoughts and manipulate the actions of another.

Forging a Connection

When a player wants his psychologist to get into the mind of another player, he must perform a little ritual. Pick up a single die and *turn and ask the target player (or the GM)*, "Do you wish to forge a connection with me?" If yes, then the psychologist player hands the other player a die from his connection pool. If no, then no connection is made.



This ritual is between the players, and it has nothing to do with the characters. The subtext for the ritual is, "If you take this die, you *will* benefit, but you also open yourself to possible attack and manipulation. Are you willing to accept the risk and possibly pay the price?"

What's happening in the game between the characters is a mere glance from the psychologist as he extends his abilities toward the other character, searching for vulnerabilities. If the player accepts, then the psychologist has found an easy way in. If he declines, then the psychologist will have to use other, less subtle methods.

A connection may only be offered when the two characters are physically in the same scene together. It requires no overt action from the psychologist.

Prince Faisal and Lord Omei are discussing their plans to unseat Prince Aziz. Mayuran turns to Thor, "Will you accept a connection?"

Thor responds, "Hell, yes!"

The Connection Die

If the connection is accepted, the target player may use it as an advantage die for Oratory, Persuasion, Command, Falsehood, Seduction, Suasion, Rhetoric, Intimidation, Interrogation, Etiquette, Ugly Truth and

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Soothing Platitudes tests. His own latent psychic powers are temporarily enhanced via the connection. He may also broadcast his thoughts to the psychologist and in turn accept the transmitted thoughts of the psychologist via telepathy—from any distance. He may not read the psychologist's thoughts.

Mayuran hands Thor a die from his pool. Thor may keep it until Mayuran asks for it back. The connection die acts as a special advantage die for a whole bunch of skills. It doesn't count as a FoRK or a wise or help.



For reasons described in *Breaking the Connection*, it's best if connection dice are distinguishable in some way—a particular color or size. It makes them easier to keep track of.

The Pool

The psychologist's Will acts as a pool with which he can protect himself, build connections and help or hinder those connections. A psychologist's connection pool is equal to his current Will exponent. However, each connection temporarily reduces his pool by one (not his Will exponent). The dice in the pool are also used to grant bonuses and cause penalties, so it is important to manage connections carefully.

Prince Faisal has a Will of 6. He has given out four connections. That means his current pool is 2. He can give out two more connections if he desires, or he can save those dice and keep them as his Barrier or use them for Transference or Hindrance.

We Are Connected

When a psychologist has a connection with another character, he is in constant communication with him, no matter the distance. He may speak “head-to-head” with the character as if they were present together. He can hear the words the other character is speaking, even if they are directed at someone else. He can also *read* the connected character's surface thoughts.

Lord Omei is speaking privately with Mal Nenox, but all the while, Mayuran is listening. Since Faisal and Omei are connected, Mayuran can use anything in that conversation as if he were present in the scene.



Surface thoughts are not terribly informative. They typically serve to give the psychologist a jumbled sense of place and physical presence for the connected character. Beyond that, the psychologist can conjure images from the surface thoughts if the connected character is concentrating. For more information, the psychologist must use his skill and read the character.



Reading a Connection

A psychologist may read a character he's connected to at any time, so long as he isn't otherwise engaged in a conflict or test of his own. He may do so no matter the distance. He gains a + 1D advantage in reading a connected character. Otherwise, use the obstacles described in the Psychology as a Skill.

Psychologist to Psychologist Connections

Psychologists must form bonds and trade dice like any other character in order to communicate telepathically or transfer skills and memory. However, since they already gain the FoRK die from their own Psychology skill, they do not gain an advantage die from their connections. All other benefits and risks stand as stated above.

Psychologist-to-psychologist connections are more of a two way connection than other connections. The targeted psychologist may initiate communications and read the surface thoughts of the character who made the connection. He may also read the character, no matter their distance.

Reading a Connected Psychologist

A psychologist player may wish to read another psychologist to whom he's connected. This is done via the standard reading mechanics, but the *target's current barrier adds to the obstacle*. The reading psychologist does gain the + 1D advantage die.

Dual Connections

It's possible for a character to have connections from more than one psychologist at a time. He only gains + 1D for connections no matter how many ghosts are in his head. However, once he's accepted two connections, the psychologists may attempt to dislodge one another. Make a Psychology test, the obstacle to dislodge another connected psychologist is equal to the target's current barrier.

Breaking the Connection

Letting go of a connection is tricky. The psychologist player must *ask* for the connection die back. The target player may willingly return it to the psychologist's pool, or he may keep it and say, "I think there have been some unforeseen complications and a strange bond has formed between us." The connection die is then considered to be "in jeopardy." The player may keep the die and use it as he has been—as an advantage for his social skills. If he uses the die in tests in conjunction with or in relation to the psychologist, the die remains his. If he uses the die in a

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test that has nothing to do with the psychologist, the connection closes if the psychological advantage die comes up a 1. The psychologist then regains the die in his pool.

Prince Faisal is about to go head to head with his uncle, Inquisitor Weller. Faisal needs to raise his barrier. Mayuran turns to Thor and asks, "Can I have my connection back?"

Thor responds, smiling evilly, "I think there have been some unforeseen complications..." Thor opts to screw Mayuran over and keep the die. He may continue to use it for tests with Lord Omei. When it comes up a 1, it returns to Mayuran.

If a psychologist wishes to terminate a connection with another psychologist, the target psychologist may opt to refuse and keep the die. In this case, the target psychologist's own Psychology FoRK die stands in for the connection die. If used in tests relating to the connected psychologist, the connection remains. If used in other tests, and the die comes up a 1, the connection is lost.

Minor Relationships and Connections

If a psychologist wishes to terminate a connection with a minor relationship—a GM-controlled character who will never have dice rolled for him—the GM must give him back his connection die. It's a perk of being a psychologist.



Connections may only be broken at the beginning or end of scenes, not during.

Social Contract of Connections

Making a connection is a player-to-player thing. The decision has very little to do with the characters. At the table, the player is essentially asking permission for power over another player's character. In the game, the psychologist is simply probing his intended target and looking for a way in. Some targets will open up easily. Some can only be swayed by force. That distinction is determined by whether or not the players agree on making a connection. It's often quite beneficial to let a psychologist in, so it's worth the risk of the prying eyes. Other times, a player will be justifiably nervous having a potent psychic riding behind his consciousness.



It is acceptable for the players to make out-of-character deals at the table that affect the workings of the game. Accepting a connection and then setting terms for relinquishing the die is the preferred method of blackmail.



The Barrier

Any dice from the pool not allocated to connections, skill transference or hindrance are considered to be a defensive *barrier* around the psychologist's mind. The less he extends himself, the better defended he is. The barrier creates an obstacle penalty against all attempts to use Psychology on the character, including locks and readings to discover traits. It adds to the body of argument in the Psychic Duel rules described below.

With a Will of 6 and four connections out, Faisal's Barrier is a 2. It adds +2 Ob to anyone trying to read him and gives him +2s to his body of argument in a psychic duel.

Transference

A psychologist may transmit temporary knowledge and skill to a connected character.

Transferring a Skill

To enact transference, the psychologist player decides which skill he will transfer. He gives a connected character that skill at an exponent equal to the his own exponent in the skill or the number of dice remaining in his connection pool, whichever is lower. Transference lasts for one scene.

Prince Faisal has a connection with Lady Kate. She has gotten herself into a psychic duel with Weller. Mayuran declares that for this scene, he'll transfer Psychology to Lady Kate. Now she may combat him on more even footing. Faisal's current pool is 2, so although Mayuran has Psychology 6, can only give Alexander a 2 Psychology, but it's better than nothing.

The psychologist must have the skill in question. If a social skill is transferred, the connection die may *not* be used.

If the target has the skill, the player may opt to use the psychologist's transference dice or his own skill. Generally, the higher pool is the one to go with!

Momentary Control

During transference, the psychologist momentarily takes over the other character. The psychologist's player may determine the actions and/or speech of his connection. The target player rolls the dice and decides whether or not to use help, fields of related knowledge or artha.

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The target tests for the ability as if he had the appropriate skill, but he also earns a test toward his aptitude for learning the skill. If he already has the skill, the test counts as if he had rolled the total dice against the obstacle as normal. The transferring character does not earn a test.

Transference may be done in the psychologist's or the other player's scenes.

Transference Is Not Punishment

Transference is an invasive process, but it cannot be used as punishment. A psychologist player may not transfer only one die and force his target to use it in lieu of using his higher exponent in a more appropriate skill. Transference is for aiding another character when he does not have the necessary ability in a particular area. When using Transference, a psychologist must transfer his full skill or pool in dice, whichever is lower. If a psychologist wants to trip up a connection, he may use *hindrance*.

Hindrance


The psychologist may harm or hinder those he's connected to. Instead of giving bonus dice in the form of a skill, he may apply an obstacle penalty to any one of the connected character's skills.

Each +1 Ob penalty costs 2D from the psychologist's pool. It is applied to a specific skill. This penalty must be applied before the target player states any intent and task. The psychologist player is not allowed to react to an announced intent by blocking it with an obstacle penalty. He must determine beforehand how he wants to influence his target's behavior. In extended conflicts like the Duel of Wits or Firefight, the psychologist must choose the skill he will hinder before the statement of purpose/objective is laid out. He must keep the hindrance at the same level on the same skill for the whole conflict.



Hindrance makes the psychologist vulnerable. Any compromise created by a Firefight or Duel of Wits can be used to initiate a follow on conflict with the psychologist before he can recover his barrier.

Hindrance may be performed as part of the psychologist's conflict scene for a maneuver. If used during another character's conflict scene, or one in which the psychologist is not present, it counts as a building scene for the psychologist player.



On Morelia, Thor's Mule, Garrett Crow, has a connection with Chris' Sodalis-Captain. Chris has entered into a Duel of Wits in order to denounce Crow. Thor states, "For the duration of the duel, I'm hindering your Oratory by +2 Ob." Ouch! Crow's Will is 6, and he has two connections out, so his current pool is 4. The hindrance drops his pool to zero—+2 Ob costs 4D. During this scene, Crow is rather vulnerable to other psychologists.

The Lock

Rather than attempting to apply a penalty to subtly influence a character, the psychologist may attempt to make an outright attack on a connected character's mind. Test Psychology, +1D for the connection, against an obstacle equal to the victim's current Will.



Command and Intimidation are viable FoRKs. If successful, the target must pass a Steel test; base hesitation is increased by the psychologist's margin of success.

Failure by any margin indicates the character is *locked*—standing and drooling—by the psychologist's force of will for the rest of the scene or until released by the psychologist whichever comes sooner. Holding a lock in a scene costs one die from the pool.

If the psychologist and his connection are in the same building or conflict scene, the psychologist can attempt the lock anytime he pleases. He may only do so once—Let it Ride applies.

Locking Remotely During Another Player's Scene

A lock may be applied to a character even if the psychologist isn't in the same scene. A connection spans any distance and allows a psychologist to monitor surface thoughts. He can tell when you're up to no good—and he can feed you a blast of psychic feedback that freezes you in your tracks.



If a player is locked out of a scene he initiated, it does not count toward his or the side's limits for the scene: If he's locked out of his building scene, he gets another building scene. The building scene cannot be for the same tests or intent. Like

Let It Ride, the nature of the conflict must change. If the player is locked out of a conflict he initiated, his side may take another conflict scene for this maneuver if they so desire.

Once again, Chris' Sodalis-Captain is opposing Thor's Mule. This time he's leading a force of soldiers against the junta—which Crow secretly controls. Chris initiates a conflict scene, a firefight. Thor announces that he's attempting to lock the captain. He rolls his Psychology. His obstacle is 5, equal to the captain's Will. Spending mucho artha, Thor comes up with seven successes. Chris must pass a Steel test. His character's hesitation is 5 plus 2 from Thor's extra successes—Ob 7! He fails and is locked, paralyzed, for the remainder of the scene. He watches his men get routed from the field.

Chris immediately frames a follow-on conflict. He describes his character storming in on Crow demanding an explanation....

Social Contract of Lock



This power is incredibly potent and potentially abusive. Locking a character can deprive a player of screen time and possibly even get his character killed. It should therefore be used with care and discretion. Don't ruin anyone else's fun for the sake of the tired old canard, "That's what my character would do."

Psychologist Versus Psychologist Locks

Using this against another psychologist is difficult. The target's barrier adds to his Will for the Psychology test obstacle.

Psychological Force

Connections, Transference, Hindrance and the Lock detail the conditions surrounding a willing (albeit unwitting) character. What if the target player refuses the psychologist's connection? What if the psychologist wants to rewire parts of the target's personality? In these circumstances, he must use psychological force in the form of a *psychic duel*.

Psychic Duel

The rules for using force on another's mind function under the same mechanics as the Duel of Wits. This duel is not one of words, though. It is completely silent, transpiring in the mental space between the two characters. Instead of convincing one another of an argument, they are vying for control of the mind. No words are spoken between the characters. Each player describes his character's state of mind and thoughtscape and how these abstract concepts affect the other player.



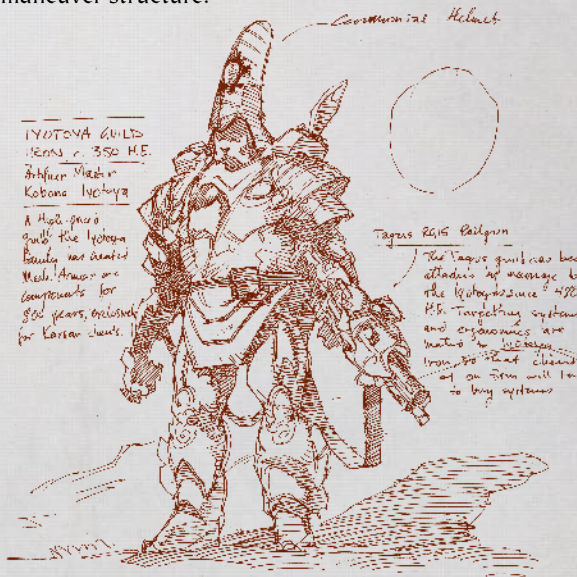
Under these circumstances, the psychologist's statement of purpose, in addition to the standard Duel of Wits stakes, can include the addition of a character trait or the modification of one of the target character's Beliefs or Instincts. The target player may set his statement of purpose as he would in a Duel of Wits. He may pervert the psychologist's statement of purpose or he may demand a connection or the cessation of a connection as part of his goals. He may not add traits or modify Beliefs of the attacking psychologist unless he himself is one.

For example, if a psychologist wants to instill loyalty to himself in one of his subordinates, he could state, "If I win, you gain the Loyal to the First Citizen character trait." And the opposing player could state that instead, this Psychic Duel will bring forth an Undying Hatred of the First Citizen. If the psychologist wins, but is forced to give a concession, the opposing player could state that Loyal to the First Citizen implies the office and not the actual man.



Psychic Duels do not require a connection die to initiate. A psychologist can initiate a duel with any character in his presence so long as the psychologist player can engage in a conflict according to the scene/maneuver structure rules.

If a psychologist has a connection with a character, he does not have to be in the same location in order to initiate a duel. He may initiate the duel anywhere or any time, so long as it does not interfere with the scene/maneuver structure.



Skills in the Psychic Duel

The Psychic Duel uses Psychology as the dueling skill for all actions. Intimidation and Ugly Truth may also be used for Incite. Characters without these skills test Will with a double obstacle penalty for the Psychic Duel.

Generating the Body of Argument in a Psychic Duel

A psychologist rolls his Psychology skill and adds the successes to his Will exponent, as per the standard rules. An unskilled victim counts this test as a *big deal*. He does not roll for his body of argument. Instead, just double his Will and count it as the body.

Barrier and Psychic Duels

Any Barrier dice possessed at the start of the Duel are added to the psychologist's body of argument.

I want Weller to change one of Lady Kate's Beliefs. I initiate a psychic duel. Weller's Will is 6, his current Barrier is 3 and I roll 3 successes on his Psychology—12 all together. Lady Kate's Will is 5. Alexander simply doubles that for his body of argument—10 for him.

Get Out of My Head

The first heading in the Duel of Wits chapter is Argument, Not Mind Control. The Duel of Wits is designed to resolve conflict and create consensus and compromise at the table. At its core, it cannot be used for "mind control" because one side can always walk away from the argument. *Well, the Psychic Duel mechanics are mind control.* We use the same mechanical structure, but a character cannot walk away and cannot refuse the duel—a player cannot extricate himself from the conflict. There's a psychologist in his head, and he's determined to have a conflict. It can be very ugly.



What recourse do non-psychologist characters have against such invasion? The statement of purpose. Use the statement of purpose to set stakes that will protect you from invasion: "You will never tamper with me or my family again." Or, "You are never to enter my presence again, on pain of death!"

In a psychic duel, if the target player is connected to the psychologist and manages to negotiate a minor compromise, he may break the connection and give the psychologist his die back. In a standard Duel of Wits, a connected player may make his statement of purpose, "Get out of my head!" If he wins, the psychologist must break the connection.



Furthermore, a psychologist may not use a psychic duel to force a connection with a character. However, the victim may demand a connection as part of a compromise.

Timing of Psychological Force

Psychological Force may not be used during a Firefight. However, if a character corners a psychologist with the I Corner Him and Stab Him in the Face rules, the psychologist may engage his opponent in a psychic duel so long as he wins the Tactics/Close Combat test or he has an Instinct, "When assaulted, fry their brains." If he wins the test, factor the Close Combat tests and then, regardless of injury, incapacitation or death, engage in the psychic duel. It happens in the space of a thought! If he has an Instinct, skip the Close Combat and go straight to the psychic duel.

Sensing

A psychologist may sense the presence of other minds. In this regard, the Psychology skill counts as Observation for detecting Infiltration attempts and Inconspicuous characters and for penetrating Sleight of Hand.

Broadcasting

If a psychologist is broadcasting his presence via multiple connections or a conspicuous show of force, other psychologists in the area can detect his presence. Make a Psychology versus Psychology test. If tied, the broadcasting psychologist has been detected. If successful, the detecting psychologist may link this test to a Psychology test against the broadcasting psychologist in the future.

The Psychologist's Touch

A psychologist may feed his own senses and memories directly into another individual. It is done by placing his hand along the individual's spinal column. During the contact, the psychologist may share and show his memories directly with the other character. The two characters may communicate with each other, thought to thought. The contact requires a connection between the two characters and a Psychology versus Perception test. If the Psychologist wins, the subject has no memory of the details of the contact. If the subject wins, each extra success allows him to recall one detail of what was shown to him.

Success on either side may be used as a linked test in a follow up Duel of Wits.

Psychological Chemistry

Boost

Psychology is rooted in body chemistry. Using his skill, a psychologist can modify his own or a connected character's body's internal workings—overcharging some of his glands, dulling pain sensations and overriding other natural fail safes. It allows him to add dice to Perception, Agility, Speed, Power or Forte. Doing so requires a Psychology test, the obstacle is equal to the current level of the stat in question. The margin of success is added to the ability in dice. However, the boost only lasts for one test, after which the target stat is then reduced by the same number of dice by which it was increased. This result represents the horrible fatigue from overtaxing the body in such a way. Make a Forte test with an obstacle equal to the number of dice granted. If successful, the stat remains taxed for the following *scene*, after which the boosted character recovers. If failed, the stat remains taxed for the rest of the *maneuver*.

Psychological Toxicology



By drastically manipulating his body chemistry, a psychologist can render his blood and cerebral fluids toxic to parasites, namely Naiven. It is a desperate and risky process—the poisons act on the worm *and* the psychologist. It is possible to kill oneself with this gambit.

Test Psychology against Ob 4. In this case, Psychology becomes the weapon. The psychologist's own brain becomes the target. The damage is H4, H7, H10 with an Assault Weapon Die of Fate. Margin of *failure* counts as a bonus to the Die of Fate as if the player had exceeded his obstacle with a weapon. Roll the die to determine damage whether you succeed or fail. The damage result is applied to both the Naiven worm and the psychologist.

A Naiven has a Mortal Wound of H7. A Mark result from Psychological toxicology will kill it. An Incidental result will not stop it from overtaking the psychologist's mind. A Superb result (H10) will kill the worm, but will probably Maim the psychologist if it doesn't kill him.

Not a process for the faint of heart.

