



SANITY LOSS - CYBERNETICS/BIO-TECH

RELEASE DATE 08/03/11

Written by Jason Valenzuela

A common theme in many games and stories is that as a human being replaces more and more of their natural body they lose more and more of themselves. Whether this is because they still feel as if their real limbs were still attached or because they can't feel that shiny new metal arm, the fundamental problem is all in their head. Similarly as a character begins to mutate, become perhaps part alien in nature there is also a loss of sanity. Presented here are the basic rules for representing this loss of sanity in an Alpha Chronicles game.

These rules are best utilized in games where the Cybernetic and Unnatural Hero Types are not used. Both of those Hero Types assume that such things are common and widely accept. There is little chance of a character feeling different or out of place in such a setting. These rules are best used with pure Skill Based Hero Type chronicles where the option exists to take the Cybernetic Implant Option or the Mutation Option. Another way to approach this is to allow players to spend points in the Cybernetic or Unnatural Hero type but to apply these rules to any points spent in such a way.

When a character does take either of these options instead of suffering just the usual drawbacks they also begin to lose sanity. Take the total number of Option Points spent on either option and subtract that total from the characters permanent Sanity Points. As the character takes more cybernetic implants or mutations the penalty continues to grow until the character can no longer hold onto their humanity.

Power Psychosis

Some characters can deal with Power Psychosis better than others. The following upgrades help prevent damage to the characters psyche. They represent a willingness to accept the changes and adapt to the changes in their body and mind.

- +25pts Tech-Empathy / Xeno-Empathy. The character chooses either cybernetic or unnatural when selecting this power. If Tech-Empathy is chosen the character only suffers $\frac{1}{2}$ the normal sanity loss for Cybernetic Options. If Xeno-Empathy is chosen the character only suffers $\frac{1}{2}$ the normal sanity loss for Unnatural Options. This upgrade can be purchased twice, once for each option.
- +50pts Technophile / Xenophile. The character chooses either cybernetic or unnatural when selecting this power, they are unusually willing to embrace their cybernetic or mutated side. If Technophile is chosen the character only suffers $\frac{1}{4}$ the normal sanity loss for Cybernetic Options. If Xenophile is chosen the character only suffers $\frac{1}{4}$ the normal sanity loss for Unnatural Options. This upgrade can be purchased twice, once for each option.

SANITY LOSS - INHUMAN POWERS

Written by Jason Valenzuela, based on Drain Rules for Options by J. Keith Wykowski

Super strength, reading minds, and casting magic these are not things that a normal human being can do. Sometimes in a game these are not things that a character is supposed to be able to do. Whether reading from some ancient tome or granted powers by some crazy aliens that abducted you and put psychic amplifiers in your skull, for whatever reason you have been granted powers which no human mind was ever meant to wield.

The rules outlined here are for campaigns where humans aren't supposed to have powers, and when they do it slowly destroys them the more they use these powers. Options that are permanent in nature and do not require activation will not incur a constant or continual Sanity Point loss. These Options commonly include those that grant skill selections, resource increases, and permanent upgrades. The final call goes to the Game Master, and both player and Game Master should discuss whether a power counts or not before the player makes the final decision to take it. Alternately some Game Master's may decide all options count, and disregard all permanent powers.

Chronicles that include these no-cost activation options should have a new 30pt weakness called Power Strain. They will then inflict the normal amount of Sanity loss that they should cost based on the number of Option Points invested in the option. The Option is no longer permanent and will require one action to activate. Durations on these powers are usually for the scene, but the Game Master may choose to extend or reduce their length.

How many Sanity Points are lost for activating a specific option will depend upon the flavor of the chronicle that the Game Master wants to present. All of these different possibilities are based upon the total cost of the Option being activated, along with any upgrades, weaknesses, or other modifiers. If the character activates an Option with an upgrade that has been purchased, but does not take advantage of the upgrade for that activation, the Sanity loss should be decreased to reflect the lowered strain on their mind. With the exception of Instant effects or those with set durations most Options should remain in effect until the end of the scene. If an option allows a longer duration then the Sanity Points lost cannot begin to heal until the power is discontinued.

Low Stress chronicles should use a very simple formula based upon Option Costs. For every 100 Option Points that an Option costs to purchase, or portion thereof, there is a Sanity Point cost of 5.

Moderate Stress chronicles incur a Sanity Point cost equal to $1/10^{\text{th}}$ the total Option Point cost utilized. Players will begin to heavily weigh the costs and benefits of using their powers.

High Stress chronicles will make it difficult and costly for the players to use their powers. Not recommended unless Sanity is a key element of your game they can make for a fun game when used properly. Sanity Points lost are equal to $2/10^{\text{ths}}$ the total Option Point cost, or more.

Some final notes. Magic Users may find Sanity both easier and harder to hold onto. Sanity Point losses for Magic Users are equal to the drain of the spell. Depending on the style of chronicle the Game Master wishes to run, this can either be in addition to regular Drain or instead of. The last note is that these rules can make for an interesting chronicle if you replace Sanity with Injury Points. These rules are not meant to apply to Skill based characters but for a truly gritty game you may choose to apply these rules to everything except education upgrades. With this style even the normal gifted and talented individuals go slowly insane. (Explains a few historic figures doesn't it.)