
House Psionics Primer

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Psychic Energy and Psionics

All living plants and animals possess a **psyche**, or body of psychic energy. Sages argue whether this body of energy is derived from the living processes of the physical body, or whether the psyche is itself the vital essence of life. To those that can see such things (in a plane of perception called the *mindscape*—see below), upon the death of the physical being, the psyche appears to flicker and fade like a dying fire; this does not solve the question, though, since damage to the psyche affects the body, and vice versa.

Psyches naturally tend to protect themselves by taking the easiest shape to maintain and protect: a roughly spherical or ovoid shape, surrounded by a shapeless aura of energy that functions like a barrier. This protective barriers are roughly analogous to physical beings covering themselves with skin, scales, or bark. Many creatures have learned to shape portions of their own psyche to attack other psyches, to defend their own psyche in unusual ways, or to directly affect the physical world. The skill of using psychic energy to affect the world outside of the mindscape is called **psionics**. Various animals, monsters, humanoids, and even plants use psionics in various degrees of skill. Those who specialize in psionics are called

psionicists; those whose psionic skills are a lesser part of their lives are called wild talents; both these two types are called **mindbenders**.

A psionic power functions because the psionics user shapes a part of her psychic energy as a tool and sends it out to accomplish her will. These shaped-energy tools are called **harbingers**. Harbingers cost energy to shape, maintain, and wield.

A character's psychic energy is measured in **psps**, or psychic strength points. A character's psp number depends on their psionic expertise, and their Constitution/Health score (see Psionist Class—psp progression, Non-weapon Proficiencies—Wild Talent, and Ability Scores—Constitution). Every use of psychic attacks or psionic powers expends psychic energy in the form of psps. Receiving a successful psychic attack also causes one to lose psps. A mind without psps is easily penetrated by a single successful psychic attack, and the successful attacker is immediately free to use any telepathic power or devotion on the penetrated mind. Fortunately, psps are quickly recovered in sleep or meditation (1/8th total per hour; see rejuvenation non-weapon proficiency for meditation specs).

The other critical psychic statistics to remember are the Mental Armor Class (**MAC**) and the Mental THACO¹.

See House Charms & Skills: "House Proficiencies—wild talent" for rules on Wild Talent MTHACO and psp progression. See House Character Creation—Psionist Class" for psionist MTHACO and psp progression.

Any being's base MAC is determined using its Reason subability and the intelligence chart in "House Rules—abilities and subabilities." Sometimes beings with psionic expertise may modify this base MAC; see "Non-weapon Proficiencies—mental fortification."

¹ **MTHACO** is an index of psionic ability, just as the THACO shows the ability of the fighter. The lower the MTHACO score, the easier it is for the mindbender to attack another mind in **psychic combat** (see below), or trigger a psionic power. All psyches have MACs that measure their protection against psychic attack (see below). MACs are also used to index the difficulty level of psionic powers. Each power has an MAC that the

Wild Talents begin with MTHACO 20, modified for Intuition. Starting psp equal—

psp needed to trigger their power
+d10 + psp bonus for health

Example: Merko is a first-level thief with the wild talent of Phase. Since his Intuition is 15, his MTHACO is 17. His Reason subability is 13, so his MAC is 10. Merko rolls a 4 on his d10 for psp and his 16 health gives him a +1 psp bonus. Phase costs 6 psp per round, so Merko's psp total is 4+1+6=11 psp.

Merko: MTHACO 17, MAC 10, psp 11.

Merko is exploring the coast of the silt sea, when he surprises a huge sink worm. He immediately tries to use his Phase power to escape. He rolls a 6 on his MTHACO check which results in a (17 - 6 =) 11 MAC score—not quite good enough, since the *Phase* devotion has a difficulty MAC of 10. The failure costs him 2 psp. Since he is faster than the huge sinkworm, Merko gets to try again, rolling a 4, and losing another 2 psp in the failure. It's the sinkworm's turn now, and it swallows Merko in one gulp. Fortunately before Merko digests, he manages to roll a 15. The thief phases and escapes the Sinkworm's gut, but the power only lasts one round since Merko only has 7 psp left and Phase costs 6 psp per round to maintain.

Five general types of psionic powers have been observed:

Clairsentient allows characters to perceive things beyond the natural range of human and demi-human senses.

Psychokinetic uses psychic energy to move objects across space.

Psychometabolic affects the user's body by altering it in some way.

Psychoportive allows psionic travel, moving characters from one location to another without crossing space.

Telepathic involves the contact of two or more minds.

Contact

Most telepathic powers require **contact** between the psionist and a target psyche. This is accomplished through the contact non-weapon proficiency. The psionist sends out a harbinger towards the target psyche. With some telepathic powers like Send Thoughts and Mindlink, the harbinger can travel virtually infinite distances immediately, allowing instant potential access to a target mind far away. The access is merely *potential* because the harbinger is stopped by the outer protective barrier of the target psyche, and can only get in one of three ways: being **admitted** by a **defending** psyche, **breaching** a **defending** psyche, or **invading** a **breached** psyche.

Psyches exist in one of two states: **defending** or **breached**.

Defending is the natural state of any psyche. As explained before, all beings from monsters to animals to plants enjoy the protection of the mental barrier defense. Psionic beings frequently have access to other defenses² as well. A defending mind may choose to admit a harbinger, though few beings trust each other so much, since once admitted, the harbinger can attempt any telepathic power that the sender possesses! Of course, the use of potentially benign psionic powers such as Mindlink, Psychic Surgery, and Sight Link rely on this sort of trust. Fortunately it is easy to recognize the sender from the harbinger, if the defender has dealt with one of the sender's harbingers before. Harbingers have a characteristic and identifiable "feel" when they touch the defender's aura, a feel more certain than any of the physical senses. Defensive constructs have this same "feel," see the discussion of psychic signature (p4).

Uninvited harbingers can also gain access to the target mind, but this requires **psychic combat**: an attacker attempts to **breach**, i.e. break through, a target's defenses. Psychic combat is inherently hostile, requiring the attacker to shape her harbinger into one of the five **psychic attack modes** (see below).

² Of the five psychic defense modes, both Mental Barrier and Mind Blank cost no psp to maintain, and can be used even when the defender has expended all of his strength (psps).

Unlike friendly contact, psychic combat is limited to the range of the attack modes.

Example of Hostile Contacting:

FYI, *Phase* is a psychoportive devotion.

See “House Rules—psionicist class” for Psionicists’ access to disciplines and powers.

Ayani is a third-level psionicist with Willpower 15, Reason 16, Health 12; Her MTHACO is (19-1=) 18, her MAC is 8, and her psp total is (12 + 0 + 10 + 10 + 10 =) 42

As a third-level psionicist, Ayani has access to two disciplines; she chooses Telepathy as her first and Clairsentience as her second discipline. Her sciences are Mindlink and Domination; her devotions are Awe, Inflict Pain, Invisibility, ESP, Truthhear, Danger Sense, and Safe Path.

Ayani’s psychic defense mode are Mental Barrier and Thought Shield. She chooses Mind Thrust and Id Insinuation as her psychic attack modes.

Ayani: MTHACO 12, MAC 8, psp 42

Ayani notices Merko the thief picking her pocket, but she realizes that he is running fast enough to escape her. She decides to use Domination to force him to return her purse. Ayani knows that in order to try to dominate the thief, that she must first breach his mind with a psychic attack.

Ayani peers into the mindscape and launches a Mind Thrust at Merko’s psyche. Ayani’s harbinger, a needle-nosed hummingbird, encounters Merko’s unshaped Mental Barrier, and hits, inflicting (2d4) a full 8 psp against Merko’s psyche. To Ayani’s dismay, her hit does not breach the thief’s defense (Merko has 3 psp remaining).

By the next round the thief has sprinted over 120 yards away—out of the mindbender’s attack range. Merko thanks the elements for his close call, and swears to avoid the very sight of the mindbender. Ayani swears to pack a stronger psychic punch next time she sees the thief.

The Mindscape

All contacting, whether conducted through friendly **admitting**, or through **Psychic Combat** (the action of psychic attack-mode harbingers against defense mode constructs³ of defending minds), takes place in the mindscape. This Mindscape, also called “shadowland,” is seen only by those with the contact ability. The user must concentrate on seeing through the mindscape, and cannot “leave it on all the time.”

Just as our world looks very different when viewed through an infra-red, ultra-violet, or X-ray sensor, the mindscape reveals a very different world than the one we see through our eyes. There is no color variation in the mindscape, just different shades of brown. The energy of psyches, constructs, and harbingers glow lighter brown against the darker contrast of the mindscape. Skilled psionicists shape their constructs and harbingers elaborately⁴, while unskilled wild talents tend to wield crude, almost amorphous shapes. While the mindscape is a purely visual medium⁵, it involves the mind and not the eyes, so that it makes no difference to psionicist’s mindscape sense if her eyes are opened or closed. Distance is often distorted, so the mindscape is no substitute for normal vision in combat.

Only psyches are visible in the mindscape, and these are indistinguishable from each other. Plants cannot even be distinguished from animals. Mindscape perception extends in all directions, which means that no advantage is derived by attacking from behind. It is impossible, however, to get dependable physical bearings from mindscape information. Fortunately,

³ Construct” refers to the defensive configuration of the psyche. See “Psychic Combat—Defense Modes” for the specific constructs that apply to the various psychic defense modes

⁴ It is this fine elaborate quality that makes the harbingers of experienced mindbenders more accurate than crude harbingers of the inexperienced, which translates in game terms to better THACOs.

⁵ There is no sound, smell, touch, taste, or even sense of gravity or balance in the mindscape.

pairing natural vision with mindscape allows one to match a physical being to a psyche, and hence to initiate psychic combat with a seen opponent.

It is necessary to see one's opponent to initiate psychic combat, but once combat begins, it is not necessary for either side to see each other, since each combatant can now identify their opponents in the **mindscape**. Anyone who attempts a contact "sees" from two mindscape perspectives at the same time: from her own psyche's perspective, and from her own active harbinger. From the psyche perspective, the target (and all other psyches) appears as a simple ball of energy. Not even the target's defensive constructs can be identified from the psyche's perspective, otherwise choosing attack harbingers would be a simple matter!

When a mindbender's harbinger closes on a target psyche, the sender briefly glimpses the construct of her target's defense mode, and even may recognize the defender, if they have had psychic contact before; at the same time, she could see someone else's harbinger approaching like a small comet (though she would not know whether it was an attack harbinger unless it was **stacked**). As the harbinger closes on her defenses, she sees the harbinger in detail and may recognize the sender from the harbinger's handiwork. Each mindbender leaves a psychic signature as unique as fingerprints on every harbinger and construct.

Mindscape and Friendly Contact: Example

Ayani wishes to communicate with her mentor via Mindlink. Since she is not attacking him psychically, she does not need line-of-sight; in fact, her range is unlimited. She reaches into the mindscape for him. She hopes to impress, so she chooses a hurrum as her harbinger. (Hurrums, sweet-humming scarabs, are expensive pets and quite popular with local noble families.)

When her hurrum approaches her mentor's psyche, Ayani sees an empty, stony field. Her master is using a Mind Blank defense, she realizes, pleased to remember her lessons. She has her hurrum settle on a rock in the field, letting her mentor decide whether to accept her contact. The Mindscape vision suddenly disappears; Ayani realizes that she has been granted contact, and successfully triggers her Mindlink power. "I succeeded, master," she thinks into the mindlink.

"Why did you send a cockroach to contact me?" her mentor demanded. "what sort of a greeting is that for your master?"

Embarrassed, Ayani suddenly realized that the sweet sounds of the hurrum were lost in the purely visual medium of the mindscape. Without the gentle, relaxing hum, the hurrum *would* appear like a cockroach!

Psychic Combat

While what really determines psychic victory is MTHACO rolls, MACs, psp, and attack/ defense mode choices, players and DM are encouraged to describe the appearance of their harbingers and constructs. Often to speed up a complex combat, the players and DM may ignore the mindscape aspects of psychic combat and simply declare attack and defense modes, just as physical fighting often comes down to "I attack him with my sword. [Roll] I hit AC -1, for 4 hit points of damage." But when it's feasible, psionic combat should be played with specific harbingers and constructs. This specific detail should not bog down play, but should make psychic combat exotic; mystify and interest the other players, not bore them. The mindbender should not be a dry presence in the party!

Psychic Attacks

As explained earlier, breaching a defending mind can only be accomplished with a psychic attack. In order for a harbinger to breach a defending mind, the harbinger must fit into one of the following five categories: Mind Thrust, Ego Whip, Id Insinuation, Psychic Crush, Psychic Blast. These five categories of harbingers are known as Attack Modes. Psionicists (depending on their levels) eventually gain access to all five attack forms, whereas wild talents can never purchase more than three of the five.

If any psychic attack successfully hits a defending mind, it causes damage to the defenses in the form of psp loss (see **Psionic Combat Chart** below). When a psychic attack hits and damages the defending psyche beyond than its remaining psp, the attacking harbinger **breaches** the target psyche (but actually only reduces the defender to zero; no psyche can fall below zero psp). For as long as the mind is breached, the attacker may

invade without using an attack mode and affect the mind with telepathic powers, checking MTHACO against the power's MAC, not the victim's. The attacker may also use an attack mode to **invade** an already breached mind, but this does require an MTHACO hit against the Victim's MAC, even though the victim is already breached. Each attack mode has effects of its own against a breached mind: see below. Invading attack harbingers must still hit against the victims MAC, unadjusted for attack/defense combination.

Attack modes must be declared at the beginning of a round, but the attacker may announce "**stacking**" just before rolling the attack die. Any psionic attack may be **stacked**, that is, the cost and damage-effectiveness of the attack doubled, tripled, quadrupled, but not more than quintupled. A quadruple psychic blast, for example, would cost the attacker 40 psp to generate; but would inflict $(2d12) \times 4$ psp damage to defending psyches, and $(d6) \times 4$ hp damage to breached minds within the psychic blast cone.

Stacking an attack creates a larger-than-usual harbinger that glows more brightly in the mindscape than usual harbingers. Because of this brightness, stacked attacks can be recognized as hostile before they close. The target is almost⁶ always aware of being breached. One victim described the breaching sensation as "feeling a kirre unleash its claws in my mind."

The breached psyche will attempt to seal the breach as soon as possible. When the victim is aware of the breach, psyches receive a saving throw vs. spells every d4 rounds to determine whether they can seal the breach and defend again. Note, though, that the success of some telepathic powers such as domination and acceptance may prevent the breached mind from trying to reseal itself and defend.

Psychic attacks are hard to master; wild talents may spend a charp to learn how to use one attack mode each time they go up a level (see *House Charps and Skills: "House Proficiencies—Contact"*), but can never learn more than three of the attack modes. Psionics start out at first level with the attack mode of their choice, and learn another at 3rd, 5th, 7th, and

⁶The only possible exceptions are a subtle attack (See Id Insinuation attack mode in this document) or using Psychic Anaesthesia or possibly Post-Hypnotic Suggestion (See Telepathic Powers List)

9th levels. Psionics also learn to attack three attacks every two rounds at 7th level, and twice a round at 13th level (see *House Character Creation: "Class Descriptions—Psionicist"*).

Mindscape and Psychic Combat: Example

Ayani spars with Melitt, a fellow psionics student (Psi 4, MTHACO 15, MAC 5, psp 51). Ayani chooses thought shield as a defense, focusing her defensive energy into a great glowing hand to stop or deflect any oncoming attacks. Ayani's first harbinger is a crossbow bolt, thrusting towards Melitt's psyche.

Melitt wins initiative, so her attack closes first. As Melitt's glowing harbinger approaches her psyche, Ayani recognizes its form as a charging mekillot: a psychic crush! Fortunately, the dumb mekillot seems more interested in charging Ayani's hand construct, and her psyche ducks away from the charge easily (bad MTHACO roll on Melitt's part).

Ayani's crossbow bolt closes on Melitt's psyche, and Ayani suddenly sees a less polished version of her mentor's stony field. The crossbow bolt sails uselessly over the field.

Cursing her opponent's lack of originality in the construct, and her own bad luck, Ayani switches her own construct to a spiky shell (Mental Barrier) and her harbinger to a crawling, rock-colored chameleon (Id Insinuate).

Ayani wins initiative; but her chameleon finds not the rocky field, but a glowing, flaming shield that blocks the chameleon's every move.

Melitt's harbinger arrives: an exact duplicate of Ayani's crossbow bolt, except five times as big. Melitt has stacked her attack! Mind thrust is devastating against Mental Barrier, Ayani realizes in horror as the ridiculously oversized bolt shatters through her spiked shell, instantly breaching her defenses. Ayani feels the sensation of utter nakedness and exposure, of being utterly at her opponent's mercy.

"Ayani is fortunate that this is just a practice, remarks her mentor, who has been observing. "Melitt would do well to learn from Ayani the value of designing and polishing her own harbingers and constructs. And yet Ayani has a lesson to learn from Melitt: that imitation can be the most powerful form of battery."

The Psychic Attacks

Below are the descriptions of the five attack modes. Each attack form—

1. inflicts psp damage against a defending mind;
2. has a special effect against a breached mind; and
3. has some unique property of its own.

Mind Thrust.

All stabbing and piercing harbingers fall into this category. In the mindscape these harbingers may appear as spears, crossbow bolts, darts, lances, needles, chatchka, etc. A thrusting force attempts to suddenly pierce defenses. Mind Thrust works best against the Mental Barrier defense.

The attacker spends 2 psp to attempt a Mind Thrust. If it successfully hits a defending mind, it causes 2d4 psp damage to the defenses. Against an already breached mind, a, invading Mind Thrust shorts out one of the victim's psionic powers for d4 days. The thrust has no effect at all on a breached nonpsionic.

Mind Thrust can be used to perform a **forced entry** against a defended mind, no matter how many psp the defender still has. In order to pull this off, the attacker must hit the defender three times in two rounds with a "called shot" (at a -5 penalty to hit). Forced entry only lasts for the next of the round; by the beginning of the next round, the partial breach is healed and the unwelcome harbinger destroyed. Forced entry allows the attacker only the remainder of the immediate round to affect the defending mind with a telepathic power. Note that a 7th-level psionist, with 3/2 attacks, would have to hit once the first round, and twice the second round (all with the -5 MTHACO penalty), to be able to attempt a telepathic power against the defender. A 13th-level psionist, with two attacks per round, would have to hit the first three times (at -5), in order to be able to strike the temporarily breached mind with the fourth psychic attack. Since psionists under 7th level and wild talents or any level cannot psychically attack more than once per round, these characters cannot possibly execute a forced entry.

Ego Whip.

All stinging, insulting, or more-painful-than-hurtful attacks fall into this category. In the mindscape these harbingers may be shaped as whips, scourges, flames, snakes, shackles, harness, chains, filth; anything that assaults the target's self-esteem or individuality. Ego Whip works best against the Mind Blank and Thought Shield defenses.

The attacker spends 4 psp to attempt an Ego Whip. If the whip successfully hits a defending mind, it causes 2d6 psp damage to the defenses. When successfully invading an already breached mind, Ego Whip dazes the victim for d4 rounds; during this time the victim makes all die rolls (attack rolls, saving throws, etc.) at a -5 penalty.

This attack mode may also be used to destroy or **block** an enemy attacking harbinger. This works roughly like a fighter trying to block an enemy's attacks: the blocker rolls to hit the attacker's unadjusted MAC, and the attacker rolls to hit the blocker normally. The lowest successful die wins. If the attacker wins, the block was ineffectual, and the attack does normal damage. If the defender wins, then the attacker was blocked, and loses the move and the psp. The defender expends the psp for ego whip, but is otherwise unharmed. This peculiar effect can even be used against a *psionic* attack directed specifically at the defender, such as **disintegrate**.

Id Insinuation.

This attack attacks the victim's subconscious, blurring the disciplined barrier between primitive needs and social constraints. This attack mode tends to use blurry and subtle harbingers that attempt to blend into the target's construct like a chameleon. (Actually the chameleon is a common Id Insinuation harbinger.)

The attacker spends 6 psp to attempt an Id Insinuation. If the attack successfully hits a defending mind, it causes 2d8 psp damage to the defenses. When successfully invading an already breached mind, Id insinuation sends the victim's mind into turmoil for d4 rounds; during this time the victim automatically loses initiative, and must save vs. spells or be unable to attack, run, cast spells, or use psionics or psychic attacks.

A called-shot Id Insinuation (at -5 penalty to hit) allows the user to make a subtle attack. Note that just because an attack is subtle does not mean that the defender does not notice it. Whether or not the attack misses, hits, or breaches, the defender receives a saving throw vs. spells at -3 (wisdom and race do not adjust this saving throw). Psionicists save at -1. If the defender fails the saving throw, then she does not notice the subtle attack; if she succeeds, then she notices it and may counterattack.

Note that subtle attacks cannot be stacked.

Psychic Crush.

Attempts an overwhelming, crushing force. Huge constrictor snakes, charging mekillots, a stampede of erdlu, and a wrestling giant, are all examples of psychic crush harbingers.

The attacker spends 8 psp per unit to attempt an psychic crush. If the attack successfully hits a defending mind, it causes 2d10 psp damage per unit to the defenses. When successfully invading an already breached mind, psychic crush actually inflicts physical damage: d8 hp damage per unit, no saving throw.

A successful psychic crush has a peculiar effect in psychic combat: the defender must attempt to retaliate with a psychic attack in the next round against the psychic-crush-using-opponent, or render his mind vulnerable for one telepathic power from the attacker at the end of the that round.

Psychic Blast.

True to its name, this power functions like an explosion of destructive psychic force. Dragon's breath, a volley of arrows, an avalanche of rocks, and a great burning tumbleweed are all examples of mindscape-versions of psionic blast.

Alone of the attack types, Psychic Blast does not even attempt to penetrate the defenses with a harbinger; it rather tries to breach them with an explosive surge of energy. The blast is an cone area attack, five yards diameter at the origin (the psionicist), and twenty yards diameter at the far end sixty yards away. Since Psychic Blast does not penetrate the mind, it does not allow use of a telepathic power on the victim immediately after the mind is breached. The user is not even aware of whose mind in the area has been breached.

The attacker spends 10 psp per unit to set off a psychic blast. The attacker rolls a single MTHACO and declares what MAC the blast hits. Everyone in the blast area with that MAC or worse (after chart adjustments) is damaged. The **Attack vs. Defense Modes Chart** modifications apply as usual to the defenders' MACs.

Psychic blast causes d12 psp damage (per unit) to defenders. When successfully used to attack already breached minds, psychic blast inflicts physical damage: d6 hp damage per unit, no saving throw.

Harbingers and Psychic Attacks

Most of the information above is also found in abbreviated form in the **Psychic Combat Chart** below. What is missing from the chart are the examples of harbingers for each attack form. Remember that the attack forms are merely categories of harbinger!

Examples:

Ayani spars with her mentor, Tlatipec (psi 12: MTHACO 3, MAC 5, psp 134), who agrees not to use his receptacle or stack his attacks, but otherwise, will not pull punches, except to let Ayani make the first attack. It's still an unfair combat, but training, not fairness is the goal of the House of the Mind.

Ayani (Psi 3: MTHACO 16, MAC 8, psp 42) decides to take advantage of her first attack privilege by attempting a sneak attack with Id insinuation. Her silk wyrm harbinger encounters a high and jagged mountain, which Ayani recognizes as a Tlatipec's Tower of Iron Will. Her heart sinks, but has her silk wyrm scale the mountainside, exploring for caves.

[Ayani rolls a 19, which hits AC 2 with the called shot penalty, but before chart adjustments. With the +3 penalty for Id insinuation vs. Tower of Iron Will, this hits AC 5—exactly what she needed.] Her Silk Wyrm finds a small stream, and begins to drink deeply. [She rolls 2d8 for 5 points of psp damage for her subtle attack. Amazingly, her mentor fails his saving throw, and does not notice the subtle attack].

"I'm waiting, Ayani," Tlatipec tells her impatiently. Ayani conceals her elation.

“You said I could choose when to begin.” She sends another silk wyrm, not subtly this time, and stacking her attack by three. She finds that her mentor has switched to his favorite construct: the stony plain. Tlatipec apparently thought that her strategy was to waste time and try to make him use up psp on expensive defenses. Her triple-size silk wyrm slithers along the stones, looking for a vulnerable spot in the ground. [Ayani rolls a 14, which hits AC 2—there are no adjustments] Ayani finds a spot where rock gives way to soft dirt, and the wyrm burrows in, gnashing its teeth. [Ayani rolls 2d6 for 9 points of damage, which triples for 27 psp damage against Tlatipec.]

“So that’s your tactic,” exclaims Tlatipec, and then the combat begins in earnest.

Defense Modes

Just as attack modes represent types or classifications of harbingers, defense modes are types of defensive constructs. All beings have access to Mental Barrier. Wild talents can spend a charp to purchase a second or third psychic defense. Psionicists choose a second defense at third level, a third at fifth level, a fourth at seventh level, and at ninth level have access to all psychic defense modes.

Mental Barrier.

This defense mode costs 0 psp per round and is the natural defense of all known living beings. Suits of armor, turtle shells, and a flaming barrier are all sample constructs for this mode.

Mind Blank.

This type of construct attempts to disguise, camouflage or hide the different parts of the psyche. Some examples of Mind Blank-type constructs: an empty plain, a crowded tavern, an dark void, a forest. It is strong against Mind Thrust, but weak against Psychic Blast. Mind Blank costs 0 psp per round to maintain, making it a favorite default mode of mid-level psionicists.

Thought Shield.

This type of construct focuses most of the psyche’s defensive energy into a small interposing force area that blocks or deflects attacks. Shields, halfling bodyguards, and moving boulders have been used for thought shield

constructs. Thought Shield is ineffective against multiple attackers, who receive an attack bonus of one per attacker. Thought shield costs 1 psp per round to maintain

Intellect Fortress.

This power sets up a 5-yard diameter hex or square safe area where allies are safe from psychic attack. This fortress may take the shape of a small keep, a city gate, an armored caravan, or a barricaded cave, to name a few constructs. Until the defender is breached or discontinues the power, no one but the defender within the fortress may be psychically attacked. Intellect fortress costs 2 psp per round to maintain.

Tower of Iron Will.

This type of defense uses remoteness to protect the defender. A Tower of Iron Will creates a 1-yard radius circular haven where allies are safe from psychic attack. Within this area, only the defending psionicist can be attacked. Mekillot Howdahs, a mountain crag, a forbidding tower, and a deep chasm in the ground, are a few know examples of constructs in this category. Tower of Iron Will costs 3 psp per round to maintain.

Psychic Combat Specifics

Examples:

After a particularly unpleasant training day in the House of the Mind, Ayani (Psi 3: MTHAC0 16, MAC 8, psp 42) makes her way towards her family’s fields outside of Draaj. As she crosses the causeway out of the city, she spots the thief who picked her pocket a few weeks before, just forty yards away, walking towards Draaj.

Merko sees the Ayani at the same time, and thinks fast (wins initiative). Running seems his best option, since the mindbender seems to recognize him, and he is not enthralled by the idea of having her sort through his mind. He opts to turn and run away from the city, since thievery, like all crimes, is punishable by death in Draaj.

The walkway is only moderately busy, and with Ayani moving at half-rate, and Merko rushing for his life between the other walkway travelers, the psionicist will get one round of psychic attack against the thief before he

gets out of range, two if Ayani wins initiative in the second round and uses Id insinuation at long range.

Since Merko has won initiative, he clears forty yards before Ayani's quintuple-stacked Mind Thrust closes with him. At almost eighty yards, this is easily long range for Ayani (It would have been short or medium range had she used Id Insinuation).

Ayani rolls an 9, which would hit AC7; adjusted for distance (+5) and for Mind Thrust vs. Mental Barrier (-4) hits AC 8. Merko (MAC 10, psp 11) is hit. Ayani rolls (2d4) only 3 psp damage, but multiplies this by five (since she stacked the thrust) to fifteen points of damage. Since fifteen damage exceeds the eleven psp that Merko possesses, his mind is breached. Ayani tries to immediately follow up with Domination. Since the range of Domination is only thirty yards, her power fails without a check.

Next round now, and Ayani attempts to invade Merko with Id Insinuation. Merko wins initiative again, and gets out of range before Ayani can strike. So close this time!

** Note that medium-range attacks carry a +2 penalty, and long-range a +5 penalty.*

All non-psionic creatures, and psionicists under third level will automatically defend with mental barrier until their minds are breached. The greater the psionic expertise of the defender, the more sophisticated the defending constructs. Those untrained in psionic defense have a defense that appears in the mindscape as a luminescent blurry ball, while more trained psionicists may construct barriers of armor, porcupine spines, etc. Combine these numbers with the MAC struck by the attacker. For example, Tantros (MTHACO 17) uses a mind thrust against his opponent's mental barrier. He rolls a 10, which would hit MAC 7, but the chart adjusts his hit - 5, so Tantros hits MAC 2.

Psychic Combat Chart

Psychic Attack: (psp/unit)	Per Unit Damage v. Defending	Effect on Breached Mind	Called Attack Effect	Range:	Psychic Defenses				
					Mental Barrier 0 psp Personal	Mind Blank 0 psp Personal	Thought Shield 1 psp Personal	Intellect Fortress 2 psp	Tower of Iron Will 3 psp 1-yard radius
Mind Thrust 2 psp	d4+d4	1 random ability lost for d4 days	Forced entry	30/60*/90* yards	-4	+4	0	+3	+2
Ego Whip 4 psp	d6 + d6 damage/unit	Dazed d4 rounds; all rolls at -5	Temporary contact	60/120*/180* yards	0	-3	+1	+3	+4
Id Insinuation 6 psp	d8 + d8 damage/unit	Enraged & confused; d4 rounds	Subtle attack	40/80*/120* yards	0	0	+4	-4	+3
Psychic Crush 8 psp	d10 + d10 damage/unit	d8 hp damage per unit	Defender must retaliate	50 yards	0	+2	-3	+2	-2
Psychic Blast 10 psp	d12 damage/unit	d6 hp damage per unit		cone: 20 yd-long to 5 y. wide.	+3	-5	+2	+3	+5