Lucidity, Inc.

Lucidity, Inc.

This game was written for the Game Chef 2015 design contest, which you can learn more about at http://www.game-chef.com.

Theme: This year's theme is "A Different Audience." I've chosen to design this game for people who work, or are considering working, in various helping professions—psychologists, counselors, social workers, vocational rehabilitation counselors, etc. Everyone is free and welcome to participate, but the game was designed specifically with this audience in mind.

Ingredients: The main ingredient of this game is Dreams, but Abandon and Stillness are also included.

Credits

Writing and Layout: Jacob Wood

Design: Jacob Wood and AshleyRose

Editing: AshleyRose

Cover Art: Photo is of a solar eclipse taken during NASA's Apollo 12 mission. This image is in the public domain.

Interior Art: Dragonfly image by Edward Boatman courtesy of The Noun Project and is used under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 CC United States license.

Contents

Agent's Handbook 4

Dream Master's Section 10

Welcome to Lucidity, Inc. As a new Agent, you should familiarize yourself with the information contained in this handbook. It provides important details about your job and how to do things around here.

Core Mechanics

Throughout this manual you'll see references to rolls, checks, Targets, Differences, and numeric bonuses of some kind. You should familiarize yourself with the following rules and definitions.

Rolling the Dice

Your job skills will constantly be tested as you work with patients to resolve their issues. Sometimes you'll be asked to make a **check** to see if your use of a Quality or Skill is successful. When making a check, you'll roll dice and add any relevant **modifiers** to reach your result.

This game uses Fudge dice (also known as Fate dice) which are dice with two ⊞ (plus) sides, two ⊟ (minus) sides, and two ◼ (blank) sides. Each time you are asked to make a check you'll roll four of them, referred to as 4dF, to get your result. ⊞ sides count as +1, ⊟ sides count as -1, and ◼ sides count as +0. Add them all up to get a total between -4 and +4, but most often in the range of -1 to +1. You'll add your relevant modifiers to the roll to find your total result.

For example, your Agent is making a Communicate check to tell the Dreamer to bring you a wrench so you can fix an engine part. You roll 4dF and add your Communicate Skill (which for this example is a +2). After adding up your dice you have a +1, and when you add your Skill you find your total is +3.

Target and Difference

When you roll a check, your goal is to *meet or exceed* a **Target**. The Target is a number set by the Dream Master (DM) and represents the difficulty of the check. For example, it may be more difficult to convince someone to leap from a ledge into your waiting arms than it would be to ask them to simply walk down the nearby stairs... unless those stairs are on fire.

The DM may tell you the Target, but oftentimes they'll keep that to themselves to add to the suspense. For example, they may tell you the Target for your Trustworthy check to get the Dreamer to leap into your arms is +2. However, they may just tell you to roll for it and they'll let you know what happens. Either way is acceptable.

In either case, you'll also be looking for the **Difference** between your roll and the Target. Simply put, the Difference is **Your Roll – the Target.** If your Difference is +0 or better, you succeed. If it's -1 or worse, you fail.

It doesn't stop there though. The greater the Difference, the more pronounced the result. If your Difference is +3, you've done a great job and may be rewarded with a better-than-expected outcome. Conversely, if your Difference is -3 then you've failed spectacularly and something is about to go horribly wrong.

Unless your DM declares otherwise, your Difference is what matters most. Even if you rolled a total of +3 on your dice, if your Difference is -1 then you've still failed your check.

The Company

Lucidity, Inc. was formed with the purpose of helping patients resolve severe mental health issues through subconscious intervention. We're often hired by the friends and loved ones of our patients, either to perform interventions or to help bring someone back from a comatose state.

We operate by sending agents into the dreams of our patients to help them work through their issues subconsciously. When the patient awakens, they feel like they've had an epiphany that helps them turn their life around. Our goal is to ensure our patients make changes for the better, although occasional failed missions wind up doing more harm than good.

The Dreamer

Lucidity, Inc.'s patients and clients are usually referred to as Dreamers. Nearly all of your interactions with them will take place within their dreams while they are asleep or comatose. You'll enter their dreams using a proprietary insertion method developed by our founder, Professor Antoine Jimenez.

As Professor Jimenez discovered in his research, many coma patients are stuck in an alternate reality inside their own subconscious. They have trouble waking up because they don't want to face the real world. Usually this is because of some recent trauma which triggered a severe psychological response.

Waking the Dreamer

Your mission is to help the Dreamer resolve their issues subconsciously so they can rejoin the world when they wake. Because you're working with a delicate and sometimes fractured psyche, you need to be careful not to do more harm than good—waking a Dreamer before they have overcome their issues can cause severe lasting consequences. It also triggers an employee review for everyone on the team, and that means more paperwork for everyone involved.

The Stress Track

On a successful mission, you'll wake the Dreamer when their **Stress Track** reaches a positive value of +5. Conversely, if their Stress Track reaches -5 they awaken with even more issues than when you went in, and that means failure. It's impossible to know just where the Stress Track stands—that's something only the Dream Master can see—but things tend to get a lot more strenuous for you when the Dreamer is stressed so that may give you some clue.

Your team's actions within the dream world determine how the Stress Track moves. Resolving an issue within the patient's dream results in the Stress Track moving toward the positive and failing at an important task means just the opposite. It's important to always do your best, but it's *especially* important to do your best under pressure.

Thankfully, you're not alone in your actions. Your entire team contributes to the Stress Track's movement. That means you don't have to do everything yourself, and it also means teamwork is vitally important.

Agents

You're an Agent, one of Lucidity, Inc.'s field operatives. Your mission is to enter a patient's dreams and help them overcome their fears, regrets, doubts, and other traumas that may be contributing to their unfortunate mental state.

It's difficult to know what a patient is dreaming before you enter, so as an Agent you'll need to be prepared for anything. Some people dream of blue skies and daisies, but those aren't typically the people you're trying to help. More likely than not you'll be tasked with helping a person face their worst nightmares, which could be anything from psychotic clowns to complete darkness and despair. It can be challenging, but that's why you don't work alone.

Your fellow Agents come from a variety of backgrounds. They may be experienced psychiatrists or trained suicide prevention hotline workers, but everyone comes from a helping profession of some kind. This means you'll all have unique skills that will complement each other's abilities.

Qualities

Qualities represent specific facets of your Agent's personality and may guide your actions during play. The Qualities are:

- Cautious / Reckless

- Empathetic / Indifferent

- Generous / Selfish

- Objective / Judgmental

- Patient / Impatient

Each Quality has a polar opposite and opposing Qualities mirror each other in terms of their levels. For example, a character with +2 Cautious has -2 Reckless.

As an Agent, you'll often be put into situations where these Qualities are tested. For example, you may be in a situation where the Dreamer is being attacked by monsters. If you want to rush into the situation to help, your DM may ask you to make a Reckless check. If your Cautious / Reckless was +2 / -2, you would roll 4dF and add -2 to decide whether or not you do so.

If you fail a check but still want to perform the action you declared, you can choose to decrease the Stress Track by 1 and ignore the roll.

When designing your Agent, consider their personality and choose their Qualities accordingly. Each pair of Qualities can have values ranging from +/- 0 to +/- 2. Remember, opposing Qualities must have mirrored values; if you have +1 Empathetic you must have -1 Indifferent, if you have -2 Generous you must have +2 Selfish, etc.

Skills

Skills represent your Agent's proficiency in certain areas. Whenever you roll dice to determine the outcome of an action, you'll roll 4dF and add an appropriate Skill depending on the situation.

Every character has the following Skills at a level between -2 and +2. When designing your Agent, all of your Skills begin at a level of +0 and you have 3 points to spend among them. You may decrease a Skill's level to earn additional points to spend on other Skills on a one-for-one basis. The Skills are:

Act / React: Your ability to think quickly and take action. This Skill also represents your ability to respond to a situation. When your dream persona is being attacked, needs to dodge a falling obstacle, avoid an explosion, or hit a monster with something, you'll use this Skill.

Analyze: Your ability to assess a situation and make a decision based on what you find. Analysis is open to interpretation; when you uncover details about the world, it's up to you to decide what they mean and how to act on them. A higher Analyze roll means you can be more liberal with your interpretation.

Communicate: Your ability to get your point across when you speak, whether or not you are telling the truth. When you're trying to convince someone to do or feel something, you roll this Skill.

Intuition: Your ability to quickly gain insight about a situation despite the lack of apparent facts. When you roll Intuition, you make decisions based on what you feel rather than what you see.

Listen: Your ability to actively listen to what someone says. You roll a Listen check when someone wants to tell you something important or personal. Your DM determines what information you're given based on your roll.

Probe: Your ability to ask questions and get answers. Probing is as much for getting answers from people as it is about getting answers from your surroundings. When you Probe for information, you get to ask the DM one question for each level of Difference. Your DM may also ask for an Analyze, Intuition, or Listen roll to help determine how you interpret the answers.

Trustworthy: Your ability to get others to go along with your actions even if you don't have time to explain them. If you find yourself needing to tell someone "Jump, I'll catch you!" or "Take my hand, it'll be okay," then you'd roll a Trustworthy check. You may also need to roll Trustworthy to get someone to share personal information.

Remember, your actions are taking place in a purely mental dream realm. You have a limited capacity to affect the reality of the dream world with your skills. Your interpretation of the facts and the scene as it is presented is important, and better rolls on your Skill checks mean you can affect the world in bigger ways.

Affecting the Dream World

As you interact with the Dreamer's subconscious, you'll often have the opportunity to alter their dream in significant ways. Everything in the dream world may *seem* real, but it's just a metaphor for something else.

When you take actions which affect the dream world, and especially the Dreamer, you have the potential to impact how the patient's subconscious interprets the results. In game terms, the greater your Difference on a check, the more control you have over the outcome. Be careful not to overdo it, though; sudden drastic changes in the Dreamer's world might have unintentional and possibly stressful consequences.

The same is true if you dramatically fail a check. When you let the dream get the better of you, it causes serious setbacks and can compromise the integrity of your mission. Slip-ups are bound to happen, especially as things get stressful, but try to keep a cool head and remember to suspend your disbelief.

Let's examine two examples:

1. You're in a space ship that's under attack by aliens. You Analyze the cargo bay to look for weapons that can help defend against the invaders. Your check's Difference is +4, which means you get to choose up to four items. The choice of items is up to you. Laser pistols seem like a good choice, but you could also decide that you find massive flamethrowers and grenade launchers. The first option is bound to help the Dreamer feel more comfortable with his ability to defend his ship, while the latter has the potential to confuse matters. Sure, you'd be able to defend the ship with them, but why are there suddenly flamethrowers and grenade launchers aboard this cargo vessel?

2. You're being attacked by aliens and they're beginning to overwhelm you and the rest of the crew. All you have to fight them with is a laser pistol, so you take aim and fire. You roll an Act check but your Difference is -2. Not only do you miss, but the alien you were shooting at scores a nasty hit against you. That can lead to some seriously stressful situations in the future. Too bad you didn't have a flamethrower instead of that puny pistol.

Dream Master's Section

The rest of this manual is intended for Dream Masters only. If you're an Agent, you should stop reading now. This information is above your pay grade and accessing it without the express written consent of your supervisor may result in corrective action.

Adjudicating Rules

As the DM, your job is to facilitate the story and adjudicate results. You set the Target of any roll and have the final say in the outcome of the results. Keep in mind that everyone has signed on for this job, though; it's important to allow your Agents as much freedom as possible.

Setting Targets

It's up to you to determine the Target for any check an Agent makes. Use the following list to help you determine the Target:

- **0 or less:** Mundane and simple tasks. Generally you don't need an Agent to roll unless the situation is stressful.

- **1:** Easy tasks. Something most people wouldn't have trouble doing.

- **2:** Moderately difficult. Most people couldn't do this under pressure without luck or skill.

- **3:** Difficult. It would take an unskilled person a lot of work or luck to accomplish this task.

- **4:** Very difficult. An unskilled person has only a slight chance of ever hoping to accomplish this task.

- **5 or more:** Extremely difficult. Even someone skilled at this task needs a bit of luck or effort to accomplish it.

Keep in mind that the outcome of the roll is based on the Difference. Even if a person has a +2 Trustworthy Skill, a roll of +4 on the dice means their maximum check result is +6. That means with a lot of luck they can completely own a simple situation or just barely exceed at an Extremely Difficult task.

Use the Stress Track to help guide your decisions. Even simple tasks become more challenging under duress—if the ST is at -3, it may increase the Target of any check. Be careful to avoid "death spirals" though. Making *every* check more challenging will inevitably lead to a greater number of failures, and thus a further decreased ST, which means higher Targets and more failures... you get the idea. Use your best judgment.

Finally, the better the Agents understand the Dreamer, the easier it is for them to accomplish the **Essential Goals** (see below). For example, the Target to fix the ship's engine might start at +6—an incredible feat for anyone. As they talk to him about his past and his feelings, you can reduce that Target to more manageable levels.

The Dream

You're free to make up any dream scenario you'd like, but we've included this one to get you started.

In this dream, your Agents board a ship drifting alone and abandoned in the stillness of space. Far away from any planet or space station, it appears to be cut off from the rest of the universe.

The Dreamer has severe social anxiety and feelings of abandonment. He lives alone after a break-up that happened over six months ago and he's been a recluse ever since. He doesn't feel like he has anyone to turn to for support because his family relationships are strained and he has shut himself off from friends.

It's up to the Agents to help Lewis come to terms with his emotions, repair his bonds, and reconnect with the outside world. They need to get the spaceship operational and avoid major meltdowns.

Essential Goals

The following major goals must be accomplished to successfully complete the mission.

- Restore power to the ship—get the Dreamer to open up to the Agents.

- Repair the engine—determine the root of the Dreamer's issues.

- Restore communication systems—get the Dreamer to realize he doesn't have to be alone if he doesn't want to be.

The Stress Track starts at 0. Each time one of these goals is accomplished, the Stress Track increases by +1. In addition to these essential goals, the Agents will need to come up with at least two other solutions to raise the ST to +5 and complete the mission.

Getting Started

Your Dreamer is a comatose patient named Lewis Bartle. He was hospitalized a week ago after an accident in the home knocked him unconscious. He was lying there for hours before the neighbors heard his dog barking in distress and called emergency services for help.

As you enter the dream, you find yourselves aboard a ship travelling through space. Or, more accurately, a ship drifting through the vast stillness of space. The power, engines, and communication systems aboard the ship seem to be out. Other than yourselves, you see a lone crewman who appears to look like Mr. Bartle. He has a look of hopelessness and despair, and he doesn't seem inclined to get any of the ship's systems operational.

Allow the players to make use of their Skills and Qualities to interact with the Dreamer and gather information about the situation. Mr. Bartle will respond to the Agents if they speak to him, but they need to make use of their Qualities and Skills to get things done.

The Metaphor

Everything aboard the ship is a metaphor. If they need help, remind the Agents they're in a dream world and aren't necessarily there to sit the Dreamer down on a couch and have a chat. They need to actively search the ship for ways to repair the vessel and should act as a typical crew aboard a spaceship might act.

Communicating with and Listening to the Dreamer are still important—the more the crew understands about his issues, the easier it is to fix the ship's problems. Refer to Setting Targets for more tips.

Complications

When players fail a check, the Stress Track decreases. As it does so, introduce **Complications** into the story. These are new issues the Agents need to resolve before they can complete the Essential Goals of the mission.

Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Aliens attack the spaceship. Can the crew defend against them or are they easy Targets in a powerless vessel?

- Space debris tears a hole in the air lock.

- They may have repaired the engine, but now they've discovered they're low on fuel.

- Communication systems are operational, but there's a lot of static and interference.

- Just when everyone thought the aliens had been defeated, they find one sabotaging the engine.

Complications can stack up quickly. One failed roll might mean aliens show up and start attacking, but the Stress Track might be diminished further if one of the crew is injured by them. Each Complication should have its own resolution so the Stress Track can be repaired. Overall, the Agents need to deal with every Complication *and* the Essential Goals to complete the mission.

Waking Up

The Dreamer awakens when the Stress Track reaches either -5 or +5.

- Waking the Dreamer when the ST is at -5 represents a failed mission. He may awaken from his comatose state, but he'll be in a worse mental state than when he went unconscious.

- Waking the Dreamer when the ST is at +5 represents a successful mission. The Agents have resolved all of his pressing issues and he'll be able to rejoin the world a better person.

Depending on the result of the mission, you may read the following text to your Agents. Feel free to tailor this text if you'd like.

Failed Mission

Just as everything on the ship seems to be going wrong, the world goes dark for a moment and you wake up back at the office. Seeing the exhausted look on your faces, your boss demands a full report. Later, you learn Mr. Bartle woke from his coma and has since shut himself up in his house, boarded the windows, and is only occasionally seen at his door to accept deliveries from package couriers.

For the next week, you're stuck in a cubicle to fill out paperwork regarding your failed mission.

Successful Mission

As you fire up the ship's engines, you set a course for the nearest inhabited planet. Just as you begin your journey, the world momentarily goes dark and you wake up back at the office. Based on the relaxed look on your faces, your boss assumes you've done a stellar job and requests a report.

Later, you hear Mr. Bartle was released from the hospital and was picked up by his estranged sister. He's regularly seen walking his dog, interacting with the neighbors, and in the company of his family. Rumor has it he's even got his eye on a potential new partner.

Agent Dosier

Name

Last   First   MI

Qualities

Cautious   Reckless

Empathetic   Indifferent

Generous   Selfish

Objective   Judgmental

Patient   Impatient

Skills

Act / React

Analyze

Communicate

Intuition

Listen

Probe

Trustworthy

Notes

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____