

Advanced Social Encounters

An advanced social encounter focuses on characters engaging with NPCs in dialog.

When to use these rules is up to the GM. It is recommend you only use these rules in complex or lengthy social encounters or in ones involving a lot of PCs and NPCs.

Rounds in Advanced Social Encounters

In advanced social encounters, rounds work similarly to the way they work in structured encounters. Essentially, they serve as a limiter. Every character gets to act once during a round, and does not get to act again until the next round.

If you use rounds in a social encounter, you don't need to track Initiative or turn order. Each character should simply take their turn when it makes the most narrative sense to do so. If a character has nothing to contribute to the encounter at that time, the character's player can just have them pass. The amount of game-world time each round takes is much more open to GM interpretation than it is in structured encounters; it may cover only a few minutes or an entire hour of activity.


When a character acts, their player doesn't have to worry about being too precise regarding what that character does. If the group is attending a fancy dress ball, for example, a player may say their character starts wandering through the ballroom, dancing with random people. In this case, you shouldn't track the exact distance a character moves, or how many maneuvers they spend dancing.

However, when a character acts, they are limited to using only one ability that requires spending an action, and using only one ability that requires spending a maneuver. If the character makes a skill check, this replaces their chance to use an ability that requires spending an action.















Skill Checks in Advanced Social Encounters

Often, your character is going to try to charm, coerce, deceive, lead, or negotiate with a single individual. This means your character is going to be making opposed skill checks. Sometimes, your character may try to influence a group of people, which requires skill checks with a set difficulty. However, expect most social skill checks to be opposed

If your character tries to influence a group, the table below suggests some difficulties for the check. Generally, it shouldn't be easier to influence a group than to influence an individual,

so the GM should consider the audience and use Story Points or add Setback () to make the check more difficult.

Difficulty Based on Group Size

NUMBER OF TARGETS	DIFFICULTY
1	Opposed
2–5	Average ( )
6–15	Hard (  )
16–50	Daunting (   )
51+	Formidable (    )

Winning Advanced Social Encounters

Proposing A Mutually Agreeable Solution

One option for successfully “winning” a social encounter is for your character to offer a solution that is completely satisfactory to the other characters involved in the encounter.

Targeting the Opponent’s Strain Threshold

In more complex social encounters, it is expected that one successful check isn’t enough to accomplish your character’s goals. In such cases, your character needs to inflict strain on their target. This represents them wearing the target down over time with constant arguments, negotiations, threats, or even relentless flattery. Your goal could be to inflict enough strain on the target to convince them to reach a compromise with your character, or you could push them to exceed their strain threshold and completely capitulate.

If your target is a rival or minion group, your strain targets their wound threshold (*since they don’t have a strain threshold*). However, if you incapacitate them, your GM should still have the target capitulate, not mysteriously drop dead!

Compromise: Strain Exceeds Half of the Target’s Threshold

Often in complex social encounters, you don’t need someone to completely capitulate to your character’s demands. A compromise where your character gets the most important

elements of what they want while giving up as little as possible in return can be just as rewarding, and far easier to obtain.

To force a target to reach a compromise with your character, your character must inflict strain on the target greater than half of their strain threshold. At this point, the target becomes willing to compromise with regard to your character's goals.

Generally, what the target is willing to agree to shouldn't be at odds with their core principles or completely against their own interests. For that reason, your GM has final say as to what the target is willing to offer.

Capitulation: Strain Exceeds the Target's Threshold

If your character wants to push for complete capitulation instead of compromise, they can try to inflict enough strain to exceed the target's strain threshold.

Once a target exceeds their strain threshold, they agree to your character's goal or goals. They may agree to your character's terms instead of theirs. If your character was threatening to exterminate their community, they may completely surrender to avoid destruction. If your character was trying to ingratiate themselves into the target's good graces, your character convinces the target that they're a true and loyal friend and ally.

Generally, capitulation means that the target gives in completely. However, capitulation doesn't mean you get to completely dictate the target's actions, nor is it mind control. Your GM can determine that some goals are just too extreme for anyone to agree to.

Failure: Your Character Exceeds Their Strain Threshold

If your character exceeds their strain threshold, then they fail to accomplish their goals. They may just give up trying to interact with their opponent and leave. However, your GM could decide that, depending on the circumstances, your character is forced to concede to one of your target's goals, instead.

Additionally, you can choose whether your character would be open to compromise if their strain exceeds half of their strain threshold.

Using Skills to Inflict Strain


Many characters have special talents or abilities that allow them to inflict strain on a target. However, everyone can default to making a social skill check as an action in order to inflict strain. If they succeed, they inflict 1 strain, plus 1 additional strain per uncanceled Success (★). If they fail, they suffer 2 strain.

The social skill check your character uses needs to be appropriate to the situation and their goals. Your character can't use Coercion when they're trying to charm and flatter someone. Also, it's never enough to just roll some dice: you always need to explain what your character is doing and why the check makes sense.

Further, you can't use weapons or combat checks to inflict strain in a social encounter. Once your character starts throwing punches, the time for talk is over.


"Critical Remarks" in Social Encounters



In combat, your character can inflict and suffer Critical Injuries from particularly powerful or lucky blows. In social encounters, the same thing can happen when someone makes a particularly good point, powerful argument, or painful insult.

When a character makes a social check, they can spend 1 Triumph or 4 Advantage () to inflict 5 strain on the target.




Using Motivations in Social Encounters











Engaging with a target's Motivation is one of the common ways for your character to increase their odds of success in a social encounter.













When your character is able to work with a target's Strength or Flaw, your character adds 1 Boost () to their next social skill check targeting that character. "Working with" means working some reference to that Strength or Flaw into what your character says or does, or simply choosing words or an action that plays on those Motivation facets.

If your character is able to work with the target's Fear or Desire, the effect is the same, but amplified: add 2 Boost ( ). Fears and Desires are powerful Motivation facets that govern many of a character's choices, so playing to them can have a greater effect.

Tables: Spending Results in Social Encounters

COST	RESULT OPTIONS
 or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recover 1 Strain. Add 1 Boost () to the next allied active character's check. Notice a single important point in the ongoing encounter, such as an overly curious waiter or some drapes your character can stand behind to avoid being recognized.

  or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn the Strength or Flaw of the targeted character. • Add 1 Setback () to the targeted character's next check. • Add 1 Boost () to any allied character's next check, including that of the active character.
   or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn the Desire or Fear of the targeted character. • Successfully conceal your true goal in the encounter. • Learn the true goal of your target, if your target has one.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn any one Motivation facet of any character in the encounter (with the GM's approval). • Upgrade the difficulty of the targeted character's next check. • Upgrade the ability of any allied character's next check, including that of the current active character. • Do something vital, such as getting everyone's attention, or distracting all the guards so your character's friends have a chance to do something important.

COST	RESULT OPTIONS
 or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The active character suffers 1 strain. • The active character gets distracted or sidetracked momentarily. This can result in their being unable to activate an ability that requires spending a maneuver on their next turn, or it may just result in their being dragged into a lengthy and boring conversation.
  or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The active character accidentally reveals their own Strength or Flaw. • Add 1 Boost () to the targeted character's next check. • The active character or an allied character suffers 1 Setback () on their next action.
   or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The active character accidentally reveals their own Desire or Fear. • The active character accidentally reveals their true goal in the encounter.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The active character accidentally reveals a Motivation facet of one of their allies. • Learn one false Motivation facet of the target character (the active character believes it to be true). • Upgrade the difficulty of an allied character's next check or the next check of the current active character. • The active character becomes so embroiled in irrelevant events in the encounter that they cannot do anything important during the next round.