

*Mind Shadows*, version 1, [board game], July 2018, Stockholm, Sweden

by Mirjam Palosaari Eladhari, Otter Play.

The game is available for free as a printable PDF at [www.otter-play.com](http://www.otter-play.com). It's a present. If you have time to fill in a form of your experience playing it (at [www.otter-play.com](http://www.otter-play.com)) it would be very welcome. This game is developed as an experiment to learn if and how game mechanics can help us to cope with life.

## Credits

Mirjam Palosaari Eladhari – Design, play-testing, production.

Ämeli Hansson – Graphics for game boards, bits and cards.

Ron Meiners – Advice and play-testing of two sessions with game designers

Marjatta Eladhari – Advice regarding framing of a safe reflective game-space.

**Partaking in play-tests of the participatory design flavor, offering their time and ideas for improvements, a list of no particular order:**

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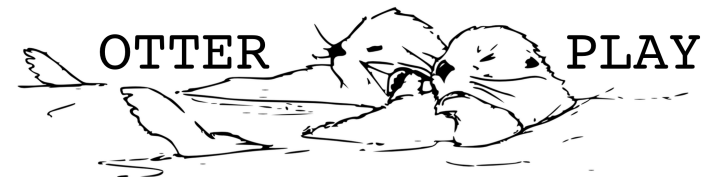
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# Mind Shadows

A board game of emotional support and reflection

by Mirjam Palosaari Eladhari







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# Symbols





## Positive Emotions

-  Joy or Amusement
-  Belonging
-  Confidence
-  Appreciation Pleasure

## Negative Emotions

-  Pain
-  Sorrow
-  Fear
-  Guilt
-  Anger

## Card Types

-  Support Card
-  Super power Card
-  Destruction Card
-  Devastation Card



## An alternate, reflective playing mode

When you use a support card, describe what you do, and then ask your co-player how this make them feel. Then, you can move your co-player's emotion markers a total of three (diminishing negative emotions and/or increasing positive emotions) for total of 3 in the combination that best reflect the player's actual feelings. That is, you don't use the 'ordained' emotional effect that is stated on the card. As long as you keep to the rule of 3, the game mechanics will still work. If you do this, the play-sessions often last longer because one tends to discuss and reflect more.

## Future and Feedback

The next version of Mind Shadows is already under development. It would be immensely useful to get your feedback on your experience playing. At [www.otter-play.com](http://www.otter-play.com) there is a form to fill in. You can also send an email to [info@otter.play.com](mailto:info@otter.play.com). It would, for example, be very interesting to learn whether you have used 'house rules' in play, and if they worked better than the current ones. (House rules = your own rules for board games.)

## Mind Shadows

In this 2-3 player board game, you together find ways to overcome Shadows - real-world problems or concepts.

You give each other super-powers that represent your strengths in the real world. You monitor each other's wellbeing, finding ways make to each other happy, and lending each other support when low. The shadow will fight that all the way, but by playing creatively you can reduce its negative emotion and significance - and win the game.

You play with supportive cards, while the shadow uses destructive ones. You can author new support cards as needed that affects both the other players, and the shadow.

During play a story-pile is created, helping you to keep track of who did what. In the end of the game, the pile is summary of how you jointly approached your shadow. Then, you can pick the best new cards to become part of your deck, personalising it, making it possible for one friend's support-card to help another friend, in a future game.

## Safe Space

Mind Shadow is a game of support. It is best played with people you trust emotionally. (It's not a party game.)

Even if you know each other since many years, it is common to be surprised by the others when playing. We are seldom aware of what it is that we take for granted.

A word of caution – this can become a deep journey.

If you are playing for the first time, pick a pre-made shadow to get an idea of how sensitive (and absurd, and hilarious) things can become. If you are a beginner, pick a subject for your own shadow that is not too raw or too tender. You will soon learn how to gauge how deep you can go, and under what circumstances.

## How to Play: Play phases

1. **Set up** the game boards, give each other super powers, and choose or make Shadows.
2. **Play.** On each turn (except the 1st):
  - ❖ Storyteller rolls a die and makes up an event.
  - ❖ Voice of the Shadow rolls for the Shadow.
  - ❖ Players play their cards.
  - ❖ Counter counts players' mental resistance and Shadow's significance.

As you play you move the tokens on the Player boards and the Shadow Board to reflect the effects of the played cards.

3. **Win** if the Shadows Emotion or Significance hits 0.  
**Lose** if all players have 0 Resistance at the same time.
4. **Reflect.** Consider how you approached the shadow, and expand your deck of support cards. Start a new session if you like.

## To play, you need:

- ❖ A pen or pencil each
- ❖ A 6-sided die
- ❖ A printer, paper (A4 or letter) and scissors.
  - ❖ Print this booklet and fold it. (Print double sided with short-edge binding).
  - ❖ Print one sided and cut: The boards, the cards, and the markers.

## The three spaces of the Player Board

### Positive Emotions Trail:

You move your positive emotions along the trail on the right side of the Player board. You gain resistance and more cards along the way. Your marker only needs to pass the fields that give resistance and cards to gain them.

### Negative Emotions Space:

Your negative emotions fluctuate between 0 and max (6) on the space to the bottom right of the Player board. Try to keep them in check: if they are maxed on the new turn you lose resistance. If they are zeroed, you gain resistance.

### Resistance Bar

Your mental resistance fluctuates on the bar to the left on the Player board. If your *Resistance reaches 0*, you are so weak that you can't use cards. You are still in the game - the shadow can target you and your co-players might be able to help you get energy back. The only way the Shadow can 'win' is if all players' resistance is at 0.

## Cards

Cards can be used once. Put the used cards in a pile as they are used. This becomes the Story log Pile.



**Support Cards** Effect: They increase or decrease 3 emotion-points of their targets. You can formulate your own on the fly during play – but you can't copy existing cards. They cannot decrease a positive emotion.



**Super Power Cards.** Effect: they increase or decrease 5 points of an emotion in a single target, OR, the increase or decrease 4 points of emotion in everyone – all players and the shadow (if applicable). You gain new ones when one of you rolls a 6 on the new-turn die roll and when a positive emotion marker passes 12 on the positive-emotion trail.



**Destruction Cards** Effect: they increase negative emotions by 3. Used by the Shadow.



**Devastation Cards.** Effect: they increase negative emotions by 5. Used by the Shadow.

## Winning, losing and reflecting

The session is over when the Shadow's significance *or* its defining emotion reaches 0. You win!

You lose against the shadow if all players suffer a mental breakdown at the same time.

## End: Reflection, debriefing and deck building

Look through the Story Pile.

What happened?

Take your time browsing the cards, and consider how you suggested to each other to cope with the Shadow. Would any of it be worth trying in real life?

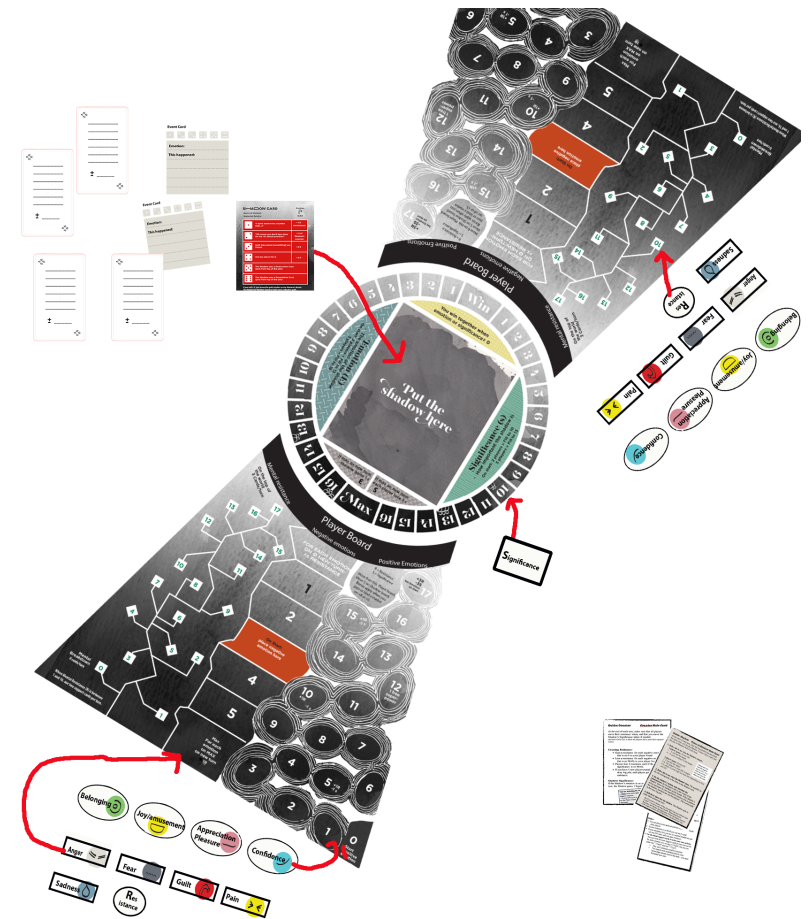
As you browse the Story Pile, set aside the support- and super power cards you have formulated during this session. If you think they can be useful in future games, add them to your deck. Over time, as you create more cards, your deck will become more versatile and personal.

If you have made your own Shadows, you can either archive them as trophies, or add them to the set of ready-made shadows, so that they can be played again. You can also take the actions from the “does” field (3) from any player-created shadows and make them to new Destruction Cards for the deck, and the action from “worst that can happen” (4) and add them as devastation cards for your deck.

### If you want to start another session with the next shadow:

1. Remove the old Shadow Card from the Shadow Board, and put the one in waiting in its place.
2. Place its emotion token at position 10 if you are two players, and on position 13 if you are three.
3. Remove the tokens of the shadows significant emotion from your player boards. Move the marker on its emotion bar up with the corresponding value.
4. Take back the emotion tokens from the Shadow you just defeated (unless you play the same emotion again). Place them in row 3 on the negative emotions space on your player boards.
5. Replenish the Shadow's card piles (Destruction and Devastation Cards).

You do not get to replenish your own bars of resistance and energy – as in life, you deal with shadows as they come. The Shadow starts.



1. Shadow Board and one Player Board Each
2. 8 Card Piles: Support cards, Super Powers, Destruction cards, Devastation cards, Shadow Cards, Shadow Roll Cards, Role Cards and Event Cards.
3. 9 Emotion tokens and a Resistance marker each
4. One Significance marker for the shadow
5. Your Shadow

# Set up 2-player game

1. Place the Shadow board and all cards in piles between you. There should be 8 piles.
2. Take a player board each and a resistance token. Place the token on position 10 on the resistance bar.
3. Take 9 emotion tokens, one of each kind. Put the 5 negative ones on row 3 in the negative emotions space on the lower part of the player board. Put the 4 positive ones on the start position.
4. Look through the pile of Super Power cards. Which ones are your co-player particularly good at? Give two of them to your co-player.
5. From the pile of support cards: pull 4 random cards. Also take 2 blank, writable, support cards.
6. Either pick a prewritten shadow or make your own (deep-play, see p.6). Put the shadow on the ShadowBoard. If you have one Shadow each, the game is played in sessions, one match per shadow. Each session takes around 30 min.
7. Note what emotion the Shadow represents. Remove the same emotion from your player boards. Put one of them as a marker on the Shadows' emotion bar to the left, on position 13. (Discard the other). Put the significance token on position 10 in the significance bar.
8. Place the pile of destruction cards and the pile of devastation cards next to the Shadow board.
9. Pick roles. One player will be Voice of the Shadow (see role cards or p. 7) – if a player authored or picked a shadow, they will be its voice. If you authored the shadow jointly, or picked a pre-authored shadow jointly, roll on who will be the voice. The other player will be the Counter and Storyteller (see role cards or page 9.) Each player take their role-cards and one Player Card. These give step by step instructions that you can refer to when playing.

The Voice of the Shadow starts the first turn.

## Counting the end of a turn

At the end of each turn, make sure that all players move their resistance token, and that you move the Shadow's Significance token if needed.  
(the end of the turn is when all players have used their support cards)

### Counting Resistance:

Gain a resistance for each negative emotion that is on 0 on your player board.  
Lose a resistance for each negative emotion that is on MAX on your player board.  
Players lose 2 resistance each if the Shadows' significance is on MAX.  
If you have 4 new player-created cards in the story log pile, each player gains two resistance.

### Shadows Significance:

If the Shadow's emotion is on max at the end of the turn, the Shadow gains 1 Significance.

## Storytelling

Start of turn: Storyteller rolls a die

• **Negative event:** Take an empty event card. Something negative is about to happen. Roll a new die. Something relating to the emotion the number represent happens. 1: *Fear*, 2: *Anger*, 3: *Pain*, 4: *Sorrow*, 5: *Guilt*. 6: *You pick, or roll again*. Author what happens on the card, and put it in the story log. Write a full sentence, so that to then end of the game, you will have a story about you and your shadow. Each player gains 2 of the negative emotion. Move the markers on the negative emotion space on your Player boards.

•• **Each player lose 1 Resistance**

••• **The Shadow gains 1 Significance**

•••• **Each player gain 1 resistance.**

••••• **Positive event:** Take an empty event card. Something happens relating to the positive emotion with is at the top of the trail on your player board. You get to decide what happens. You can confer with your co-player(s). Write what happens on the Event card, and note the positive emotion. Each player gains 2 of the same emotion.

(If there are more than one emotion that share the highest number, you pick which one that relates to your event.)

••••• **Give each other a super power card (hearts).** Each player chooses an existing one from the pile, or write their own. Give to the other player(s).

*If you write your own:* They can decrease a negative emotion with 5, or increase a positive emotion with 5. You can make them to affect ALL, including the shadow – then the effect is 4.

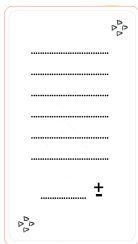
## Players turn:

Once it is the players' turn, the player who was not just targeted by the shadow starts.

1. Select 2 of your cards, either support cards or super powers and use them.
2. Move tokens on the boards accordingly.
3. Place the used cards in the story log pile. You can make notes on the cards before you put them in the story pile.
4. At the end of your turn, make sure you have 6 support cards of which two are blank/writable.

## Rules:

- You can direct your cards towards the Shadow or towards other players.
- If your resistance is on MAX you can use 3 cards.
- If your resistance is 0, you are in a mental breakdown and can use NO cards until you gain resistance.)
- **Use the blank support cards to write your own actions.** However: You can only write new support cards per emotion per turn. (ex. not two "-3 Guilt", but you can make one "-3 Guilt" and one "+3 Joy")
  - They can't decrease a positive emotion
  - You cannot write something that (to your knowledge) already exist in the deck – you must formulate new ones.



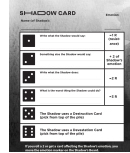
# Set up 3 player game

1. Place the Shadow board and all cards in piles between you. There should be 8 piles.
2. Take a player board each and a resistance token. Place the token on position 10 on the resistance bar.
3. Take 9 emotion tokens, one of each kind. Put the 5 negative ones on row 3 in the negative emotions space on the lower part of the player board. Put the 4 positive ones on the start position.
4. Look through the pile of Super Power cards. Which ones are your co-players particularly good at? Give one to each of your co-players.
5. From the pile of support cards: pull 4 random cards. Also take 2 blank, writable, support cards.
6. Either pick a prewritten shadow or make your own (deep-play, see p.6). Put the shadow on the ShadowBoard. If you have one Shadow each, the game is played in sessions, one match per shadow. Each session takes around 30 min.
7. Note what emotion the Shadow represents. Remove the same emotion from your player boards. Put one of them as a marker on the Shadows' emotion bar to the left, on position 16. (Discard the other). Put the significance token on position 13 in the significance bar.
8. Place the pile of destruction cards and the pile of devastation cards next to the Shadow board.
9. Pick roles. One player will be Voice of the Shadow (see role cards or p. 7) – if a player authored or picked a shadow, they will be its voice. If you authored the shadow jointly, or picked a pre-authored shadow jointly, roll on who will be the voice. The other players will be the Counter and the Storyteller (see role cards or page 9.) Each player take their role-cards and one Player Card. These give step by step instructions that you can refer to when playing.

The Voice of the Shadow starts the first turn.

# Make Shadow

- Take a blank shadow card.  
Have a pen handy.
- Throw a dice.
  - Fear,
  - Anger,
  - Pain,
  - Guilt/Shame
  - 5 – 6 : Pick the emotion you want of the above, or roll again.
- Think about something in your life that causes this emotion. It can be a situation, a person, a thing, or something more abstract.
- Give it a *name*, write it in the name field.  
Tip: Think about what actions that cause the emotion. Examples of names: The Excludor, Loss, A robber, – but you can call it what you like, as long as it makes sense to you. (Tip: If ‘anger’ is difficult, start with disappointment or something annoying.)
- What does the shadow say?  
Write down two things it *says* in the Says fields (1 and 2).
- When the shadow makes you feel the emotion, what does it do?  
Write what it *does* in Does field (3).
- What would be the worst thing the shadow could do, or make happen? Write that in field 4.



Do not strive for perfection! You get to change and vary the Shadow during play.

# Roll for the Shadow

## Roll for the Shadow

The player who has the role “The voice of the Shadow” will always roll for the shadow. If you picked a pre-made shadow you can decide amongst you who has the role, else it should be the one who make the shadow.

### 1. Roll a die to see who the Shadow targets. .

**2-player game:** If you roll 1 – 3, you are the target. 4 – 6: your co-player.

**3-player game:** If you roll 1 -2 you are the target. 2-4: The player to your left. 5-6: player to your right (or next left, depending on how you sit)

Change and vary what the shadow says on roll 1 -4 as much as you like – just make sure the effects are the same.

### 2. Roll a die to see what the Shadow does.

The number on the dice corresponds to the field on the Shadow-card.

### 3. Do the shadow’s action, and calculate the consequences

for the player who is the victim of the Shadow. Move the markers on the boards. If the Shadow’s action increases its own significant emotion, this is added to the shadows emotion bar, not the players’. Place used cards in the story log pile.

### 4. Roll two more times.

The Shadow gets to make three actions per turn.

**Ex:** If you have a shadow of Pain, the shadow has your collective pain in itself – it is not on your player boards. Where players have Resistance, the Shadow has significance. When the Shadow loses all of the negative emotion OR all Significance, the players have won.