

CHARACTER THERAPY

USING REAL PSYCHOTHERAPY

ON IMAGINARY PEOPLE

WWW.SOFIYAPASTERNAK.COM

ABOUT ME

ALL ABOUT SOFIYA

Sofiya is an author and a psychotherapist who loves baking, hiking, and doing things with her family.

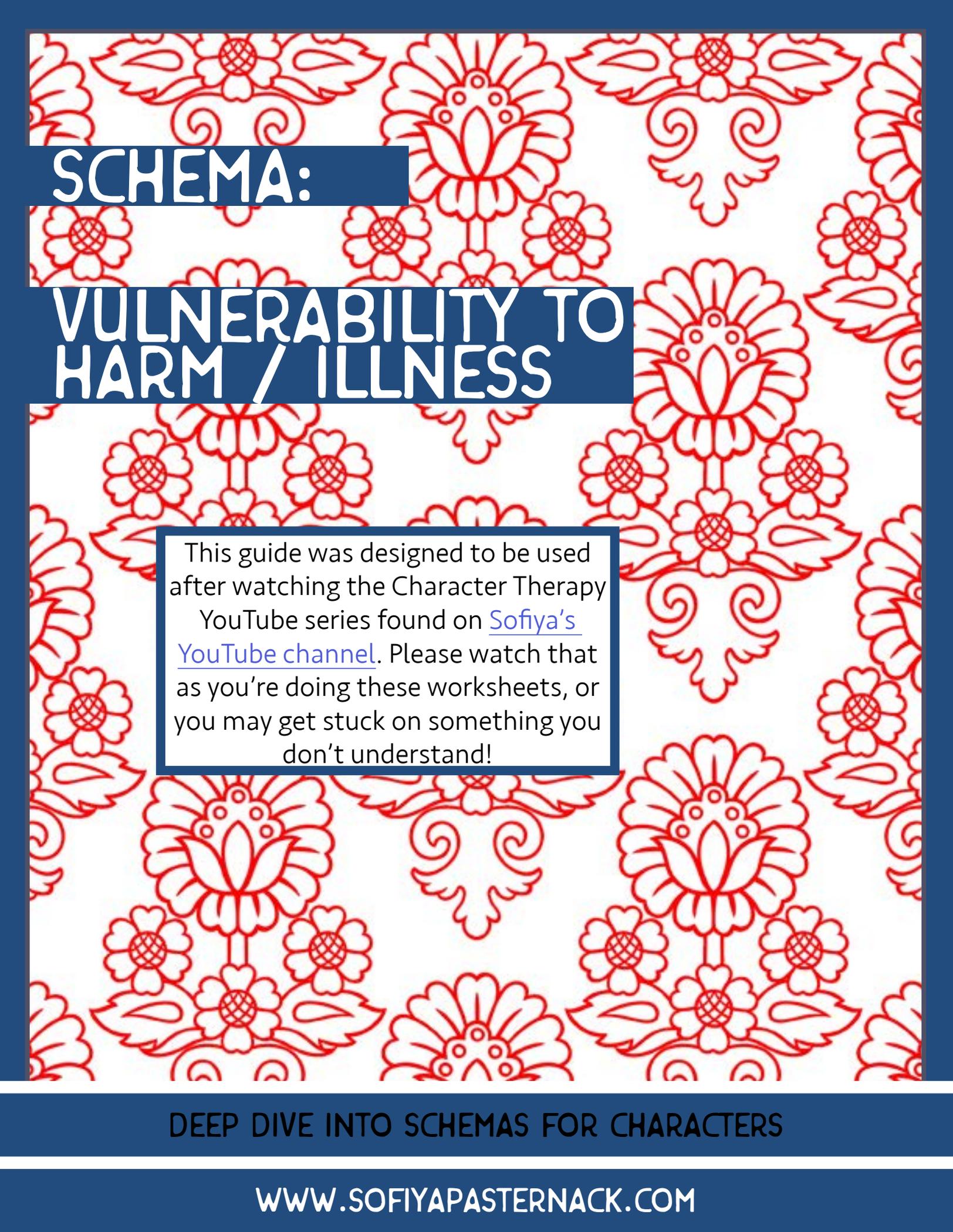
Her debut novel ANYA AND THE DRAGON is a Sydney Taylor Book Award Honor. The sequel is pretty good, too.

Find her online on her [website](#), [YouTube](#), or being a goblin @sofipasternack on Twitter!



ABOUT SCHEMA THERAPY

Schemas are not diagnoses, even though you can use them to inform or elaborate upon diagnoses. Essentially, they're a way to focus therapy on particular topics or experiences, and can give the therapist a road map to follow. The schemas in this guide are simplified and are not for use on real humans (just imaginary ones!).

The background of the entire page is a repeating pattern of red line-art flowers and leaves on a white background. The flowers are stylized with multiple petals and a central circular motif. The leaves are simple, pointed shapes. The pattern is dense and covers the entire area.

SCHEMA:

VULNERABILITY TO HARM / ILLNESS

This guide was designed to be used after watching the Character Therapy YouTube series found on [Sofiya's YouTube channel](#). Please watch that as you're doing these worksheets, or you may get stuck on something you don't understand!

DEEP DIVE INTO SCHEMAS FOR CHARACTERS

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VULNERABILITY TO HARM/ILLNESS

TRAGEDY IS AROUND EVERY CORNER

PEOPLE WITH the Vulnerability to Harm or Illness schema believe they are always moments away from catastrophe.

THOSE WITH the Vulnerability to Harm or Illness schema live in a constant state of anxiety over impending medical illness, natural disaster, violent crime, accidents, financial ruin, or mental insanity. This anxiety can develop into full-blown panic attacks and can lead to social isolation and agoraphobia to prevent others from seeing the panic. They may begin to engage in magical thinking or rituals in an attempt to prevent these impending disasters.

THIS SCHEMA may begin in childhood due to a parent or other attachment figures experiencing one of these terrible catastrophes, or being vocally fearful of them.

VULNERABILITY TO HARM/ILLNESS

OVERCOMPENSATION: the opposite of the schema is true.

Magical thinking and compulsive rituals.

Reckless or dangerous behaviors.

AVOIDANCE: the schema does not exist.

Engages in phobic avoidance of situations that may cause disaster.

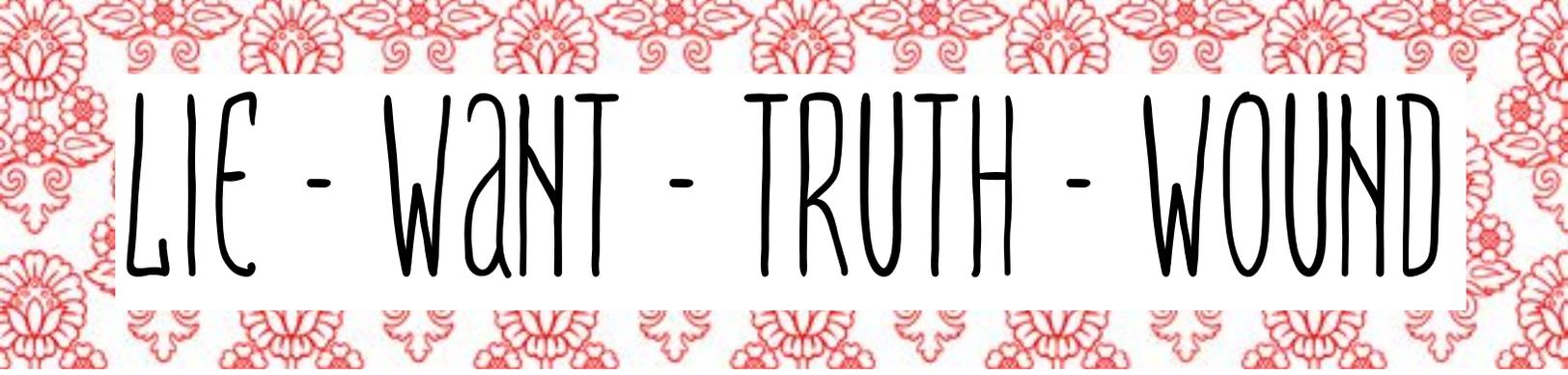
Avoids travel or going to “dangerous” places.

SURRENDER: the schema is true.

Worries constantly about impending disaster.

Constantly asks others for reassurance.

Reads about/watches news about catastrophes and actively anticipates them.



LIE - WANT - TRUTH - WOUND

WHAT'S YOUR CHARACTER'S FUNDAMENTAL INCORRECT BELIEF?

"Something bad is about to happen."
"I know I'm seriously ill, even though a doctor says I'm fine."
"I worry a lot about all the bad things in the world."
"The world is a dangerous place."

WHAT DOES YOUR CHARACTER THINK THEY NEED TO BE HAPPY?

Ex: "To find a way to prevent the bad things from happening to me.."

WHAT DOES YOUR CHARACTER ACTUALLY NEED TO BE HAPPY?

Ex: "To understand that catastrophe doesn't lurk around every corner."

WHAT CAUSED THIS BELIEF IN THE FIRST PLACE?

CHARACTER ARC OUTLINE

INCORPORATING SCHEMAS INTO THE OUTLINE

HOOK: THE LIE IS INTRODUCED VIA THE CHARACTERISTIC MOMENT AND REINFORCED BY THE “NORMAL WORLD.”

PLOT TURN 1: THE LIE IS CHALLENGED WITH THE “NEW WORLD,” THE MC CONTINUES TO BELIEVE THE LIE AND PURSUE THE WANT.

PINCH 1: MC UNABLE TO PURSUE THE LIE; FAILS WITHOUT REALIZING WHY; EVOLVES BELIEF IN THE LIE.

MIDPOINT: MC SEES THE TRUTH BUT STILL FOLLOWS THE LIE.

PINCH 2: ANTAGONIST REINFORCES THE LIE; MC TRAPPED BETWEEN THE LIE AND THE TRUTH.

PLOT TURN 2: THE WANT IS WITHIN REACH, BUT NOW THE MC UNDERSTANDS THAT THE TRUTH IS THE BETTER WAY.

RESOLUTION: MC REJECTS THE LIE FOR THE GREATER TRUTH.

THE SEVEN POINT PLOT OUTLINE

Unfamiliar with the Seven Point Plot outline? Check out my video on it, or Dan Wells' video series of his presentation given at the LTUE Conference in Provo, UT.



SCHEMA OPERATIONS

USING SCHEMAS TO OVERCOME WRITER'S BLOCK

WHAT IS YOUR MC'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LIE?

WHAT COULD HAPPEN TO ENFORCE THE LIE?

WHAT COULD HAPPEN TO CHALLENGE THE LIE?



CHARACTER THERAPY

I HOPE YOU LEARNED SOMETHING COOL!

NOW YOU SHOULD have an idea of what the Vulnerability to Harm or Illness schema is, how it relates to your character's Lie, and also what the Lie, Want, Truth/Need, and Wound are.

YOU SHOULD ALSO understand schema coping modes, and how overcompensation, avoidance, and surrender can each take this schema in different directions depending on the character's personality.

REMEMBER TO USE this guide with the YouTube Character Therapy series!

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED in learning more in-depth about Schema Therapy, the following books are amazing resources:

[SCHEMA THERAPY: A PRACTITIONER'S GUIDE](#)
[EXPERIENCING SCHEMA THERAPY FROM THE INSIDE OUT](#)

ALSO, PLEASE CHECK OUT K.M. Weiland's website, www.helpingwritersbecomeauthors.com, especially her Character Arcs series. That's where I got the bulk of my information about Lie, Want, Truth/Need, and Ghost! Her website is super helpful. You won't regret taking a look!