

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 red floral pattern on a white background. The pattern consists of stylized flowers with multiple petals and leaves, arranged in a grid-like fashion.

SCHEMA:

DEPENDENCE / INCOMPETENCE

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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DEPENDENCE / INCOMPETENCE

I JUST CAN'T DO ANYTHING RIGHT

PEOPLE WITH the Dependence/Incompetence schema find life overwhelming and believe they are unable to cope with this overwhelming world on their own. They can come across as childlike or helpless.

THOSE WITH the Dependence/Incompetence schema believe they do not have the ability to handle even the smallest problems. They struggle with doing things on their own due to the certainty that they will be unable to manage anything without help from someone else. Usually, a person will feel incompetent first, and they become dependent as a response to this feeling of incompetence. They are unable to take care of themselves, so they seek others.

THIS SCHEMA may begin in childhood due to a caretaker who did everything for the child, or a caretaker who was overwhelmingly negative and always put the child down.

DEPENDENCE / INCOMPETENCE

OVERCOMPENSATION: the opposite of the schema is true.

Excessively self-reliant.

Rejects help from others even when it would be healthy to accept it.

Counterdependent: doesn't ask anyone for anything.

AVOIDANCE: the schema does not exist.

Procrastinates on decision-making.

Avoids normal adult responsibilities.

Avoids new challenges, like learning how to drive.

SURRENDER: the schema is true.

Constantly asks for help; checks every decision with someone else.

Selects partners who do everything for them.

LIE - WANT - TRUTH - WOUND

WHAT'S YOUR CHARACTER'S FUNDAMENTAL INCORRECT BELIEF?

"If I'm allowed to make my own decisions, they will be wrong."
"Everyday life is overwhelming."
"I screw up everything I try."
"I need other people to help me get by."

WHAT DOES YOUR CHARACTER THINK THEY NEED TO BE HAPPY?

Ex: "To find a person who can help me not mess up my life."

WHAT DOES YOUR CHARACTER ACTUALLY NEED TO BE HAPPY?

Ex: "To understand that I'm more competent and able than I believe I am."

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 Dependence/Incompetence 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!