



Schema:

MISTRUST/ABUSE

This guide was designed to be used after watching the [Character Therapy 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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About Me

All About Sofiya

Sofiya is an award-winning author and mental health professional 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 basically everywhere!



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!).

For more fun and helpful writing information, check out my website and [subscribe to my newsletter!](#)



Mistrust / Abuse

THE PEOPLE WHO LOVE YOU WILL HURT YOU

PEOPLE WITH the Mistrust/Abuse schema believe their loved ones will lie, manipulate, cheat, or take advantage in some other way. This could even extend into outright abuse or purposeful humiliation.

THOSE WITH the Mistrust/Abuse schema can be certain that when others take advantage of them or hurt them, it's intentional and malicious. This can make them suspicious of others, and in extreme cases, paranoid. These people may avoid intimate relationships, will not share their private thoughts or feelings, and may even preemptively harm others if they perceive that someone is going to harm them. In some cases, these people will set up tests to see if people are worth trusting.

THIS SCHEMA may begin in childhood due to parents or other attachment figures being abusive, manipulative, or lying.

Mistrust / Abuse

OVERCOMPENSATION: the opposite of the schema is true.

Uses or abuses others before they can do the same.

Acts in an overly trusting manner.

AVOIDANCE: the schema does not exist.

Does whatever they can to not be vulnerable.

Keeps secrets; withholds personal information from others.

Avoids close involvement with others.

SURRENDER: the schema is true.

Forms intimate relationships with people who are abusive or manipulative.

Is hypervigilant for abuse or manipulation; exhibits paranoid symptoms.

Lie – Want – Truth – Wound

WHAT'S YOUR CHARACTER'S FUNDAMENTAL INCORRECT BELIEF?

"Everybody lies."

"I have to protect myself from other people."

"Control or be controlled."

"People have to prove themselves to me before I will trust them."

WHAT DOES YOUR CHARACTER THINK THEY NEED TO BE HAPPY?

Ex: "A trustworthy person I can rely on."

WHAT DOES YOUR CHARACTER ACTUALLY NEED TO BE HAPPY?

Ex: "To understand that not everyone is out to get me."

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 CHARACTER'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 Mistrust/Abuse 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 all tie into the schemas themselves, and how your character handles the emotions that come along with schema triggers.

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. Her website is super helpful. You won't regret taking a look!