



Schema:

DEPENDENCE / INCOMPETENCE

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!](#)

Dependence/Incompetence

I JUST CAN 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 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 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 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!