



A Guide to Help Children and Families Understand the Therapeutic Process
by Trisha Pearson, MA, LPC

Zoe's Guide to Therapy

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The Therapeutic Process**

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INTRODUCTION

I am a Licensed Professional Mental Health Clinician who works with children on a daily basis. This story I have created developed from frequent interactions with children and often parents who were unsure of what to expect from the therapeutic experience. Therapy has such a stigma attached to it that it can be difficult to convince families and individuals to commit to therapy without feeling as though it is an admission that something must be wrong or abnormal.

In general, children struggle to communicate and express their feelings. They often have a difficult time understanding the idea of therapy, and the preparatory process (what to expect from receiving therapy) is never explained in a way that children can fully understand. In my experience, children and parents alike have such a negative view of therapy regarding how helpful it can be as a tool rather than as a punishment for misbehaving. I have searched book-stores for different types of children's books to explain the initial steps and feelings connected to seeking therapy and moving through the process, but to no avail.

This book is what I found to be missing during my quest. This story is about a young girl who is told she has to go to therapy to help manage her emotions. She describes how she assumes therapy will be and what she experiences. I personalized this book by naming the main character after my daughter, Zoe. I believe it will be helpful to her, as well as other children and their families, as she goes through life and experiences different emotions and events.

Readers will learn key components of initial therapy sessions and be prompted to create goals. It explains mental health diagnoses and interventions to children and families more clearly without being clouded with the psychological jargon that turns most families away from therapy. The colorful pages are easy for children and parents to read and understand. They evoke positive emotions and ease anxiety associated with seeking therapy. Children will learn how to express, cope, and manage their emotions without feeling ashamed of seeking the help of professionals. I hope you enjoy!

Hi,
my name is Zoe.



I'm 8 years old, and I'm
in the second grade.



I have a lot of feelings inside.
Sometimes, I feel Mad,
Sad,
Worried,
~~Frustrated~~ (Frustrated),
and Happy too...





Mommy
and Daddy ...

They say I have to go to a ~~therapy~~.
I mean a therapist. They say it will
help me ~~comonicate~~ (communicate) better.

But, I don't want to go!
I don't need it! What will people say?
What if my friends find out?
What's therapy anyway?



I have all kinds of thoughts and things floating in my head...





Did I do something wrong? Am I in trouble? Are Mommy and Daddy mad at me? Will it be scary? I'm scared. What will it be like? Is it like going to the doctor's office? Will I get a check-up? Will I get a shot?