

Counselor Guide: Emotional Safety Through Story

Based on *The Umbrella That Followed Me Home*

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Overview

This guide is designed to help counselors, therapists, and mental health professionals use *The Umbrella That Followed Me Home* as a gentle entry point for emotional expression. The story's central metaphor of the umbrella as emotional protection is ideal for children processing grief, anxiety, or emotional shutdown.

1. Key Themes to Explore

- Emotional safety
- Suppressed or 'quiet' feelings
- Visual metaphors for self-protection
- Self-acceptance and compassion

2. Therapeutic Activity: Create a Feelings Umbrella

Invite the child to draw or build a visual umbrella. Divide the umbrella into sections and help them label each part with an emotion they carry often. This can include both primary feelings (sad, mad, happy) and more complex ones (guilty, left out, nervous, proud).

Use the umbrella to spark conversation:

- Which feeling shows up the most?
- Which part of the umbrella feels heavy?
- What helps you carry it?

3. Weather Forecast Check-In

Ask: 'If your feelings were a weather report today, what would it say?' Let the child respond with a metaphor—sunny, stormy, windy, etc. Over time, use this as a consistent check-in method.

4. Ava's Journey Reflection

Use Ava's experience as a mirror:

- Why do you think the umbrella followed her home?
- What would you say to Ava if she was sitting beside you?
- Do you ever wish you had an umbrella like hers?

5. Follow-Up Tools

- Umbrella-themed play therapy tools (stuffed animals, small umbrellas, emotional cards)
- Journaling: "Today I carried..."
- Art: Design a "Safe Space" or "Emotional Weather Map"