

# The Parent is the Hero

*THE OPTOMETRIST IS THE GUIDE*

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Understanding Parent Psychology  
to Grow Your Myopia Management  
Practice



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# We Are Not Heroes

When it comes to our practice, we optometrists tend to communicate to young patients with myopia and their parents, consciously or subconsciously, that we are the hero. We can become overly obsessed with the latest and greatest therapies and treatments, taking on the persona of a magician who, with the swipe of a wand, can conjure up magical treatments.

But we are not the hero ... or a magician. Rather, the parent is the hero. They are the one who comes out swinging for their child, no matter how overwhelmed they might be by too many demands in their busy lives.

Rather, our job is to be a guide to the parent to help them navigate through the chaotic journey of competing for their children's attention in a world dominated by digital devices and guide them through the decision-making process with compassion and care.



“ Give permission to the parent letting them know that you are going to take this problem off their plate.

# Cecelia's Story

Take the case of Cecelia for example whose twelve-year-old daughter, Maya, glued herself to her electronic tablet for more than three hours a day, driving her to distraction.

A demanding job, evening classes, and transporting Maya to school and after-school activities have left Cecelia frazzled at being unsuccessful in convincing Maya to reduce her screen time, not to mention having one more decision on her plate to deal with.

But she was concerned Maya's deteriorating eyesight might impact her grades, and eventually, her ability to get into college, so she brings her to your clinic for a vision test and to explore treatment options.

## Device Whirlpool

*When Maya started complaining about blurry distance vision, she feared excessive screen time might be to blame, but no amount of pleading persuaded Maya to detach herself from her tablet to go outside and play. She protested that all the other kids are on their devices a lot and that Cecelia was being unfair. Cecelia felt she was losing Maya to the whirlpool of devices that dominates our culture.*



# Showing Compassion

When a parent walks into our office, it is our job to show them empathy, clarity, and care. We need to take time to understand what in their life may be compounding the stress they are experiencing around their child's vision: demanding jobs, family or financial issues, and limited time. They may look to us to 'be the parent' and coax their child into reducing his or her screen time.

While they may be anxious to find a solution for breaking their child free from the electronic device whirlpool, they are most likely stressed about having another obstacle to deal with and about making the decision for their child's eye care.



The parent needs to know that they are putting the care of their child in the hands of an expert.



Guiding them toward the treatment we believe will yield the best outcome relieves them of their decision-making anxiety and gives them the power to be the final decision-maker. This empowers them to feel they can make the best decision and provide the best opportunities for their child.

# Giving Them Permission

We can make parents feel comfortable and empowered by giving them permission to make what they feel is the right treatment care for their child. By doing so we, the optometrist, are going to take this one problem off their plate.

We need to resist the temptation to throw a multitude of options at them—deciding on a treatment plan should not feel like they have to choose which version of a device to purchase: the simplest version with no bells or whistles, a version upgrade, or the latest and greatest. We need to offer the parent one or two treatment options at the most.



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It is important that the parent feels that the vision care of their child is in good hands.

## Watching Our Language

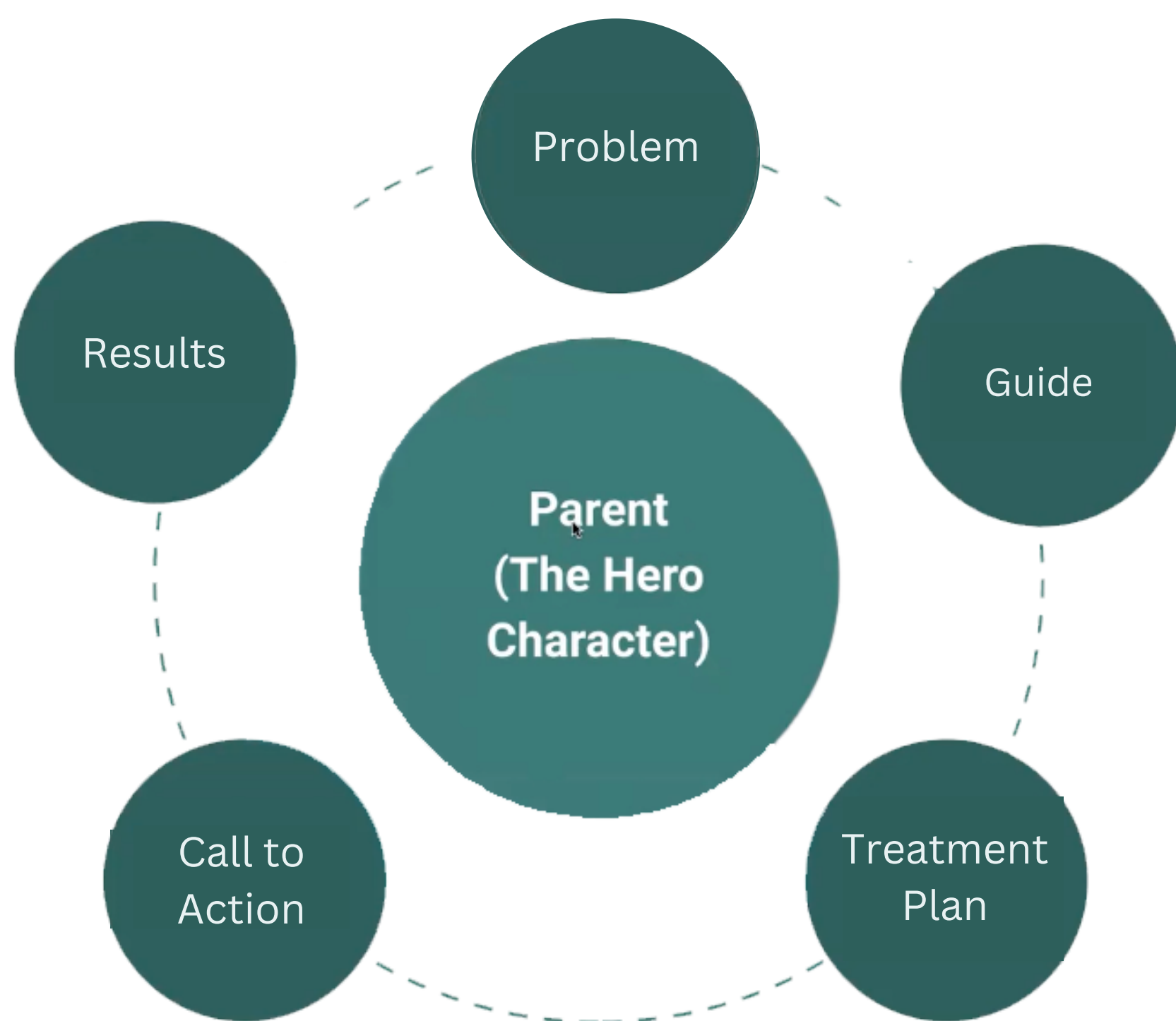
*Using straightforward language and giving them an easy-to-understand overview of what the treatment will involve and how it will help their child is essential to bringing the parent into the decision-making process. We need to avoid complex medical terminology and technical language and save details for later.*

*The parent may be confused or overwhelmed by ambiguous or non-committal language. Statements such as "This is the right choice for your child," communicate both your confidence in the treatment and the parent to make the right decision.*

# Presenting a Call to Action

Once we have shown compassion to the parents and given them permission to make what they believe is the best choice for their child, the best way to move them forward is to give them a call to action based on our treatment selection that will yield the best outcome for their child's myopia.

Phraseology such as "This is the right decision for her vision," "When he graduates from high school you will be so proud of the outcome," or even "Here's a beautiful thing that happens if you sign up for the treatment," goes a long way toward motivating them to move forward.



# Following Up

If the parent does not respond within a week to ten days, we need to follow up with them on the phone or in person. We can ask if they have had a chance to go over the material we gave them and if they have any questions.

When we set a specific time range for treatment, such as the length of time between the child's current age and when they turn 18, the parent will likely feel more comfortable moving forward.

Finishing by asking them if they would like our Myopia Management Coordinator to send them a contract puts the power to sign up for treatment in their hands. And they will sign up because of the bond and trust they have with you, the optometrist.

“ They will sign up because of the bond and trust they have with you, the optometrist.

*Providing them with information regarding the recommended treatment plan (and alternative if there is one) such as Hoot Myopia Care videos, clinical briefs, and success stories helps avoid confusion and increase their confidence that they are making the right choice.*



# A Happy Outcome

We left Cecelia bringing Maya to your practice. You diagnosed Maya with myopia and recommended a specific treatment plan for the next six years.

Maya is now 18 and her vision has been successfully controlled. She is graduating high school at the top of her class and has been awarded a full scholarship to attend the college of her choice.

She can now acknowledge and appreciate Cecelia's choice and sacrifices to ensure she had the best treatment possible for her myopia.

As Maya walks up to receive her diploma she smiles broadly and gives her proud Mom a thumbs up. Cecelia is truly a hero in Maya's eyes.

