Worksheet
UK English

Belief-O-Meter

PSYCHOLOGYTOOLS®

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Belief-O-Meter

Description

An important part of CBT psychoeducation is that 'thoughts are not facts'. One job of the therapist is to help clients to understand that negative thoughts – although believable – are not always accurate. The *Belief-O-Meter* is an engaging way of helping children and adolescents to relate to their thoughts differently. It is a form of cognitive restructuring which encourages consideration of thoughts as an 'object' about which one can have an opinion. The *Belief-O-Meter* exercise:

- Helps to introduce the idea that thoughts are not facts.
- Introduces the idea of 'believability' of thoughts and that some thoughts may be more 'trustworthy' than others.
- Can be related to principles of distancing, decentering, cognitive defusion, continuum work, and mentalising.
- Can be used to start a conversation about the consequences of holding certain beliefs.

Instructions

"Did you know that just having a thought does not mean that it is true, or that you have to believe it? Could you rate how much you believe some of the thoughts on this form? And what about some thoughts or ideas that have been bothering you recently – could you rate how much you believe those?"

Encouraging curiosity at variation in believability

"Could we start by recording some thoughts that have bothered you recently, and then have you rate them on the belief-o-meter? It can often be interesting to see what other people believe about these same thoughts. How could we find out how much other people believe these same thoughts? Is there any way we could survey your friends or family, or conduct an anonymous survey to find out what other people think? What would it mean if they thought the same way? What would it mean if they thought differently?"

Examining whether emotions affect believability

"Can you write down some thoughts from a time this week when you felt upset, and record some other thoughts from less emotional times in this past week. How believable were these thoughts at the time? What do you notice about the believability of these thoughts?"

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Exploring causes-for and changes-in belief

"When did you start to believe this thought so strongly? What happened that you came to believe this? How and why has your belief in this changed over time?"

Exploring the consequences of beliefs

"What are the consequences of believing that so strongly? If you had a friend who didn't believe that so strongly how would they react in a similar situation?"

Considering what it would take for a belief to change

"What would it take for that belief to shift? If someone believed that, what new information would they need in order for that belief to shift?"

References

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Teasdale, J. D., Segal, Z. V., Williams, J. M. G., Ridgeway, V. A., Soulsby, J. M., & Lau, M. A. (2000). Prevention of relapse/recurrence in major depression by mindfulness-based cognitive therapy. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 68(4), 615.

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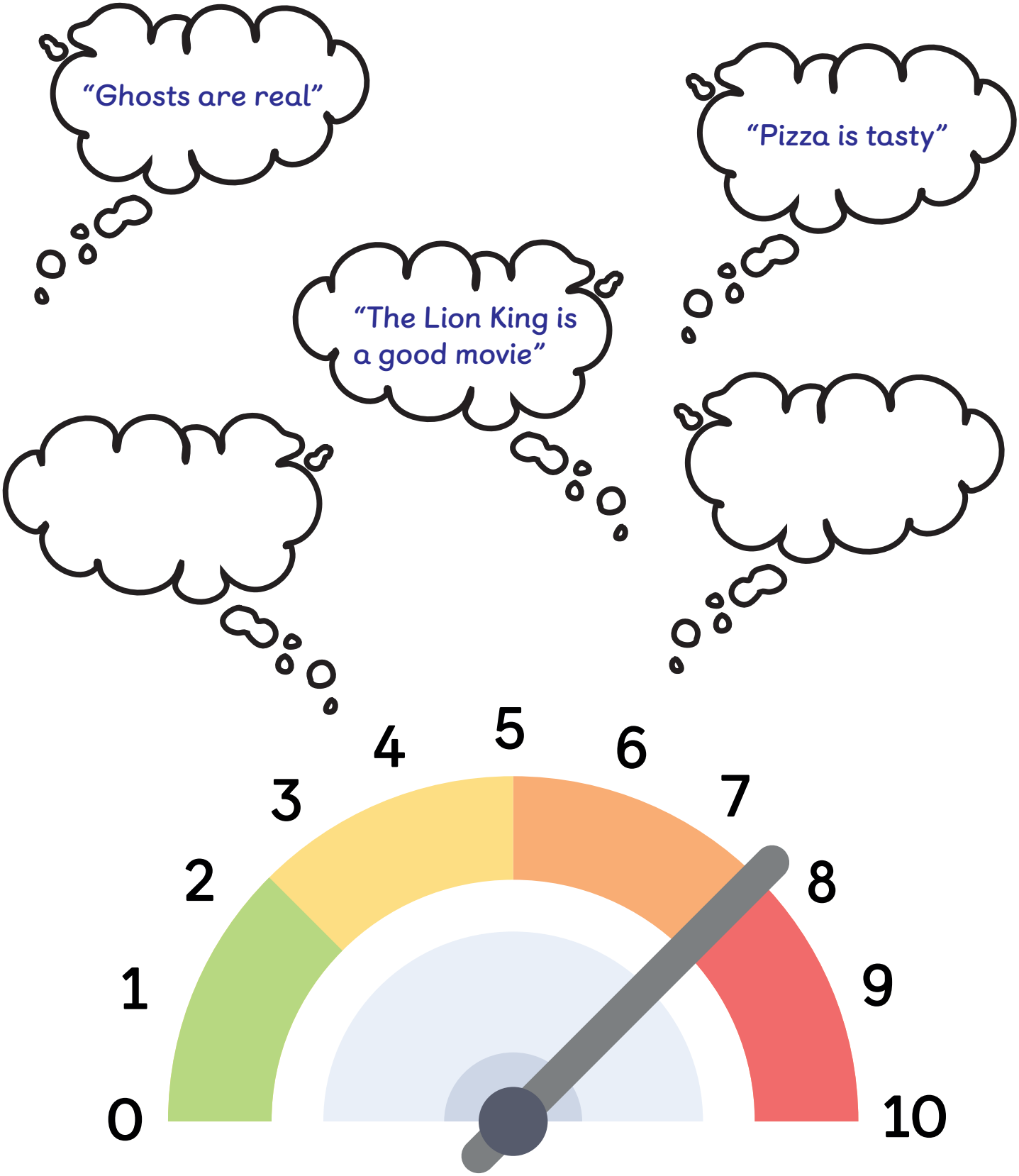
Belief-O-Meter

Just having a thought doesn't mean that it is true or that we have to believe it.
Use the dial to rate how much you believe the thought in each bubble.
Then use the dial to rate some of your own thoughts.



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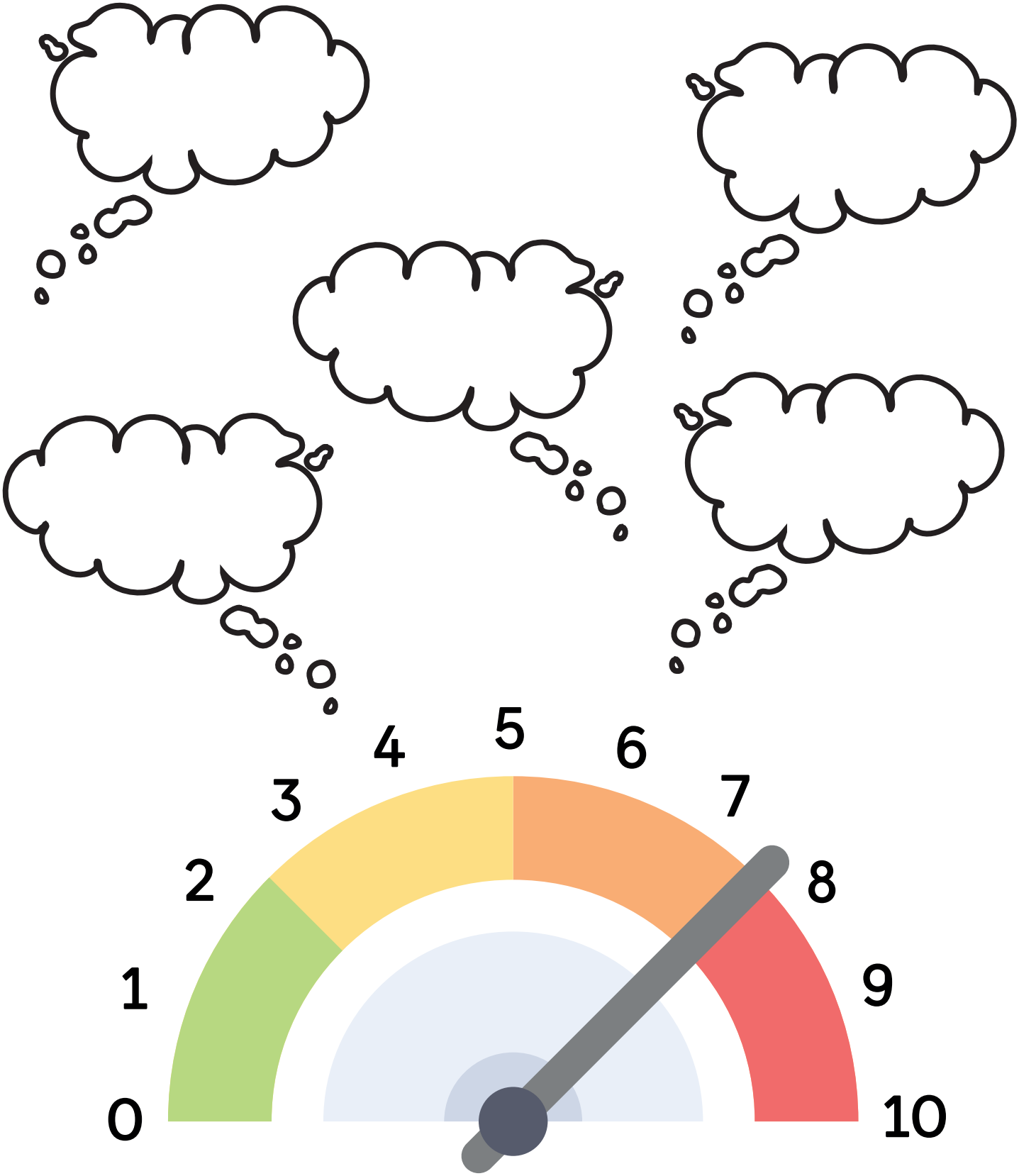
Belief-O-Meter

Just having a thought doesn't mean that it is true or that we have to believe it. Write some of your thoughts in the bubbles then use the dial to rate how much you believe each thought.



I don't believe this at all

I believe this completely

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