# The Psychotic Symptom Rating Scales


## User manual

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**2009 Version**

# Contents

## Introduction

The PSYRATS are interviewer administered scales designed to allow ratings of the severity of dimensions of auditory hallucinations and delusions. The scales are rated following questioning during a clinical interview. Hallucinations and delusions are rated separately and independently, hence can be used on their own or together. They should usually only be used when there is sufficient indication that the client has experience of auditory hallucinations or delusions. As a general guide, instruments that elicit the symptoms such as the Positive and Negative Syndrome Scale[1] can be used to elicit the experiences which can then be rated on the PSYRATS. Scores of 3 or above on the relevant PANSS subscales are sufficient to warrant rating on the PSYRATS. However, there is no set rule about this and clinicians and researchers can make there own judgement as to the appropriateness of rating on the scales.

In order to successfully use the PSYRATS it is essential that the researcher or clinician is sufficiently skilled in eliciting details of the client's symptoms. It is advisable to elicit as much information as possible from the client. Gaining a full picture of the interviewee's experiences will allow for a more accurate rating on each item on the PSYRATS. In addition, the scales can produce valuable clinical information that can form the basis of a cognitive-behavioural assessment and can be used as an aid to monitoring changes during treatment. The scales are designed to elicit and rate ALL of the client's auditory hallucination and delusion experiences. However, as a clinical tool, it can also be useful to do separate assessments of individual voices or individual delusional beliefs.

The scales have demonstrated excellent inter-rater reliability and good validity against similar instruments in people with chronic psychosis[2], people with acute psychosis[3] and people with learning disabilities and psychosis[4]

This manual will give guidelines for each sub-scale separately.

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[1] Kay, S.R., Fiszbein, A., & Opler, L.A. (1989). The positive and negative syndrome scale (PANSS) for schizophrenia. Schizophrenia Bulletin.13(2):261-76.

[2] Haddock, G.; McCarron, J.; Tarrier, N.; Faragher, E. B. (1999) Scales to measure dimensions of hallucinations and delusions: the psychotic symptom rating scales (PSYRATS) Psychological Medicine, 29(4) pp 879-889

[3] Drake, R., Haddock, G., Tarrier, N., Bentall, R.P. and Lewis, S. (2007) The Psychotic Symptom Rating Scales (PSYRATS): their usefulness and properties in first episode psychosis. Schizophrenia Research, 89, 119-122.

[4] Hatton, C., Haddock, G, Taylor, J.L., Coldwell, J., Crossley, R., Peckham, N. (2005) The reliability and validity of general psychotic rating scales with people with mild and moderate intellectual disabilities: an empirical investigation. Journal of Intellectual Disability Research, 49, 490-500.

# Guidelines for Rating Auditory Hallucinations

For the purposes of rating using this scale, auditory hallucinations are defined as follows.

> ***An auditory perception that has the compelling sense of reality of a true perception but that occurs without external stimulation of the relevant sensory organ (adapted from DSM-IV, APA, 1994)***

This section will provide general and more specific guidelines for rating each item on the auditory hallucination scale along with illustrations to clarify how this would work in practice. Examples of how to rate each item on the PSYRATS are provided.

### Auditory Hallucinations Items

1. *Frequency*
2. *Duration*
3. *Location*
4. *Loudness*
5. *Beliefs about origin of voices*
6. *Amount of negative content of voices*
7. *Degree of negative content*
8. *Amount of distress*
9. *Intensity of distress*
10. *Disruption*
11. *Control*

Three optional items are also included although these are not included in the overall scoring. These are:

(i)     Number of voices
(ii)    Form of each voice
(iii)   Sex of voice/voices

At the beginning of the assessment record the interviewee's name, age, gender, diagnosis (if relevant), the length of time they have been experiencing voices and details of any hallucinations in other modalities such as visual, olfactory, gustatory or tactile.

### Probing questions

Probing questions are provided for each item. These are not meant to be prescriptive or exhaustive and interviewers should use any questioning that

allows them to elicit the information required. Interviewers need to be reflective and sensitive to encourage the interviewee to speak about their experiences. In general begin with open questions and allow the client to describe their experiences. Only progress to more specific or closed questions when fine-tuning ratings.

**Timeframe**

This structured interview is designed to elicit specific details regarding different dimensions of auditory hallucinations.  When asking questions, the interview is designed to rate the interviewee's experiences **over the last week** for the majority of items.  There are two exceptions to this:

(a) Asking about beliefs regarding the origin of voices (item 5) — rate the interviewee's response based on what they believe at the time of interview

(b) Loudness of voice (item 4) should be rated according to the loudness of voices at the time of interview or the last time the interviewee experienced them.

When rating auditory hallucination items, rate all the auditory hallucination experiences that the interviewee reports as a composite using the highest score; that is, if the client reports more than one auditory hallucination rate the highest scoring one for each of the items.

*In general, if in doubt, rate conservatively.*

# AUDITORY HALLUCINATION ITEMS

## 1. Frequency

**Probing questions**

*How often have you heard your voices over the last week?*

*Thinking about the last week, what has it been like?" e.g. every day, all day long etc"*

**Example**

*Mary reports hearing two different voices. Voice one occurs once a day and voice two occurs throughout the day, every 20 minutes or so.*

Scoring criteria:

0    Voices not present or present less than once a week (specify frequency if present)
1    Voices occur for at least once a week
2    Voices occur at least once a day
3    Voices occur at least once an hour
4    Voices occur continuously or almost continuously i.e., stop for only a few seconds or minutes

The correct rating in this case would be a **3**, because, when taking all her voice experiences together, Mary hears voices at least once an hour

Make sure that a conservative rating strategy is employed. For example, if the interviewee hears voices several times a day i.e. significantly more than once per day but not as frequent as once an hour, the correct rating would be a 2 even though it may appear they are nearer to scoring a 3.

## 2. Duration

**Probing questions**

*When you have heard your voices over the last week, how long have they lasted?*

*Have they lasted for a few seconds, minutes, hours, all day long for example....?"*

**Example**
*Jenny reports hearing 3 different voices. Voice one occurs once a day and is fleeting, voice two occurs at least once an hour and is fleeting and voice three occurs continuously or almost continuously.*

Scoring criteria:

0       Voices not present
1       Voices last for a few seconds, fleeting voices
2       Voices last for several minutes
3       Voices last for at least one hour
4       Voices last for hours at a time

The correct rating in this case would be a **4**

Again, a conservative rating strategy should be applied with a higher rating being given only if the interviewee fully meets that item anchor point

### 3. Location

**Probing questions**

*When you have heard your voices over the last week, where did they sound like they were happening?*

*Did they sound like they were inside your head and/or outside your head? Whereabouts do your voices sound like they are coming from?*

For this item ensure that the interviewee understands that you are interested in hearing about where they actually hear or experience the voice rather than where they 'believe' the voice to be originating.

**Example**

*Sarah describes hearing her Mother's voice speaking to her. It sounds as if she is whispering in her ear. She also hears a man's voice inside her head telling her to do things.*

Scoring criteria:

0       No voices present
1       Voices sound like they are inside head only
2       Voices outside the head, but close to ears or head.  Voices inside the head may also be present.
3       Voices sound like they are inside or close to ears and outside head away from ears
4       Voices sound like they are from outside the head only

The correct rating in this instance would be a **2** because she hears voices both inside and outside her head.

## 4. Loudness

**Probing questions**

*How loud are your voices?*

*Are they louder than my voice, about the same loudness, quieter or just a whisper?*

Loudness of voice should be rated according to the loudness of voices at the time of interview or the last time the interviewee experienced them within the interview time-frame. When rating the loudness of voices use your voice as a comparison or anchor point. As with item 3, above, it is important that the interviewee knows that you are interested in what they actually hear rather than what they 'believe' to be occurring. For example, an interviewee may say that their voices shout at them, however, the shouting seems to be far away so they only actually 'hear' very quiet voices.

**Example**

*Joe reports hearing one voice of a person singing Elton John songs. He describes having to strain to hear them, and sometimes can't make out the words very well because they are so quiet even though he believes they are singing quite loudly.*

Scoring criteria:

0       Voices not present
1       Quieter than own voice, whispers.
2       About same loudness as own voice
3       Louder than own voice
4       Extremely loud, shouting

The correct rating in this instance would be a **1**

## 5. Beliefs regarding the origin of voices

This item is designed to rate the strength of any delusional beliefs that the client holds about their voices. If the client has no delusional beliefs about their voices e.g. they believe that their voices are fully attributable to their mental health problems (i.e. an internal attribution), a **1** rating should be given. However, if the client has any delusional beliefs about their voices, then the

interviewer should establish the strength of that belief on a scale of 0 to 100% conviction and make a rating based on that conviction.

There may be a number of beliefs associated with the voice/s. Record all of the beliefs regarding the origin of voices for each voice and rate as a composite using the highest score. Remember that if you make a positive rating on this item that you will also need to rate this on the Delusions Rating Scale.

**Probing questions**

*What do you think has caused your voices?*

*Are the voices caused by factors related to you, or due to other people or factors?*

*Are your voice caused by your mental health problems or illness?*

*How much do you believe that your voices are caused by (add interviewee's contribution) on an scale from 0-100 with 100 being that you are totally convinced, have no doubts and 0 being that it is completely untrue?*

A rating of one would be given if the interviewee believes the voices to be solely related to a mental illness. If the interviewee expresses belief in an external cause e.g. voices put there by aliens from outer space, a transmitter in their brain from doctors, caused by neighbours who are reading thoughts……., ask whether the interviewee has any doubts about this cause. If they express no doubts, check whether this belief is really held with 100% conviction. If they express some doubts, check out their degree of conviction.

For this item, the rating should be based on the highest conviction regardless of the frequency of the voice.

**Example**

*James reports hearing two voices over the last week. One voice is heard inside his head and he believes it is the voice of an old neighbour – he has a 70% conviction that the voice is the neighbour sending him messages from hell to torment him. His second voice sounds as if it is coming from people in his social environment. It happens when he's with other people and he thinks that they are whispering about him. He thinks he may be a bit paranoid and that the voices are more coming from thoughts in his head and so only has a 10% conviction that voices are due to other people.*

Scoring criteria:

0     Voices not present
1     Believes voices to be solely internally generated and related to self

2       Holds a less than 50% conviction that voices originate from external causes

3       Holds 50% or more conviction (but less than 100%) that voices originate from external causes

4       Believes voices are solely due to external causes (100% conviction)

In this case the correct rating would be a **3** and a further rating on the Delusions Rating Scale would be appropriate due to the John's delusional interpretation in the origin of the voices from his neighbour.

## 6. Amount of negative content of voices

This item is designed to elicit and rate the proportion of all the voice content that the interviewee *believes* to be unpleasant or negative. It is important that the interviewer rates this item on the client's beliefs rather than what the actual content of the voices appears to be.

### Probing questions

*Do you think that your voices have said unpleasant things or negative things over the last week?*

*How much of the time do the voices say these types of unpleasant or negative items?*

### Example

 *Eleanor hears voices of strangers criticising her appearance - for example- "you look so fat, you ugly bitch". This only occurs a couple of times a week, lasting for a few minutes. She believes this to be unpleasant and negative. The rest of the time she hears comments that she doesn't find unpleasant - like a commentary on her actions. This happens every day for hours at a time.*

Scoring criteria:

0       No unpleasant content
1       Occasional unpleasant content
2       Minority of voice content is unpleasant or negative (less than 50%)
3       Majority of voice content is unpleasant or negative (50% or more)
4       All of voice content is unpleasant or negative

The correct rating in this instance would be a **1**

**7. <u>Degree of negative content</u>**

This item is designed to rate the actual content of the voices. When rating this item, it is important to find out what the voices are actually saying. You may already have a good idea about his from questioning around item 6. It is quite likely that interviewees may have voice content that fits into all off the criteria below. The correct rating would be the highest one regardless of the frequency of each type of content.

**Probing questions**

*Can you tell me a bit about what you have heard your voices saying over the last week?*

*Can you give me some examples of the things you have heard this week?*

Scoring criteria:

0       Not unpleasant or negative
1       Some degree of negative content, but not personal comments relating to self or family e.g. swear words or comments not directed to self, e.g. "the milkman's ugly"
2       Personal verbal abuse, comments on behaviour e.g. "shouldn't do that or say that"
3       Personal verbal abuse relating to self-concept e.g. "you're lazy, ugly, mad, perverted"
4       Personal threats to self e.g. threats to harm self or family, extreme instructions or commands to harm self or others and there may also be personal verbal abuse as in (3)

**Example**

Using the previous example from item 6, the correct rating would be a **<u>3</u>**

**8. <u>Amount of distress</u>**

This item is designed to elicit the client's view on whether their voices have been distressing and for what proportion of the time this has been the case.

**Probing questions**

*Have you found your voices to be distressing over the last week?*

*How much of the time have they caused you distress over the last week?*

**Example**

Again, using the example from item 6

*Eleanor hears voices of strangers criticising her appearance- for example- "you look so fat, you ugly bitch". This only occurs a couple of times a week lasting for a few minutes. She believes this to be unpleasant and negative. The rest of the time she hears comments that she doesn't find unpleasant- like a commentary on her actions. This happens every day for hours at a time. However, even though she thinks a lot of the content of her voices is not unpleasant most of the time, she finds **all** of the voices she hears very distressing and would rather not hear anything.*

Scoring criteria:

0   Voices not distressing at all
1   Voices occasionally distressing, majority not distressing (<10%)
2   Minority of voices distressing (<50%)
3   Majority of voices distressing, minority not distressing (≥ 50%)
4   Voices always distressing

The correct answer in this case is a **4**

## 9. Intensity of distress

For this item, it is important to rate only the voices that the interviewee has described as distressing and gain a subjective impression of how distressing this has been.

**Probing questions**

*Over the last week when your voices have been distressing, how distressing has that been?*

*Thinking about the worst distress you could feel, over the last week, how have your voices compared to that? For example, has it been slightly, moderately distressing etc?*

Scoring criteria:

0   Voices not distressing at all
1   Voices slightly distressing
2   Voices are distressing to a moderate degree
3   Voices are very distressing, although interviewee could feel worse
4   Voices are extremely distressing, feel the worst he/she could possibly feel

**Example**
Again, using the example from item 6

*Eleanor hears voices of strangers criticising her appearance- for example- "you look so fat, you ugly bitch". This only occurs a couple of times a week, lasting for a few minutes. She believes this to be unpleasant and negative. The rest of the time she hears comments that she doesn't find unpleasant- like a commentary on her actions. This happens every day for hours at a time. However, even though she thinks a lot of the content of her voices is not unpleasant most of the time, she finds **all** of the voices she hears very distressing and would rather not hear anything. She could imagine feeling worse than she does (as she has experienced that in the past) but describes them as 'very' distressing rather than 'moderately' or 'slightly' distressing.*

The correct rating in this case would be **3**


## 10. Disruption to life caused by voices


**Probing questions**

*How much disruption have the voices caused to your life over the last week?*

*Can you tell me how the voices stopped you from working or doing any other daytime activity that you wanted to do?*

*How much have they interfered with your relationships with friends and/or family?*

*How much have they prevented you from looking after yourself, e.g. bathing, changing clothes, etc?*


**Example**

*Morris describes hearing voices often throughout most days. He lives in sheltered accommodation where he received daily checks from a support worker. He is able and happy to go about his day normally, and often receives visits from family and friends. Morris describes sometimes finding it hard to concentrate when his family and friends are talking to him because his voices can get quite loud, giving a commentary on his friends and his relationship. He has help with his shopping, cooking and has to be reminded to look after his self care. His CPN believes that if he was not bothered so much by his voices that he would be able to live more independently.*

Scoring criteria:

0   No disruption to life, able to maintain social and family relationships (if present)

1   Voices cause minimal amount of disruption to life e.g. interferes with concentration although able to maintain daytime activity and social and family relationships and be able to maintain independent living without support.

2   Voices cause moderate amount of disruption to life causing some disturbance to daytime activity and/or family or social activities.  The interviewee is not in hospital although may live in supported accommodation or receive additional help with daily living skills.

3   Voices cause severe disruption to life so that hospitalisation is usually necessary.  The interviewee is able to maintain some daily activities, self-care and relationships whilst in hospital.  The interviewee may also be in supported accommodation but experiencing severe disruption of life in terms of activities, daily living skills and/or relationships.

4   Voices cause complete disruption of daily life requiring hospitalisation. The interviewee is unable to maintain any daily activities and social relationships.  Self-care is also severely disrupted.


The correct rating in this case would be a **2**



## 11. Controllability of voices

**Probing questions**

*What control had you had over your voices over the last week?*

*How much control have you had over your voices when they happened over the last week?*

*Can you get rid of, dismiss or bring on your voices?*


**Example**

Using the example from item 10

*Morris describes hearing voices often throughout most days. He is still able and happy to go about his day normally, and often receives visits from family and friends. Morris describes sometimes finding it hard to concentrate when his family and friends are talking to him because his voices can get quite loud, giving a commentary on his friends and his relationship. The voices generally say positive things about how nice his friends are and how much they care for*

*him. Morris feels that he can sometimes stop the voices being so noisy, and occasionally can ignore them so they go away. However, this only happens once or twice a week. The rest of the time he can't do anything about them and can't do much to bring them on or stop them.*

Scoring criteria:

  0   Interviewee believes they can have control over the voices and can always bring on or dismiss them at will

  1   Interviewee believes they can have some control over the voices on the majority of occasions

  2   Interviewee believes they can have some control over their voices approximately half of the time

  3   Interviewee believes they can have some control over their voices but only occasionally.  The majority of the time the interviewee experiences voices which are uncontrollable

  4   Interviewee has no control over when the voices occur and cannot dismiss or bring them on at all.

  The correct rating in this instance would be a **3**

## Scoring the auditory hallucination scale

To generate a total score for the rating scale overall, calculate the total of all auditory hallucination items. A score sheet is provided in Appendix 1.

*Subscales*
Research into the psychometric properties of the scale indicate that it is also valid to consider three subscales on the AHS. The subscales are emotional characteristics (distress), cognitive interpretation and physical characteristics.

These subscales are made up of the following items:

*Emotional characteristics*: Amount of negative content, degree of negative content, amount of distress and intensity of distress (items 6, 7, 8 and 9)

*Cognitive interpretation*: Beliefs regarding origin of voices, disruption, control (items 5, 10 and 11)

*Physical characteristics*: Frequency, duration, location, loudness (items 1, 2, 3 and 4)

## Optional items (not included in overall scoring)

Three optional items are also included to enable a fuller assessment of the individual's experience. These do not form part of the overall scoring so are optional.

### (i) Number of voices

*How many voices do you experience?*

### (ii) Form of each voice

*How does each voice refer to you? Does it say things that start with 'you', or 'he/she' or 'I'?(1st person, 2nd person, 3rd person etc)*

### (iii) Sex of voices

*Are the voices males or female? How many voices are male and how many are female?*

The interviewer should use discretion in the questioning around these items. It is possible that this information is acquired during questioning around the other items and if this is the case, then no further questions are necessary here.

# Guidelines for rating delusional beliefs

For the purposes of rating on this scale, delusions are defined as follows:

***A false belief based on incorrect inference about external reality that is sustained despite evidence to the contrary or rejection by other members of the person's culture or subculture (adapted from DSM-IV, APA, 1994)***

This section will provide general and more specific guidelines for rating each item on the delusions scale along with illustrations to clarify how this would work in practice. Examples of how to rate each item on the PSYRATS scale are given.

## Delusion items
1. *Amount of preoccupation*
2. *Duration of preoccupation*
3. *Conviction*
4. *Amount of distress*
5. *Intensity of distress*
6. *Disruption*

There are also three optional items that can be recorded if required although these are not used in the overall scoring.

(i) Number of beliefs
(ii) Content of each belief
(iii) Conviction of each belief

Record at the beginning of the assessment the clients name, age, gender, diagnosis (if relevant), the length of time they have been experiencing delusional beliefs, specific details of individual delusional beliefs and any other information deemed important.

## Probing questions

As with the auditory hallucinations section, probing questions are supplied. These are not exhaustive. Interviewers can utilise any form of questioning to assist them gain the information they need to make a rating.

## Timeframe

This structured interview is designed to elicit specific details regarding different dimensions of delusional beliefs. When asking questions, the interview is designed to rate the interviewee's experiences **over the last**

**week** for the majority of items.  There is one exception to this.  When rating conviction, ask the interviewee about their conviction at the time of interview.

When rating delusions items, rate all delusions as a composite using the highest score; that is, if the client reports more than one delusion, rate the highest scoring one for each of the items. In general, if in doubt about a score, rate conservatively.

**DELUSIONS ITEMS**

### 1.  Amount of preoccupation with delusions

**Probing questions**

*Over the last week, how much time have you spent thinking about your beliefs about ……[insert client's beliefs] ?*

This item should be rated on the frequency that the interviewee has thought about all of their beliefs over the last week. Individual beliefs are not usually rated separately, although the scale can be used this way if necessary.

**Example**

*Sarah reports that she thinks that she is Jesus' minder. She thinks about this quite often, about once a day. She also says that she has nightmares regularly and this is due to Satan. She thinks he comes into her room at night and touches her. She thinks about this nearly all the time, it really scares her and she finds it hard to think about other things at all.*

Scoring criteria:

0       No delusions, or delusions which the interviewee thinks about less than once a week.
1       Interviewee thinks about beliefs at least once a week.
2       Interviewee thinks about beliefs at least once a day.
3       Interviewee thinks about beliefs at least once an hour.
4       Interviewee thinks about delusions continuously or almost continuously.

The correct rating in this instance would be a **4**

### 2.  Duration of preoccupation with delusions

Again, as with item 1, all delusions are rated together.

**Probing questions**

*When you have thought about any of your beliefs (i.e. [insert interviewee's beliefs]…) over the last week, how long do they tend to stay in your mind? - Few seconds/minutes/hours, etc.?*

**Example**

*Bert believes that people can read his thoughts; he can tell when they are doing it because his head feels like it is exploding. He also feels that people say things behind his back. Bert thinks about people being able to read his mind often and the thoughts last several minutes each time. He also, often thinks about people saying things behind his back but these thoughts are only fleeting.*

Scoring criteria:

| | |
|---|---|
| 0 | No delusions |
| 1 | Thoughts about beliefs last for a few seconds, fleeting thoughts |
| 2 | Thoughts about delusions last for several minutes |
| 3 | Thoughts about delusions last for at least one hour |
| 4 | Thoughts about delusions usually last for hours at a time |

The correct rating in this instance would be a **2**

## 3. Conviction

**Probing questions**

*At the moment, do you have any doubts about any of your beliefs, for example do you sometimes wonder whether they are real or not? (Go through each belief in turn).*

*How much do you believe in ,,,[insert belief]?  Can you estimate this on a scale from 0 – 100, where 100 means that you are totally convinced by your beliefs and 0 being that you are not convinced at all?*

If the client does consider other explanations for his/her experiences, check these out. If there are no doubts, check that the interviewee is 100% convinced in relation to their beliefs. If there are doubts ask further about conviction.

NB: Ensure that your questioning with regard to the client's conviction does not seem to suggest that you do not believe what they are saying or demean or undermine the client.

A rating on this item is based on the highest conviction an interviewee has in any of their beliefs.

Using the previous example,

**Example**

*Bert believes that people can read his thoughts; he can tell when they are doing it because his head feels like it is exploding. He also feels that people say things behind his back. Bert describes feeling 75-80% sure that people can read his thoughts and 95% certain that people, especially strangers, are talking about him behind his back.*

Scoring criteria:

0      No conviction at all
1      Very little conviction in reality of beliefs, less than 10%
2      Some doubts relating to conviction in beliefs, between 10-49%
3      Conviction in belief is very strong, between 50 – 99%
4      Conviction is 100%

The correct rating in this instance would be a **3**


## 4.  **Amount of Distress**

### **Probing questions**

*Have your beliefs about [insert interviewee's beliefs] caused you distress over the last week? How much of the time have they caused you distress over the last week?*

Again, using the previous example-

### **Example**

*Bert believes that people can read his thoughts; he can tell when they are doing it because his head feels like it is exploding. He also feels that people say things behind his back. Bert finds this very upsetting as he feels he can't trust anyone and doesn't understand what he has done wrong to make everyone hate him and think he is a bad person. Bert says that he always feels distressed when thinking about all of his beliefs.*

Scoring criteria:

0      Beliefs never cause distress
1      Beliefs cause distress on the minority of occasions.
2      Beliefs cause distress on less than 50 % of occasions
3      Beliefs cause distress on the majority of occasions when they occur between 51-99% of time
4      Beliefs always cause distress when they occur

The correct rating here would be **4**

## 5. Intensity of Distress

**Probing questions**

*Over the last week, when you have felt distressed by your beliefs about [insert interviewee's beliefs] how severe does this feel?" Have you felt slightly, distressed, moderately distressed etc..*

**Example**

*Sam attaches special meaning to some events in his life. For example- following his sister's death he became interested in collecting pictures. One day he a found a picture which he thought was of his sister. He felt that somehow this was connected to his sister and the picture was a message sent from the Devil. When Sam thinks about this it distresses him as he misses his sister and worries that she has gone to hell. He has found it hard to think of anything else over the last week and it has distressed him severely. However, over previous weeks he has felt worse.*

Scoring criteria:

0      No distress
1      Beliefs cause slight distress
2      Beliefs cause moderate distress
3      Beliefs cause marked distress
4      Beliefs cause extreme distress, couldn't be worse

The correct rating here would be a **3**

## 6. Disruption to life caused by beliefs

**Probing questions**

*In what way have your beliefs caused disruption for you over the last week?*

*In what way have they stopped you working or carrying out a day-time activity?*

*In what way have they interfered with your relationships with family or friends?*

*In what way have they interfered with your ability to look after yourself, e.g. washing, changing clothes, etc?*

**Example**

*James believes that strangers are out to get him e.g. a woman with a big, vicious dog. He finds it very distressing if he has to leave his home. He finds that he can only trust his close family members and so only socialises if his family come to visit him. Because Sam thinks strangers are out to get him he is too scared to go out to do any shopping and insists that only his Mother buys it for him from a particular shop. She is not able to get out very often so Sam relies on a support worker to provide him with extra help.*

Scoring criteria:

0. No disruption to life, able to maintain independent living with no problems in daily living skills. Able to maintain social and family relationships (if present)

1. Beliefs cause minimal amount of disruption to life, e.g. interferes with concentration although able to maintain daytime activity and social and family relationships and be able to maintain independent living without support.

2. Beliefs cause moderate amount of disruption to life causing some disturbance to daytime activity and/or family or social activities. The interviewee is not in hospital although may live in supported accommodation or receive additional help with daily living skills.

3. Beliefs cause severe disruption to life so that hospitalisation is usually necessary. The interviewee is able to maintain some daily activities, self-care and relationships whilst in hospital. The interviewee may also be in supported accommodation but experiencing severe disruption of life in terms of activities, daily living skills and/or relationships.

4. Beliefs cause complete disruption of daily life requiring hospitalisation. The interviewee is unable to maintain any daily activities and social relationships. Self-care is also severely disrupted.

In this instance the correct rating would be a **2**

## Scoring the delusions scale

To generate a total score for the rating scale overall, calculate the total of all delusions items. A score sheet is attached in Appendix 1.

Research into the psychometric properties of the scale indicate that it is also valid to consider two subscales on the DS. The subscales are emotional characteristics (distress) and cognitive interpretation.

These subscales are made up of the following items:

*Emotional characteristics*: Amount of distress and intensity of distress (items 4 and 5)

*Cognitive interpretation*: Frequency, duration and conviction (items 1, 2, 3 and 6)

## Optional items

### (i) Number of beliefs

*Record the number of beliefs considered in the interview, use further probing questions if necessary*

### (ii) Content of each belief

*Record the content of each belief considered in the interview, use further probing questions if necessary*

### (iii) Conviction in each belief

*It may be useful to record the conviction that the individual has in each of their beliefs that have been considered during the interview.*