

# The Invisible Suitcase

The Invisible Suitcase is a concept created by the NCTSN that helps us and caregivers understand behaviors and the impact of trauma on negative beliefs and expectations of children and others. Below are visuals and work sheets to guide caregivers through unpacking what is in their child's invisible suitcase regarding beliefs about themselves, caregivers and the world.





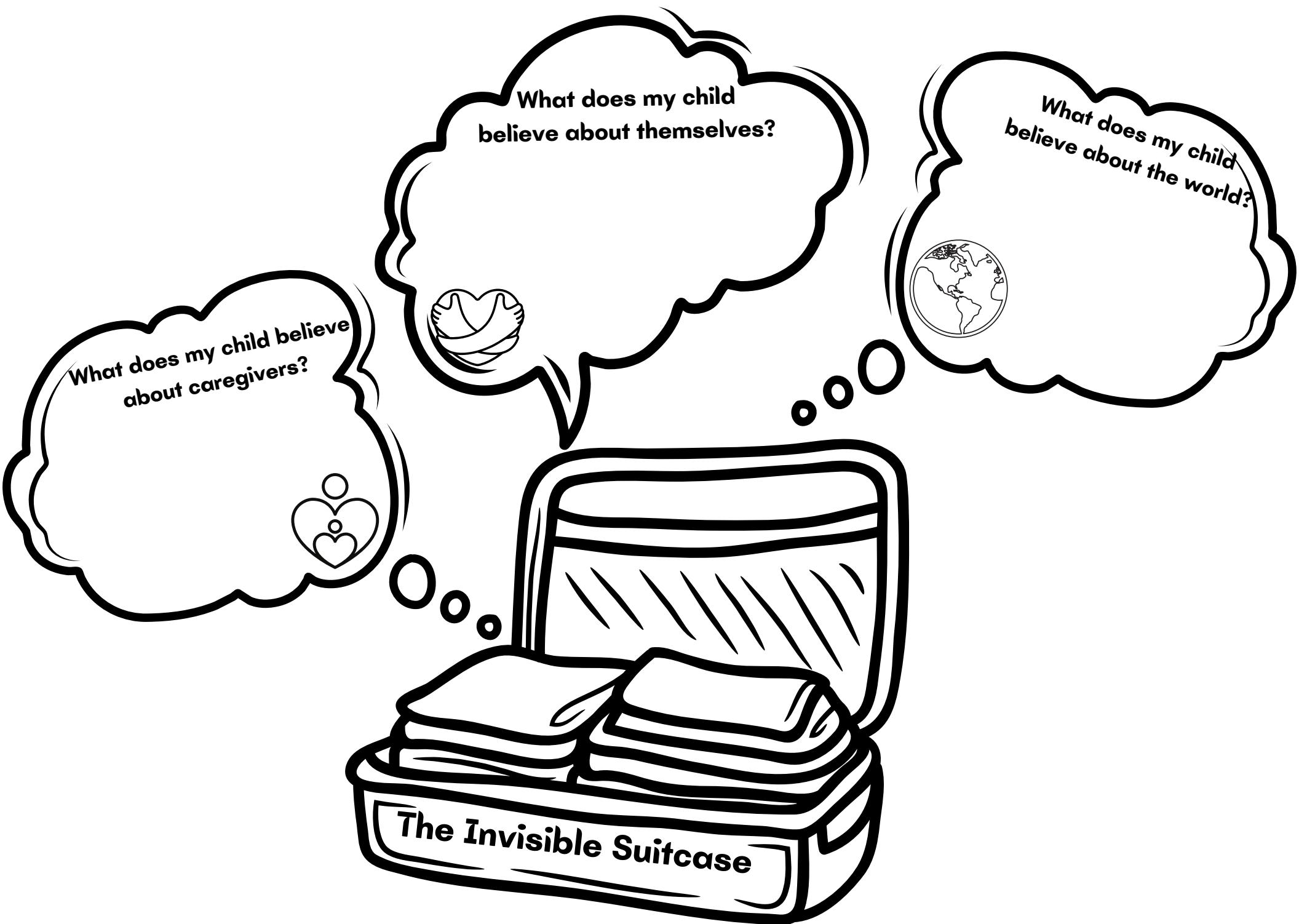
# The Invisible Suitcase:

## Directions

This activity will likely take the majority of an outpatient session, so plan accordingly.

Introduce The Invisible Suitcase: "We all carry around with us what we refer to as an invisible suitcase, packed in this are our own beliefs about ourselves, our caregivers and the world based on our experiences. Today we are going to explore what is in your child's invisible suitcase based on the behaviors you experience and the experiences they have had"

- 1- Use the first worksheet to identify what the caregiver predicts the child believes about themselves, caregivers and the world.
- 2- Utilize the 2nd worksheet to identify how safe, capable and loveable the child feels based on these beliefs
- 3- The 3rd worksheet is repacking the suitcase, what does this caregiver want their child to believe about themselves, caregivers and the world. Write any and all of these down.
- 4- The 4th worksheet is very important: together, write down behaviors the caregiver can experiment with in order to reinforce the new beliefs they want their child to have and how full they think the safe, capable and loveable buckets will be. Explore: When will the specifically do these things? What time of day, practice what words they may say and what to do when previous habits make their way into the situation.



What does my child believe  
about caregivers?

What does my child  
believe about themselves?

What does my child  
believe about the world?

**The Invisible Suitcase**

**How full do you think these buckets are for your child?  
How safe, capable and loveable do you think they  
currently feel?**

**Color how full it is or write a number on a scale of 1-10**

**Safe**

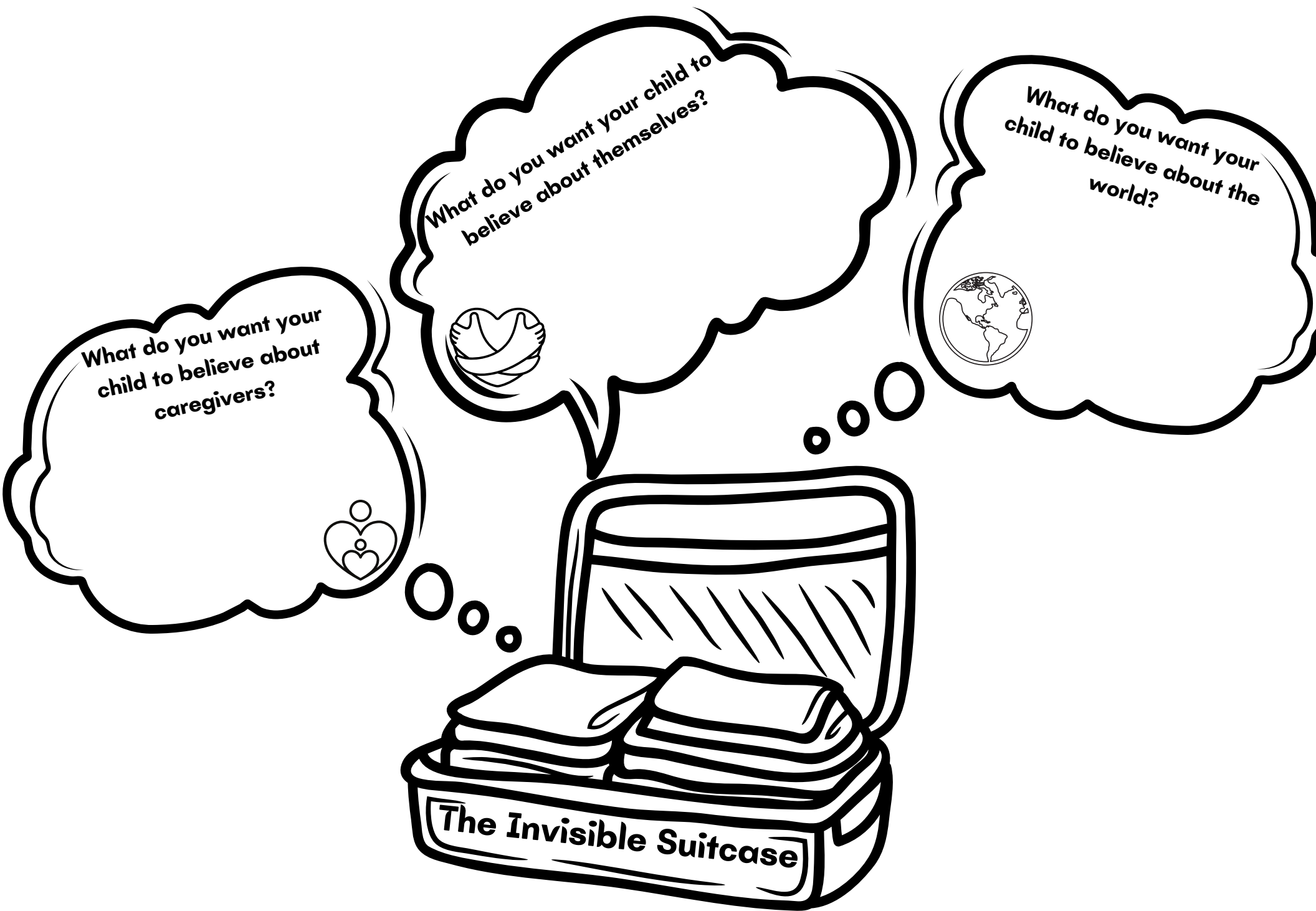


**Capable**



**Loveable**





What do you want your  
child to believe about  
caregivers?

What do you want your child to  
believe about themselves?

What do you want your  
child to believe about the  
world?

The Invisible Suitcase

**What behaviors will I experiment with in order to help my child to have these beliefs about Caregivers? Themselves? The world?**

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**If your child believed these things, how safe, capable and loveable would they feel?**

**Safe**



**Capable**



**Loveable**

