

oxfordvr

Immersive technology for mental health



Who is Oxford VR?

Oxford VR is an Oxford University spin-out company based on the work of clinical psychologist and co-founder, Prof Daniel Freeman, who has been working with virtual reality (VR) for mental health treatments for more than 18 years. Their aim is to develop immersive technology for mental health problems.

What is the Fear of Heights Treatment?

Oxford VR's fear of heights application has been created by a team of clinicians, programmers and researchers.

There is a virtual coach called Nic, who offers techniques, support and advice to the individual. The program is automated, and doesn't need a real therapist there to deliver it, however, for this project there will always be a therapist in the room with you overseeing the treatment and offering advice if you need it.

The virtual environment is based on an open atrium, akin to a large shopping mall, with interior balconies that overlook the ground floor and central structure. The building has 10 floors, with interactive, fun and challenging tasks on each floor.

Treatment will take place in a clinic room, over 3 to 5 sessions, where you will be in the virtual reality for up to 30 minutes.

Can any body take part?

There are a few manufacturers guidelines for the VR kit which we follow:

- Individuals must have stereoscopic vision, i.e. vision in both eyes.
- It is not suitable for people with photosensitive epilepsy.
- It is not suitable for individuals with balance problems.

A practitioner will talk to you before enrolling you on to the VR programme, and if there are any other concerns or reasons to think that the VR treatment may not be the best option, then alternatives to VR treatment will be discussed with you.

What are the benefits of the VR treatment?

Virtual reality allows patients to do things that perhaps they wouldn't or couldn't do in real life in the knowledge they are in a safe environment. Although the environment is virtual, it still evokes the same emotions and physical feelings that the equivalent real environment does, and this allows you to learn things that translate to the real world.

Are there any risks of VR Treatment?

Some people, with some virtual reality programmes/games, can occasionally experience motion sickness, which is like travel sickness. If this happens, we recommend people stop the virtual reality and see if it passes. The way Oxford VR have designed the Fear of Heights programme reduces the likelihood that you will experience motion sickness.

Data Sharing

With your agreement anonymised data will be shared with Oxford VR. The data shared will include your age, employment status, main problem/diagnosis (e.g. specific phobia) and whether you take prescribed medication for your mood. You will also complete regular questionnaires to measure your mood, and phobia severity. At the end of your treatment you will also be asked to provide some feedback of the VR experience.

This confidential and anonymous data is shared so they can continue to evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of their virtual reality treatments and make improvements as necessary.