

NHSX latest GDE Blueprint highlights Oxford VR's exemplary VR innovation

- The publication of the latest NHSX GDE Blueprint aims to accelerate the adoption of VR therapy and best practice across NHS trusts in the UK.



OXFORD, England, Apr. 23, 2020 Oxford VR's exemplary VR innovation in mental healthcare has been highlighted by the latest NHSX Global Digital Exemplar (GDE) Blueprint which has been published on the **Future NHSX Collaboration Platform** and details how Oxford VR's automated VR therapy has been integrated into NHS IAPT Talking Therapy services.

As a spinout from Oxford University's Department of Psychiatry, Oxford VR's ground-breaking mental health treatment is at the frontiers of the exciting transformation of mental healthcare using powerful immersive technology and evidence-based science to improve patient outcomes and increase capacity.

Oxford VR played an instrumental role in creating the NHSX GDE blueprint **'Virtual reality as a psychological tool'** which will help other NHS Trusts to integrate and deliver VR therapy as part of building out their digital capabilities, to improve mental healthcare services for patients. The NHSX GDE Blueprint details the process of the rollout and includes key artefacts such as a standard operating procedure, a digital strategy and a data sharing template.

Speaking about this development, Barnaby Perks, Founding CEO of Oxford VR said: ***"We are immensely proud that Oxford VR's automated therapy is exemplified in the latest NHSX DGE Blueprint publication. In these unprecedented times for mental healthcare, digital transformation will be central to building capacity. This is an important Blueprint that NHS Trusts can turn to, for an evidence-based and highly scalable intervention, that is making a real-world impact and is based on years of rigorous research."***

Oxford VR automated therapy builds on two decades of research by Daniel Freeman, Professor of Clinical Psychology and NIHR Research Professor at Oxford University, investigating VR's potential to create a powerful new psychological treatment that is revolutionising the way people experience therapy.

The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified the urgency of building capacity in mental healthcare to ensure Trusts and providers can adequately meet acute demands for treatment and the longer-term mental health issues arising from this crisis.

About Oxford VR

- Oxford VR (OVR) is a global pioneer developing automated VR therapy. A spin-out from Oxford University, OVR's work builds on two decades of ground-breaking clinical research by Daniel Freeman, Professor of Clinical Psychology and NIHR Research Professor at the Department of Psychiatry, Oxford University and co-founder of OVR.
- As a Tech for Good enterprise, OVR is committed to developing evidence-based, cost-effective and scalable solutions that build mental healthcare capacity and improve outcomes using cutting-edge VR technology.
- OVR's automated VR therapy translates cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) through immersive virtual reality environments to provide powerful new psychological treatments.
- Oxford VR's first clinical trial for fear of heights, which was published in [The Lancet Psychiatry](#)¹, shows how automated VR therapy can produce large clinical benefits. Results achieved were significantly better than expected, with the best psychological intervention delivered face-to-face by a therapist. This landmark trial also demonstrated automated VR therapy's capacity to to expand access and standardize clinical excellence, ensuring adherence to treatment protocols. Because VR therapy is automated, prized therapists can be redeployed to more urgent cases or other aspects of care.
- Mental health problems are inseparable from the environment. In VR therapy, individuals put on a headset and enter VR simulations of the situations and environments that trigger their symptoms. Throughout their treatment, individuals are asked to complete several different tasks that are graded in difficulty and are coached on helpful responses. The VR environments give people reassurance they can try out new things safely and that they're not in any real danger. The great thing about VR therapy is that the behavioural changes made in the VR environment transfer to the real world.
- In February 2020, OVR secured a \$12.5 million investment – a record for VR therapy investment in Europe to advance its real-world impact in behavioural health, and accelerate clinical leadership in the U.S.

Reference

¹ The Lancet Psychiatry, Automated psychological therapy using immersive virtual reality for treatment of fear of height, Daniel Freeman, Polly Haselton et al, 2018.

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