Virtual Reality in Social Work Education & Training

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Virtual Reality in Medical Education & Training

OVERVIEW

1. Summary*
2. Advantages & Outcomes
3. Challenges
4. Application
5. Cost Implications
6. Market Solutions
7. Next Steps

*The complete investigation & findings are available in this document.
AT A GLANCE

- Effective tool to foster empathy for patients & their families, and to prepare social workers for on-site visits
- Simple VR viewers or desktop-run virtual patient programs can effectively enhance training
- Insufficient data on cost variability, long-term cost savings & ROI for various setups and scenarios
- More research recommended
- Limited number of specialized vendors & readily available simulations
ADVANTAGES & OUTCOMES

✓ Immersive, comprehensive, standardized, hands-on training
✓ High level of realism
✓ Ability to practice assessing home environments in “safe” space with no real-life consequences
✓ Great diversity & variability in Field settings & patient demographics
✓ Practice for unanticipated situations, anytime, with unlimited repetitions
✓ Immediate, objective feedback
✓ Positive psychological effect on learners (e.g., ↑ self-confidence)
✓ Accelerated learning pace & decision-making
✓ Improved teamwork in IPE settings
CHALLENGES

- Insufficient information on:
  - setup and maintenance costs
  - use of VR in the **continuing education** of social workers
- **No standardization** of tech training
- **Limited** effectiveness research
- **Lack of** in-person communication and ability to observe body language cues
- Scale implications (hardware may **quickly become outdated or obsolete**)

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APPLICATION

- Navigate community & prepare for home visits
- Build assessment skills
- Simulate unpredictable home environments
- Prepare for field practicum
- Build empathy for the patients & their families
- etc.

"All of our students go do a field practicum for 420 hours, but they can't go until they have these skills. This [VR experience] is a middle ground to give them some practice before they're out there in it."

Jennifer Pribble, Director of Field Experience, Northwestern Oklahoma State University
COST IMPLICATIONS

● Software costs vary by vendor and specific requirements.

● Some tools, such as WondaVR and others, allow users to create immersive learning experiences with limited or no coding background, and are typically less costly than custom-built solutions (e.g., WondaVR charges $350/mth for unlimited experiences & multi-user live sessions, among other features).

● Hardware costs
  - $399 per Oculus Quest headset (256 GB)
  - $49 carrying case per Oculus Quest headset
  - $10-$40 per Google Cardboard or similar viewer
MARKET SOLUTIONS

- **Accenture Virtual Experience Solution (AVEnueS)** - aimed at training child welfare caseworkers. It requires Oculus Go headset.

- **SIMPACT Immersive Learning** (by California State University, Northridge) - a mixed reality simulation system that provides a highly realistic virtual platform for practice in social work, counseling, teaching, conflict resolution, and other interpersonal interactions. It utilizes software by Mursion®.

- **The Cornerstone Partnership VR program** - aimed at understanding the needs of children in or from the care system.
RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

➔ Investigate existing solutions when possible
➔ Explore desktop-run virtual patient programs or simple VR viewers such as Google Cardboard when limited immersion & interactivity meets the learning goals
➔ Explore the possibility of vendor partnerships or other cost sharing with institutional stakeholders and/or outside funding for these types of projects
➔ Determine a feasible long-term approach to VR technology support at the department and/or institutional level