

VR-U There?

Accessing mental healthcare can be a daunting challenge, with waiting times often stretching for months. This is far from ideal, particularly for those in urgent need of professional support. On top of this, eligibility criteria can sometimes prevent individuals from receiving the help they require. But what happens when someone doesn't meet these criteria yet desperately needs mental healthcare?

The issue is further intensified by the current staff shortages in the healthcare sector, where priority is often given to physical care. This means that mental healthcare is becoming increasingly difficult to access, leaving many without the support they need.

To address these challenges, VR-U There? was created as a Speculative Design concept, aimed at tackling the consequences of staff shortages in mental healthcare. It is an innovative VR furniture-device designed to be both accessible and effective in promoting mental well-being. The device offers various options, such as guided meditation and multiple types of therapy, allowing users to work on their mental health in a simple, approachable way.

Just as VR is being increasingly utilized in emerging educational tools, it is also proving to be an effective medium for therapeutic purposes. VR therapy, in particular, is an excellent solution for individuals who may be unable to leave their homes due to physical, emotional, or logistical barriers. With this device, they can engage in therapy in a safe and controlled environment.

However, it is easy to lose oneself in another world. When the device is placed over the user's head, they will be isolated from their surroundings and disconnected from reality. The world they see and experience only exists within the device, immersing them in a complete different environment. (3)

Prolonged use of such technology could lead to escapism, potentially blurring the lines between reality and the digital world. Additionally, the isolation could unintentionally contribute to feelings of loneliness or social withdrawal. (1) (2)

VR-U There? raises questions about the use of VR in mental health and escapism in general.

While improving mental health is important, it should not come at the expense of real social connections. True well-being is a balance between personal growth and meaningful human interaction. Without these connections, the solution may become part of the problem.



Bronnen
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