

An Interactive-Participatory Session for Exploring the Potential of Immersive Virtual Reality for Family Therapy Training

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Historically, family therapy training has relied on simulations and role plays as core teaching methods to foster trainees' immersion and experience with different clinical scenarios and develop psychotherapeutic skills and techniques. Immersive Virtual Reality (IVR), i.e. 3D software supported by a Head-Mounted Device or 'goggles', offers the possibility to combine immersion with 'sense of presence', namely the feeling of 'being there' in the virtual environment, and enhance learning processes. The rapid development of IVR and its affordability have opened new possibilities for its use and application in different contexts, including professional training. Research on IVR-enhanced education has shown that IVR promotes active, experiential and higher-order learning while mitigating possible risks by practicing with skills development in a protected and controlled virtual environment. Our contribution builds upon this literature and the lack of research and applications of IVR in family therapy education to introduce IVR, discuss psychotherapeutic competencies and teaching methods, and offer participants the possibility to have an immersive experience with IVR. Our international and interdisciplinary team of psychologists, family therapists and computer scientists co-designed an IVR-based prototype concerning family therapy first sessions. Through a 1-hour interactive session participants will a) gain better knowledge about IVR, b) participate in a conversation about training methods in family therapy, and c) will also be invited to actively (and creatively) contribute to the further development of our IVR-based prototype. Our hope is that this session will provide participants and our team with an invaluable collaborative learning and development opportunity which can advance further research and training in family therapy.

- 1) **Pillar: Research**
- 2) **Subject area: Coaching, Organisational Development, Supervision**
- 3) **Format: Open format – interactive immersive experience**