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Virtual Reality in End of Life Care

Carys Stevens

The use of Virtual Reality in palliative and end of life care has the potential to transform patient and carer experience.

A Macmillan Grant enabled the Ceredigion Palliative Care Team to purchase licences to access two headsets.



Aim

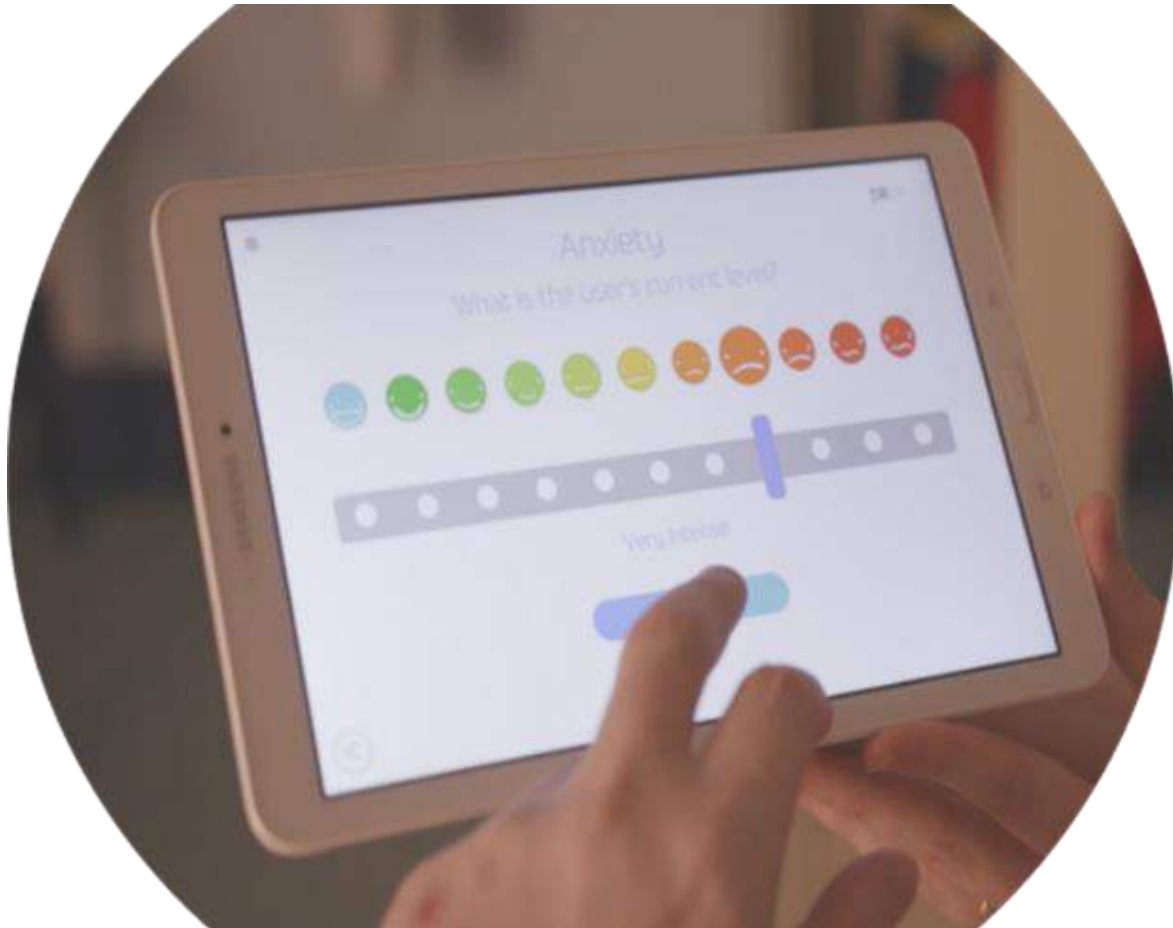


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To offer virtual reality experience to patients and carers, exploring benefit, evaluating, and inform its future development and use within Hywel Dda UHB.



The VR equipment includes an evaluation tool for measuring impact on anxiety and pain.

Patient, carer and staff stories are collected with the aim of identifying emerging themes.



Post VR experience

- 60% report reduction in pain
- 70% report reduction in anxiety

Top 3 experiences

- Meditation
- Secret beaches
- David Attenborough

Patient Feedback



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I suffer really bad with anxiety. This really helped me calm down. I was on a beach for real it felt like. It was so calm and peaceful. Thank you for this.

Many thanks for the chance to leave the ward if only for an hour. Things are looking dark for the future. It was amazing to go on safari to see the elephants I knew from my childhood.

It was a super experience and a marvellous distraction from what was going on in my life. Like I was living in the moment. Some of the scenes reminded me on the beautiful places I visited in New Zealand and Canada. It brought back happy memories.

Don't use it if you have just had Oramorph.





Chose the underwater experience and reported to finding it very calming. She was observed to relax into an armchair and look around her during the experience. Carer stated, “it’s brilliant”, “it’s amazing”, “how beautiful” and “it was lovely”. Post experience she described feeling calmer and self-reported an improved rating on the anxiety scale. She was grateful for being offered the opportunity.

The key learning from this session was that family and carers can benefit from the relaxation focus of VR experiences, as much as the patient. This can offer a valuable opportunity to take time out for self-care, from what can be in some cases, a very intensive role.



Reminiscing
calming present Carer anxious
It's Opportunity respite
happiness relaxing escape
from Calming family
Feeling experience time
laugh momentary of amazing
peaceful situation less
amazing!

Challenges



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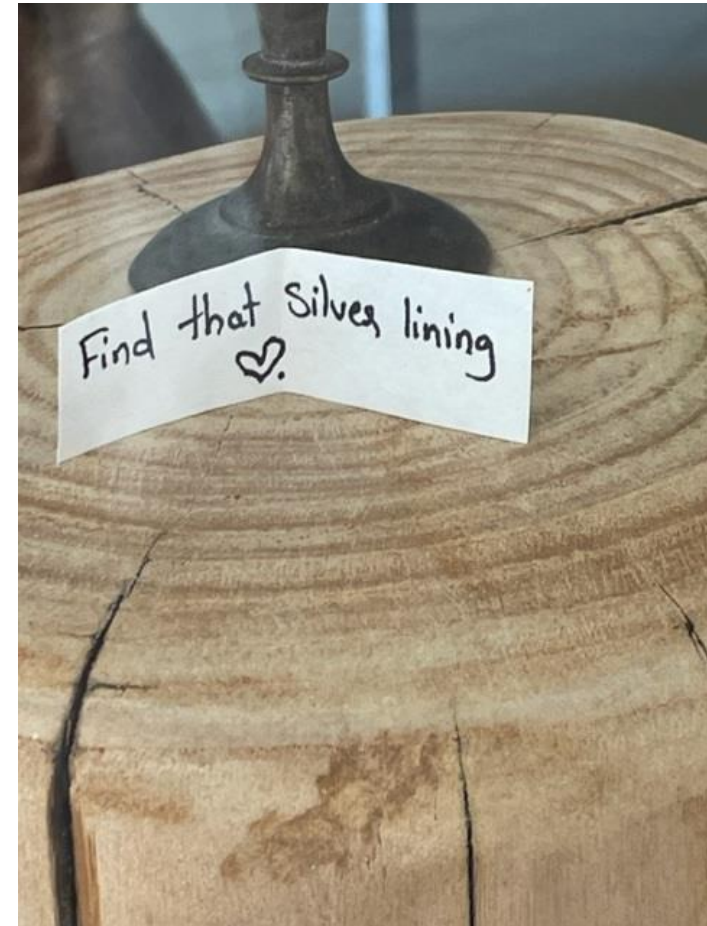
Awareness

Timely use

Staffing

Capacity

Access to kit



Key Conclusions



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The use of VR provides valuable short respite opportunities.

Coproduction. Has the potential to enhance the resilience of people and communities by actively involving people in managing their own wellbeing.

Enables a range of health care workers to support and empower patients and carers with self-care opportunities, potentially reducing the need for additional referrals and community visits.

Identified need for more local content.

Staff report strong feelings of reward, satisfaction and happiness when witnessing patient / carer using immersive therapy – secondary beneficiaries of this project.

Next Steps



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The VR headsets are procured for another 2 years.

To further develop the project by suggesting wider adoption and spread of this innovation within palliative and end of life care services in Hywel Dda.

Share the project results and the patient / carer voice with all who will listen.

Work with the VR company to produce Welsh experiences, highlighting the importance of care closer to home, and the Welsh Government's 'More than just words plan' and Quality Statement for Palliative and End of Life Care in Wales.

Going Fishing!



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“Thank you so much for making a gentleman extremely happy 😊. Who looks forward to your visits, you give him such a huge boost every time. May more people be able to benefit from this fantastic experience. Hands up to you and thank you team”

Diolch.

Thank you.

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