

# The use of Immersive Virtual Reality in Safeguarding Training

Poster Authors: Claire Humphreys, Clinical Lead Nurse, Nursing & Workforce, Evonne Hunt; Deputy Chief Nurse

Safeguarding VR Project Leads: Sue Govier; Named Nurse Safeguarding Children, Sonya Stocker; Senior Sister and Paediatric Liaison, Safeguarding Children's Team, Gina Tomlin, Safeguarding Adults Lead

## Background

Safeguarding is the actions by people and organisations to ensure actions are taken to promote the welfare of children and adults and protect them from harm. A responsibility of all staff delivering, or working in settings which provide healthcare (1).

Society is changing with differing and emerging forms of abuse such as exploitation, human trafficking, modern slavery and social media. Contextual safeguarding recognises that young people and adults are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts.

Despite Safeguarding Children's training being a mandatory requirement for DGT staff and staff being able to demonstrate an understanding and ability to provide correct answers to provided scenarios, learning was not always transferred to practise. An external review found that on occasions appropriate referrals were missed and dependents not always safeguarded.

## Aims

To embed Immersive virtual reality (IVR) for staff undertaking their Level 3 family focused safeguarding training to;

- Bridge the gap between patients and safeguarding professionals to support full understanding of the child's perspective and the impact on adult's behaviour to help staff recognise abusive and neglectful situations with more empathy within its 'Think Family' approach (2)
- Improved delivery and quality of staff training and user engagement
- To improve quality and quantity of safeguard referrals



## Reason for change

The current format of Safeguard training and education provision was not being transferred to clinical practise. Staff continued to treat a patients presenting complaint, without considering the impact on other dependents in the home that would trigger a safeguard risk and referral.

Furthermore, as an impact of the COVID-19 pandemic the Safeguarding Team continues to observe increased presentation in patients with mental health problems, drug and alcohol misuse and domestic abuse. It is therefore even more vital that staff understand the impact on others in the family and make appropriate referrals.

As an organisation DGT recognises the importance of high-quality safeguarding practise, in discharging its statutory obligations and protecting the most vulnerable in people in our population. DGT is fully committed to improving staff education and understands its accountability and obligation to review and improve organisational staff education to facilitate access to training, enabling the Trust to fulfil its objectives and statutory duties safely and effectively.

## Next Steps

The extent to which NHS organisations capitalise on potentials of IVR in training and development will depend on perceptions and intentions to use. At DGT we really see the value and want to continue to be pioneers in expanding the wider use of Virtual Reality simulations in respect to safeguarding training.

As noted in the NHS Long Term Plan, "Virtually every aspect of modern life has been, and will continue to be, radically reshaped by innovation and technology – and healthcare is no exception. The NHS is a hotbed of innovation and technological revolution in clinical practice"(3).

There is now a steering group (Procurement, Finance, ICT, Workforce Leads, VR Specialists) capturing organisational work streams, enabling the centralisation of support to drive forward innovative practices, and approaches to technology, but also to ensure utilisation of skills, expertise, and contributions staff across the organisation.

## Considerations

### IVR Technology Provider

The Safeguarding Training DGT opted to use Antser's Virtual Reality programme (4), designed to enhance the adults' understanding of a child's emotions, trauma and potential triggers to improve the care, support and guidance they provide. It also provides an insight onto the difficulties adults face from outside influences such as drugs, alcohol and domestic abuse.

### Funding Stream

- This varies through organisation dependent on IVR required for specific projects. The Hospital Charity supported the Safeguarding project involving a 3-year contract, headsets, downloadable content and Train the Trainer support.

### Infection Prevention Control

- Headsets are provided with a decontamination headset, and are clinnell safe
- Headsets are used are allocated to a single individual for the training session

## Outcomes

To be able to ensure an effective workforce that is skilled in recognising the effects of abusive or neglectful situations in both children and adults and its effects through meaningful training is fundamental.

### Training Outcomes

- 90% had a deeper understanding of the child and adults perspective
- 90% would consider alternative ways to approach situations in their work
- 87% felt the course equipped them to use the information gained throughout their training in their everyday practise.
- 84% felt the Course taught them to use the experience throughout their work.

### Training Feedback

*"I could quickly see how powerful the VR was and how the immersive experience would help staff understand and recognise certain situations with more empathy."*

*"I really liked the use of VR, it was hard fitting but powerful and effective. Focus on early childhood, attachment and longer term health and life experiences. Brilliant holistic 'family focus' approach to this training. Best safeguarding training I have attended in years, thank you."*

## Virtual Reality in DGT – The Wider Picture

VR is very much embedded and widely embraced at DGT in the transformation of staff training, staff induction and patient experience developments. Current uses include but are not limited to;

- Simulation Training for clinical education trust wide
- Maternity – As a response to the pandemic to enable continuation of tours for expectant families
- Paediatrics – Currently undertaking a trial for use with cannulation and phlebotomy
- Dietetics – Nutrition Education
- Recruitment – Nursing Open Days
- Surgery – Pre Assessment Tours (In development)



1. Rcn.org.uk. 2019. Safeguarding Children and Young People: Roles and Competencies for Healthcare Staff. [online] Available at: <<https://www.rcn.org.uk/-/media/royal-college-of-nursing/documents/publications/2019/january/007-366.pdf>> [Accessed 1 July 2021]. 2. Scie.org.uk. n.d. Think child, think parent, think family: Introduction - Think Family as a concept, and its implications for practice. [online] Available at: <[https://www.scie.org.uk/publications/guides/guide30/introduction/thinkchild.asp?gclid=CjwKCAIwz\\_WGBnA1EiwAUx1cbz1I20YkZ51Hs2b6YkZW-3773DONSQhVghyKMG9C19wYHLNB0CTrcQAVD\\_BwE](https://www.scie.org.uk/publications/guides/guide30/introduction/thinkchild.asp?gclid=CjwKCAIwz_WGBnA1EiwAUx1cbz1I20YkZ51Hs2b6YkZW-3773DONSQhVghyKMG9C19wYHLNB0CTrcQAVD_BwE)> [Accessed 1 July 2021]. 3. Chapter 5: Digitally-enabled care will go mainstream across the NHS. [online] NHS Long Term Plan. Available at: <<https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/online-version/chapter-5-digitally-enabled-care-will-go-mainstream-across-the-nhs/>> [Accessed 1 July 2021]. 4. Antser. n.d. Immersive virtual schools launched by Antser will put isolated students back into the classroom - Antser. [online] Available at: <<https://www.antser.com/immersive-virtual-schools-launched-by-antser-will-put-isolated-students-back-into-the-classroom/>> [Accessed 1 July 2021].