

CHALK
2023

Poster

#1

BRINGING THE OUTSIDE WORLD IN

Home Care Unit:

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Project Synopsis

A significant number of our Home Care clients are seniors who are homebound, with little interaction with the community or their physical environment. Our team constantly explores innovative ways to keep our clients engaged, and this includes the use of virtual reality (VR) technology as an activity for our clients. This project explores the use of VR to encourage communication in clients by reminiscing past experiences, inspiring conversation topics based on the VR activity, and fostering bonds between our clients and staff.

Project Details

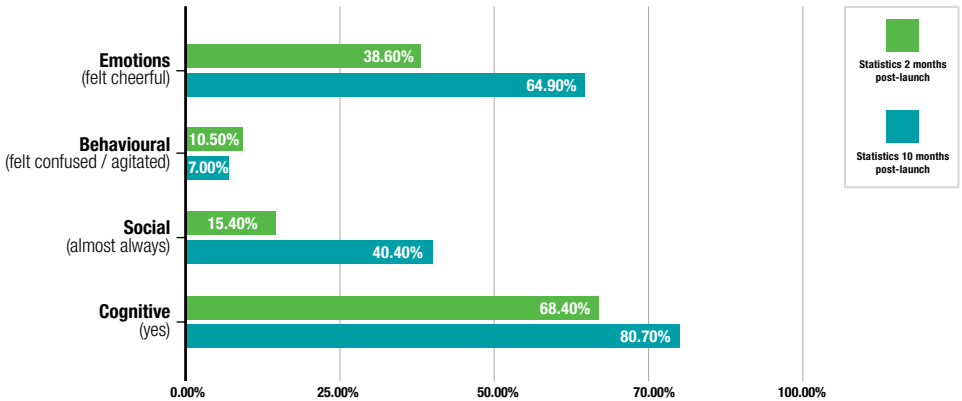
Funded by South-West Community Development Community (South West CDC), we worked with a vendor specialising in virtual and augmented reality to put together a VR activity that allows our elderly clients to virtually explore local scenes they would find familiar. These include the Haw Par Villa attraction and the sights of Chinatown during the festive Lunar New Year period. A total of 1,760 hours of VR sessions were conducted for 60 clients over a period of 12 months, from June 2022 to June 2023.

Prior to implementing the activity for clients, training and demonstration were conducted over two sessions for 20 staff from the Home Care team to understand the purpose of the activity and how to operate the VR headset for the experiential sessions.

A team of five care staff – all skilled in English, Mandarin, and Malay – underwent training to effectively facilitate client sessions, observe and assess clients, and handle technical aspects related to the VR headset and gadgets. The training equipped them with the expertise to facilitate the VR sessions and observe client behaviour during sessions, so as to ensure their well-being and safety during the activity sessions. The effectiveness of VR sessions for clients was evaluated based on four aspects - emotions, behaviour, social, and cognitive.

Project Outcomes

Clients and their next-of-kin completed post-activity surveys which showed that the VR sessions impacted the clients in having more positive emotions, calmer behaviour, a higher tendency to interact with others, and being more cognitively active.



Conclusion

Our initiative revolutionises VR technology for the elderly by tailoring experiences to their preferences, mobility, and sensory needs. While some clients respond positively, we acknowledge that not all may be receptive to VR. Thus, we focus on traditional activities like crafts and board games for those not comfortable with headsets. Based on our observations and results obtained from the project, several identified areas of action can be taken for a more engaging and enjoyable experience with the VR equipment in the future.