

Section A

Question 1

The HAT forms you filled in for the standard induction indicated that you experienced the sessions as X*. Can you please explain this overall experience of the standard induction?

- 7/10 Neutral
- No negative experiences.
- Pleasant, neutral. Were able to go deep.
- Very few sessions that were outstanding.
- "And I think a part of that is what we trying to accomplish with SHIP therapy, is that you're trying to stimulate the brain to to access old memories and old emotions in order to process them, in order to facilitate the process of healing. That's kind of the main goal of ship therapy."
- Same old story as with traditional SHIP therapy.
- "So if I can break that down for you and maybe this will be helpful for your data. What we did with that was we worked with where a person was and we processed what they were able to because it was a stranger that they were working with. I mean, they had met me probably once, very briefly before, but they were comfortable, but they didn't necessarily sign up for a full SHIP process. So whatever their body was able to dig up in that moment, that was essentially what they they gave the information they gave me to work with. And that's why we had the kind of neutral effect."

Question 2

The HAT forms also indicated that you experienced the VR induction sessions as Y*. Can you please explain this overall experience of the VR induction?

- 8/10 Extremely useful
- "...the VR stimulus served as a stimulus to active, to stimulate brain functioning and to stimulate memories. So it's almost like the VR group had additional tools, additional resources at their disposal, and that would account for and it's an excellent tool."
- "So it didn't influence their experience, but it heightened their experience."
- "Remember your brain, your brain function is on a computer processing model type of model. So the computer processing model is input process output. You think of a quality old fashioned calculator where you put two plus two is input processing happens in the background and you have output on your screen of four with your answer and a computer works on the same kind of principle and your brain ironically works on the same principle. Where it takes in information. It has input through the five senses. There's processing in different parts of your brain, you know, integration, analyzing for conclusions, and then there's output. You either speak your answer, you write your answer down, or through your actions or behavior, you

will demonstrate an answer. And the VR group had greater input and that is what heightened their experience.”

- Allowed; greater stimulation;
- All participants in both groups were equally comfortable with the therapist. Differentiating factor was the VR tool.
- “I had not noted anybody not being comfortable. So the therapeutic relationship, which is very important for a psychologist that did not influence the rich experience and therefore it would be the additional stimulation that the VR goggles provided.”
- “The therapeutic relationship is the type of, it's literally the, the therapeutic relationship that you create. Are you, are you on good terms? Do you feel like you, you can connect do you click type of thing? If we can put it very colloquially and some clients, click with a therapist... Sometimes you click with someone and sometimes you don't right? And if you don't, maybe the therapist is not a good fit for you. And I did not have that experience with any of our participants across both groups.”
- “And what this what this kind of reminds me of or leads me to, is that the only thing that would impact on those 7.2 and 7.8 scores between the Standard and the VR group is then the VR goggles, because all the other potential elements that could contribute to the experience of the participant. Were, were eliminated, like the therapeutic relationship.”

Section B

Question 3

What events occurred during the standard induction sessions that attributed to this overall experience?

- Therapeutic alliance; healthy; comfortable; willing; sense of ease; engage; unbiased; vulnerability;
- Phase 1 enhanced the therapeutic alliance.
- “I also think that none of the participants VR or standard had experienced SHIP before was helpful because they went into it very neutral and there were no biases amongst the VR in the Standard Group or between the VR and Standard group.”
- Biggest: Therapeutic alliance.
- “And you can read up on Therapeutic Alliance, you'll find that it's a massive contribution to absolutely any therapeutic process, regardless of the techniques being used whether its SHIP therapy, talk therapy or anything else. Therapy requires vulnerability, the therapeutic alliance facilitates the vulnerability.”

Question 4

What events occurred during the VR induction sessions that attributed to your overall experience of the VR sessions?

- Unbiased; authentic; additional stimulation; heightened experience; healthy distraction; immerse; psychological safety; familiar;
- "What I found is it took them a few seconds or a minute or two to kind of get into the VR experience to adjust to the visual they were perceiving before them through the visual VR goggles in this case was the picture of the door. But once they did that, remember on a subconscious level, there was additional stimulation through the VR experience and that processing heightened the experience in my observation."
- "I think the VR goggles served as almost a healthy distraction because it allowed them to immerse themselves into the VR world. And it's almost like a personal world that you had in the back that functions in there because they don't know what I'm seeing and it's not a shared experience, and that maybe allows them to feel a sense of, of psychological safety."
- "I think I think I have one hypotheses on that. So the first aspect we need to keep in consideration is that these are all people or not all of them. A lot of them are familiar with the IT industry or the IT world and the concept of VR, whether they've experienced VR or not, whether they've used a VR headset or not before the concept of it is familiar to them. Also the other thing is that a lot of those who were not part of the IT world or the IT industry or familiar with the IT industry were referred by people who were part of your network and they felt a sense of connection to you via your study or your friend or whoever one of your colleagues and what that does is it enhances the sense of security and it allows people to feel at ease."
- "So in summary, what that would mean for our hypothesis is that we worked with a very small group, and while our results are indicative of this particular group, they are not necessarily generalizable to a wider population."
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Section C

Question 5

What were the most helpful aspects of the standard induction? Why were they helpful?

- Old fashioned authenticity; pure therapist-client engagement; familiarity for therapist; face-to-face;
- "I think what I did feel was familiarity, not necessarily ease."
- "...from a therapist perspective, familiarity makes it easier. Familiarity is literally a foundational element of ease. Remember your brain functions on neural pathways that create familiarity. Your brain loves familiarity. That's why we stay comfort zones. And a lot of therapists would struggle, once VR is really launched into the

psychology world on a big scale, which at some point I trust it will be... therapists may struggle to embrace it.”

Question 6

What were the most helpful aspects of the VR induction? Why were they helpful?

- Additional stimulus; engage deeper; enhanced; tool
- Most helpful was the visual simulation;
- “...as a therapist, it was very helpful that you had designed the VR program in a way that it exactly duplicated the instructions of a standard session. There was a lot ease. There was there was great ease to transition between the two as a therapist...”
- First phase data collection was extremely helpful.
- “I think for research purposes it was extremely the most helpful aspect was that people had come in for those sessions. Initially. I think that really enhanced the quality of our research results because what it did is it normalized the research process between interlinking VR or IT and psychology, which are two field that you don't traditionally see going together. And it was a whole new which was a very new concept for a participant for any participant.”

Section D

Question 7

What were the most hindering aspects of the standard induction, or did you find any aspects missing during the standard induction?

- The height of the air mattress.
- “I think the height of the air mattress, not necessarily the air mattress... if you think of very caveman fight or flight type of thinking, if you are on the floor, you're not safe. Because if you need to respond to a risk or a threat, it takes a long time to stand up before you can fight type of thing.”
- Nothing was missing or lacking.

Question 8

What were the most hindering aspects of the VR induction, or did you find any aspects missing during the VR induction?

- “I think with the VR session, what I would have loved ideally in a perfect world is to have a lazy boy or some kind of chair where they could recline because a lot of some

of the participants had asked to sit up and we didn't necessarily have the tools for that."

- "...it takes the tension because if a client is if a participant is sitting and they're not comfortable, then they focused on shuffling around and my back hurts... it distracts from what you're trying to focus on SHIP wise."
- Hardware; headset; weight;
 - o "So what I try to do with clients is identify the distractor. It's almost like, you know, when the direct metaphor of what do you do when there's an elephant in the room? You introduce the elephant, you say, this is the elephant, the VR goggles seem to be hindering you, and they keep slipping down. I want you to hold it. I put your prop your arms up in this way and try and make it as easy as reasonably possible under the circumstances. And then most importantly, you redirect attention where you want the client to focus. So we redirected attention onto what she was seeing rather than how she was seeing it with holding the glasses up, holding the headset up, and that was the coping mechanism to cope with that."
- Skewdness ? Orientation?
 - o "...I feel like he again acknowledged the the skewed ness of the visual and adapted to it... So it wasn't necessarily it it added an additional element to cope with in the session, but it was something the client was able to cope with and I think the quality. And this again highlights, the power of a therapeutic relationship. If you have a therapeutic relationship, you can overcome the obstacles or distractors or whatever it is that comes up in the session because your client feels like you've got them and you with them..."
- Therapeutic alliance made the headset weight and orientation less hindering. Able to address it.
- All therapies have distractors. These physical distractors are much more maintainable and manageable than personal distractors.
- Power outage
 - o "We restarted the session and I was worried that it would cause bias for the client. I loved the authenticity of the fact that nobody had used a VR headset before and that that was consistent throughout all of our VR participants. And I felt that that may cause kind of a bias because now she's already seen it"
 - o "...whether it's a headset being too heavy that you need to prop up or it's an expected and avoidable things like loadshedding or power outages, I think in real life as with in VR you need to be prepared to cope with unexpected things because that is the nature of the human experience. That is literally what human beings need to be prepared for throughout life."
 - o "If we were to use this in a in a practice consistently, those are things you would be prepared for. You know that I'm using electricity, so I need to be prepared for an outage. And what I would do if I had a client like that, I would before the session, tell them if this happens, if we do have a power outage, I'm prepared for it."

What aspects of the standard induction made the process more difficult, but that you still perceived as helpful or “OK”?

- Participants lying down and closing their eyes.
- Vulnerable state
- “...some participants lying down, feel a little bit self-conscious about lying there with the eyes closed. It's a vulnerable position. You don't lie down and fall asleep in front of just anybody type of thing, you know? And what I did to cope with it is I turned my chair in a direction and my screen and my writing, my notes and everything in a direction where while they were lying down my back was facing them so if they opened their eyes midway and they looked up, they would see that they're not being “watched”. And hopefully that would put them at ease.”

Question 10

What aspects of the VR induction made the process more difficult, but that you still perceived as helpful or “OK”?

- Anxious anticipation
- “I think some of the participants had a form of anxious anticipation for the way it was, excitement and healthy anticipation. But there was also a bit of anxiety of what's this new thing going to be like. I've never used a VR headset before. What is this experience going to be like? ... And I would term it as anxious anticipation because anticipation is a positive word and anxiety is a negative word, but there was a combination of those two.”

Section E

Question 11

What differences did you experience between the standard and VR induction in terms of the level of immersion of the participants?

- “The standard group enjoyed the relaxation aspect of the SHIP sessions. And a lot of them didn't go or some of them did not go too deep into emotional processing. They just enjoyed the comfort. Of a positive visual inside, in their mind and that that's where their mind took them. And I found that the VR group was able to go a little bit deeper and I would, I would account in my mind that is accounted for by the additional brain stimulation that the VR headset provided.”
- VR group immersed themselves more.
- “So overall I but I experience both of them as immersing themselves. If I had to pinpoint one that immersed themselves more, uhm, I'm going to go to my current memory and understanding with the VR group. I think engagement was of a good

quality in both groups. In the VR group and the standard group, they both engaged. There wasn't for me any participant that didn't engage in activities in the the instructions that I gave to them. Everybody engaged it to, to the best of their ability and it was at a good level overall in terms of immersing themselves in their emotional world. That's how I would define it. And I'm defining it as immersion into your emotional world. And I found there the VR group could go slightly deeper."

- "But understand immersion. If it's like building a house, you have a foundation and then you can build the walls and then the cement that then you put the roof on top and see immersion as the roof on top and the roof cannot stay up. If everything else wasn't built. And the VR was one of the the structures that held the roof up in this case."

Question 12

During which treatment do you think the participants were more involved/engaged with the imagined/simulated stimuli during the sessions?

- Both (refer to previous question quotes)
- "I think engagement is a mutual is a result of mutual engagement. If the therapist doesn't come to the table, then the client doesn't come to the table. And that we gauge based on therapeutic alliance. Which again our test sessions helped with and I think the whole facilitation process I think went well."

Question 13

What aspects of the chosen treatment at Q12 do you think contributed to this?

- Therapeutic alliance established through test sessions.
- "...it's the idea that the most basic primal need for a human being is psychological safety. And by establishing a healthy level of therapeutic alliance, we created that. And therefore that allowed the engagement and emotion to be heightened."

Question 14

On a scale of 1 to 10, how well did the participants describe their emotional or physiological responses experienced during the standard induction? Please explain your answer.

- 8.5 out of 10
- "I think everybody gave me reasonable answers and I know from my personal experience with doing it with clients that some people struggle to identify feelings in their bodies and identify specific locations of feelings. So I think our participants did well."
- "They were able to identify feelings quite adequately."

Question 15

On a scale of 1 to 10, how well did the participants describe their emotional or physiological responses experienced during the VR induction? Please explain your answer.

- 8.5 out of 10
- "In that regard to my current memory and understanding, I think I'm going to rate the VR group also at 8.5. Because most people were, they did a good job of it. But I didn't note a significant difference in identifying locations of feelings in their body between the VR group and the standard group."

Section F

Question 16

What effect on the induction of unique memories did the standard induction have on participants?

- "Yes. So I don't remember names of participants, but I can actually remember specific people where we had very deep sessions, a very deep experiences within a session, and they were able to identify unique memories and very significant memories that I thought was very, very helpful to a healing process."

Question 17

What effect on the induction of unique memories did the VR induction have on participants?

- "...I don't think there was a significant difference between the standard in the VR group because I think the answer to question 17 then is that the VR induction was able to allow us to stimulate very significant memories there also."
- "...I distinctly remember having very good quality high intensity sessions with both groups..."
- "Yeah. I do think what would be a contribution to that is the participant themselves and your allocation to the standard group and the VR group was completely random and so we didn't have a choice in who went where and there was, there wasn't any bias in that process. And I think some individuals by nature are more accustomed to being able to talk about emotions and connect with themselves on a deep level as opposed to others... that doesn't link to that is more linked to the individual than the induction method."

Section G

Question 18

Do you have any suggestions regarding the research or the VR treatment as to how to improve it?

- The participant sessions
 - "...height of the bed..."
 - "Little things like this, the physical space, because human beings, before you go into a VR space, you are first located in a physical space. And there must be there must be ease in the physical space. And that allows them to transition into the VR space. See it as the physical world and transitioning into the VR world. And I think for participants sessions, that that's a nice element to keep in consideration for future research or for practical application of VR in psychotherapy."
- The virtual environment
 - "The virtual environment, I think was well designed. It would be if I can if I can think into the future now, it would be great if a participant and I have no knowledge of IT, so I don't know how doable this is or what it takes to make it doable. But it would be great if a participant could personalize it. It would give them greater connection with that visual image that they have in front of them to color the door green or purple, if they want to add flowers next to it if they want."
 - "I think what you did accomplish there is a sense of relatability. By adding their name on the door, it wasn't just a picture of a door. I think you chose a very neutral door."
 - Relatability
- Sample size and recruitment
 - "So in terms of sample size, I liked the fact that your recruitment was completely random and snowball sampling and that type of thing, because it gave us a group of very random people. I think there was a and I don't think it was a bias, but I think there was a sense of familiarity because some of our participants are from the IT field or were linked to people in the IT field, and that gave them a sense of familiarity. And in my experience that did not create any bias. So it's completely fine. But I like the idea of random sampling because we want this technology, these methods to be usable by anyone in any institution, in any field, in any environment. And that randomness created, again, a sense of relatability with that."
 - "I think to make it even more random, maybe put an ad out in the university paper or the local paper with some kind of broader network. We have so many avenues now available through social media and get an

even more randomized and maybe not random. Random is the wrong word... A more varied population sample. So then you're going to get people from business."

- "So I think in a perfect world, if we could think for a follow up study, if we could advertise and get participants through a Facebook group or an Instagram page or something and get these completely random people from different walks of life. And if we could have, oh, in a perfect world, if we had time and money to facilitate this."
- "Imagine if you could have like 50, 50 the comparisons and the data you could get from such a big sample."
- "50's random number. But if you can note a bigger sample."

The VR induction

- "I think, first of all, to create more comfort in the the positioning and we learned a bit from this study. There were things that we couldn't foresee, we didn't expect people to say, but I prefer to sit up and to have options of a nice bed, a La-Z-Boy chair with cushions to hold it up if you need to prop it up with your hands and little elements like that, because when you physically comfortable and then you can put your attention on other things like your emotional world."

Question 19

In your professional opinion, how successful do you think the VR induction is compared to the standard induction?

- "If I look at therapeutic principles and what I would aspire for my clients to have in order to facilitate the goals of research of the psychotherapy session and specifically SHIP psychotherapy, I was very happy with the induction of the the VR sessions. I think it gave them at this point as much as we could expect. And in our simplified version of SHIP that we that we facilitated through our sessions, I was very happy with it."

Question 20

Is there anything else that you would like to add?

- "No, I think as a therapist. It's been a very enjoyable experience to be part of this. It was very eye opening for me on a personal level because I got to be exposed to new stuff, new ways of thinking and taking my skills. And this is what all therapists will need to do in the future. So I like to think I'm one step ahead of them traditional psychotherapy skills and apply it to to use with a technological aid."

- "I think that was my biggest I got a learning curve out of this as well, and that was my curve to be able to adapt. And I think adaptation is a primary skill for human beings. It should be. And I think that's that's one of the things I learned to do in relation to tech with psychotherapy."
- "I think there is great potential for this. It's very exciting to think of the idea of Tony Stark glasses being a reality and all of those very fun, exciting tech things that are going to come about and how they can be useful to us because I think psychotherapy can be highly enhanced with the stimulation of VR and I use those words very deliberately."
- "What it provided is it cut out the physical world, how high the bed is, what chair you're lying on all of that, and it forced your conscious mind to get immersed to be present in the virtual reality world. And I think that is advantageous. And what what happens when you do that, when you cut out the physical world and you immerse yourself in the virtual world, if your energy is all concentrated onto that, and then your energy becomes more concentrated on the task in front of you, that door you visualizing the door, doing, going through all the SHIP processes basically."
- "And what that did is it enhanced and almost forced presence because there's nothing else to focus on. You don't need to be present with what the bed feels like and that is something I use to bring them back out of the SHIP session, where I told them become aware of the sensation of the mattress, the air mattress, etc. etc."
- "Cutting out the physical and reducing your consciousness to the VR world. And you can quote those words, reducing your consciousness to the VR world. I think that was helpful in enhancing presence."