

THE USE OF VIRTUAL REALITY IN GBV

Department of Justice and Democratic
Quality. Catalonia

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**Generalitat
de Catalunya**

1

Contextual issues



Catalonia

- ✓ North-eastern autonomous region of Spain
- ✓ 8,000,000 inhabitants
- ✓ Devolved powers regarding the organization of prisons, probation, juvenile justice, victim support and restorative justice



Probation in Catalonia

- ✓ 16 Probation teams
- ✓ 201 Professionals
- ✓ 15.946 Probationers / year (2024)
- ✓ Sentences carried out:
 - Community work (69%)
 - Security Measures (7%)
 - Suspension of prison sentence with therapeutic obligations (5%)
 - **Suspension p.s. with obligation of following training programs (19%)**



2

The obligation of following a training programme for GBV



GBV training programme

- Aims to produce changes in the behavior of men who commit gender-based violence crimes, thereby reducing the risk of reoffending.
- The content is oriented to the acquisition of alternative behavior patterns to violence, discrimination, control, or abuse towards women.
- It's a cognitive-behavioral programme

MAIN CONTENTS

- 1 | Motivation for changing
- 2 | Emotional awareness
- 3 | Assuming responsibility
- 4 | Social and communication skills
- 5 | Identifying violence
- 6 | Self-control skills
- 7 | Empathy with the victim
- 8 | Conflict resolution

OUR TRAINING PROGRAMME ON GBV

33 hours

1 therapist

Expert on GBV

**Up to 18
participants**

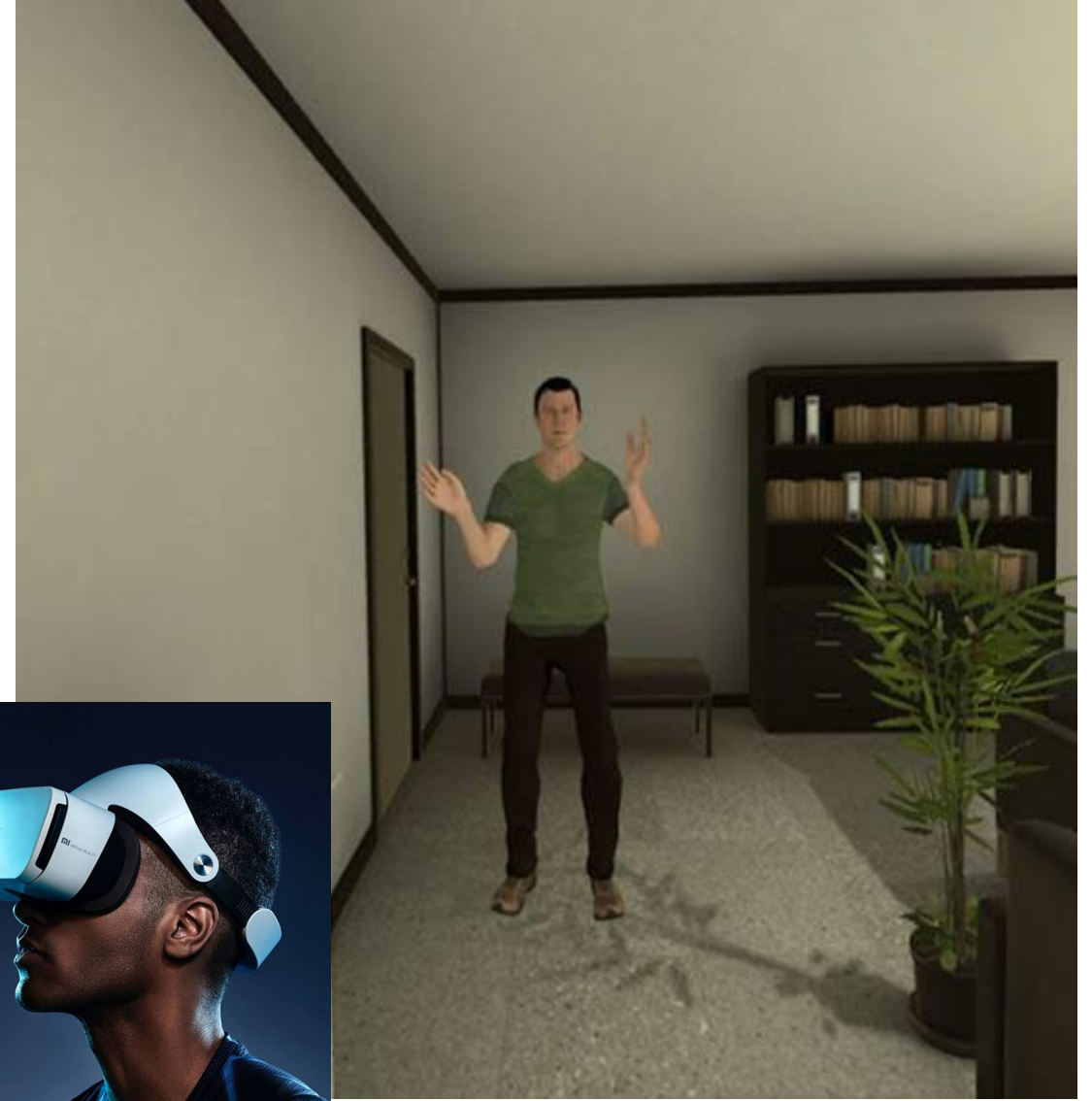
1 session VR

30' VR + debriefing

1,058 Participants / year (2024)

3

Why virtual reality in the GBV training programme?



Virtual reality in GBV training programmes

2012: a pilot project was launched aimed at fostering empathy towards victims of gender-based violence through virtual reality

- ✓ led by researcher Mavi Sánchez-Vives
- ✓ carried out through IDIBAPS (August Pi i Sunyer Biomedical Research Institute), ICREA (Catalan Institution for Research and Advanced Studies), the University of Barcelona, and the company Neurotransvirtual Technologies.

VIRTUAL REALITY

- 1 | Motivation for changing
- 2 | Emotional awareness
- 3 | Assuming responsibility
- 4 | Social and communication skills
- 5 | Identifying violence
- 6 | Self-control skills
- 7 | **Empathy with the victim**
- 6 | Conflict resolution

Virtual reality: how does it work?



Virtual reality: how does it work?

- **IMMERSION PRINCIPLE**

- ✓ In a computer-generated environment that responds to the user's movements
- ✓ At a cognitive level: the illusion that he is actually there (**place illusion**)

- **EMBODIMENT PRINCIPLE**

- ✓ To place the user in a virtual body that responds to his own movements and sensations
- ✓ At a cognitive level: He is feeling that the body is his (**body illusion**)

VR allows to experience a situation from the victim's perspective

Virtual reality scenarios place male aggressors in female bodies within the context of a gender-based violence scene so that the aggressors can experience the situation from the perspective of the victim.

VR allows experiential learning: experiencing a situation from another person's perspective instead of imagining it, what is proved as very useful in therapy.

DEBRIEFING

Individual session with the therapist after the VR experience

- Ask the user what he has seen, what has happened within the scene
- Work on his own feelings, impressions and emotions
- Work on the feelings he thinks that a woman may have in this situation

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_NSVR5oREfnaenL3HuOwZEN7-R99Ljug/view



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