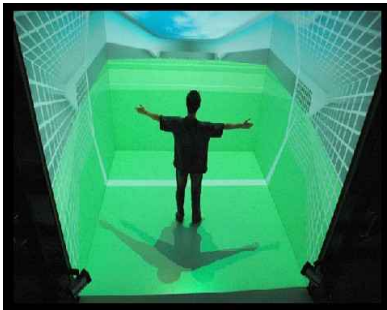




## Stewart-Marchman-Act Foundation/University of Florida Research Center at the Vince Carter Sanctuary

### Managing Sobriety Applying Virtual Reality (MSAVR)



Imagine that you have been in residential addiction treatment for 70 days. You have been working with your counselor in a safe and controlled environment. You will graduate in two weeks and go back to the 'real world' at home, work, and places you usually visit. Your counselor has provided the tools necessary to being a productive member of society however you have not practiced using these tools. **This is where MSAVR comes in.** Virtual Reality technology allows you to experience "real life settings" in the safety of a controlled laboratory where your counselor is present to teach you how to use those tools in situations that may trigger relapse in the real world.

**What is Virtual Reality?** – Virtual Reality (VR) is the complete immersion in an electronic world by wearing a simple stereoscopic helmet or glasses and a tracker to figure out where you are looking. This electronic world may be an imaginary one or a replica of a real situation.

**Why use Virtual Reality as a Tool to Assist in Relapse Prevention?** – Relapse prevention is a vital component of addiction treatment. VR has been extensively and successfully used by the military, medical field, and the space program for training and research. We would be the first residential treatment center to use VR as an experiential activity to enhance refusal skills and augment existing relapse prevention techniques for drug/alcohol addiction.

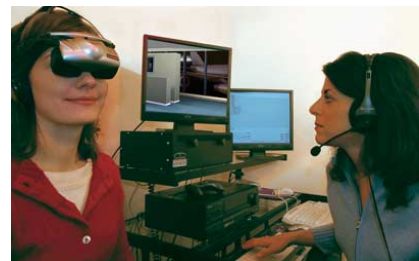
#### **What are some Benefits?**

- Total control of the experience without leaving the treatment facility
- Complete patient confidentiality
- Capability to repeat scenarios in order to improve refusal skills

#### **What are some Drawbacks?**

- May exclude patients with some physical and psychotic symptoms
- Older patients may show some resistance to the technology

Now imagine the confidence you would feel in experiencing similar situations that triggered your abuse of alcohol/drugs and utilizing the enhanced refusal skills you learned before you go back to your environment. You would work through specific scenarios with a specially-trained counselor using exciting technology most people are comfortable with. What better way to know what to expect when you leave treatment than to “virtually” experience it?



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