

# The Alfi Virtual Reality Project

## SEEKING PARTICIPANTS

### TRAINING THE VULNERABLE TEEN BRAIN

Teenagers more often than people of any other age, tend to follow their short-term impulses rather than pursuing long-term goals. This difficulty controlling impulses typically gets better with age, but for some teenagers controlling impulses can be especially challenging.

Researchers at Monash University are inviting teenagers between the ages of 13 to 18 who have difficulties with attention, or a diagnosis of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), to test a new Virtual Reality (VR) cognitive training program. This virtual reality program, known as Alfi VR, is designed to improve inhibitory control and reduce impulsive behaviours in teenagers.

#### WHY IS THIS RESEARCH IMPORTANT?

Difficulties with inhibition, which are common in children with ADHD, can affect both your behaviour and thinking, causing a person to act impulsively or make it challenging to ignore distractions and pay attention. For 80% of children diagnosed with ADHD, symptoms will persist into their teenage years and can significantly impact their learning, mental health, and social relationships. Currently there is a lack of non-pharmaceutical interventions available for families struggling with attention difficulties. VR-based cognitive training could be an engaging way to enable young people of all ages to reach their full potential without having to rely on pharmaceutical interventions.

#### WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS?

We cannot guarantee that you or your child will receive any benefits from this research; however, possible benefits of this intervention may include improvements in your child's inhibition or reduced impulsive behaviour, which could lead to improvements in mental health, educational outcomes and decision-making. **All participants will receive the chance to win their own VR head set (valued at \$315).**



#### WHAT DOES PARTICIPATION INVOLVE?

Stage 1 involves completing some simple online screening questionnaires. Participants who meet criteria for attention difficulties will be invited to participate in the study.

Stage 2 involves some further online questionnaires for both parents or caregivers and teenagers, and the completion of two cognitive and behavioural assessments. Teenagers will complete either 14 30-minute VR training sessions (2 times a week, for 7 weeks), or complete their regular classroom activities.

All assessments and training sessions will be held at your child's school, either during school hours or after hours as agreed with the school principal.

#### WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

If you and your teenager would like to participate, please read through the explanatory statement, and sign the consent form. You can complete consent online, or return the form to your child's school. One of the research team will then be in contact with you.



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TURNER  
INSTITUTE FOR  
BRAIN AND  
MENTAL HEALTH

Approved by the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee: #21530

#### WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Please contact the ALFI-VR team on: 03 9905 3255  
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