



Virtual Reality (VR) Risk Assessment



The benefits and positive outcomes of using VR are many and wide ranging including: relaxation, distraction, enjoyment and entertainment, increasing confidence, empowerment, socialisation, freedom and reducing anxiety.

VR experiences can be powerful and as such a risk assessment should be carried out to assess the suitability of the equipment and the software for each individual user. This document is provided as a guide to assist in carrying out that assessment and minimising any risks to users. The recommendations are based on Lifelites research, including a focus group with children’s hospice staff.

Please note that the manufacturers of the VR system recommend it is only for use of those over 12 years old.

<u>Potential risks</u>	<u>Potential solutions</u>
Eye strain leading to headaches	Introduce experiences gradually by limiting the time the user is exposed to them. Limit the overall time a user spends on the VR system.
Falling over and bumping into/walking into things Loss of balance i.e. standing up, claustrophobic feelings	All of the games and experiences we have provided can be used sitting down and we would recommend sitting down at all times when using the system. Always have a member of staff or another adult present to monitor the user and assess and potential risks. Ensure there are no immediate obstructions surrounding the user before they put the headset on.
Nausea/vertigo/motion sickness	Introduce experiences gradually by limiting the time the user is exposed to them. Monitor the users reactions whilst they are playing and encourage them to discuss their experience during and afterwards.
Over stimulation	Ensure you understand what the content is of the

<p>Panic attacks</p> <p>Fear</p>	<p>game/experience and assess its suitability for the user before giving access to it. You could do this by trying the game yourself or check our game guide for information on the content and accessibility of each game provided.</p> <p>Introduce experiences gradually by limiting the time the user is exposed to them.</p> <p>Monitor the users reactions whilst they are playing and encourage them to discuss and express how they felt about their experience during and afterwards.</p> <p>Check the user has no known fear or phobia of an element of a particular experience (i.e. water or heights etc.).</p> <p>Allow users to watch someone else playing a game or experience first before they try it themselves – this can help users become more comfortable and help establish that the experience is virtual and not real.</p>
<p>Weight of the headset</p>	<p>Assess the individual’s strength and test for suitability.</p>
<p>Risk of seizures</p>	<p>As with any computer or TV screen there is a risk. Assess the user’s history of seizures and discuss suitability with family and medical staff if there are any concerns.</p> <p>Close monitoring.</p>
<p>Infection control</p>	<p>Risks have been minimised in the design and the headset and controllers should be cleaned with antibacterial wipes.</p>

For more help and resources on using your VR system visit the VR section of the Lifelites Learning Resources Library:

<https://www.lifelites.org/hospicestaff/learning-resources/hardware/games-consoles/#.W4j71c5KiUk>