01

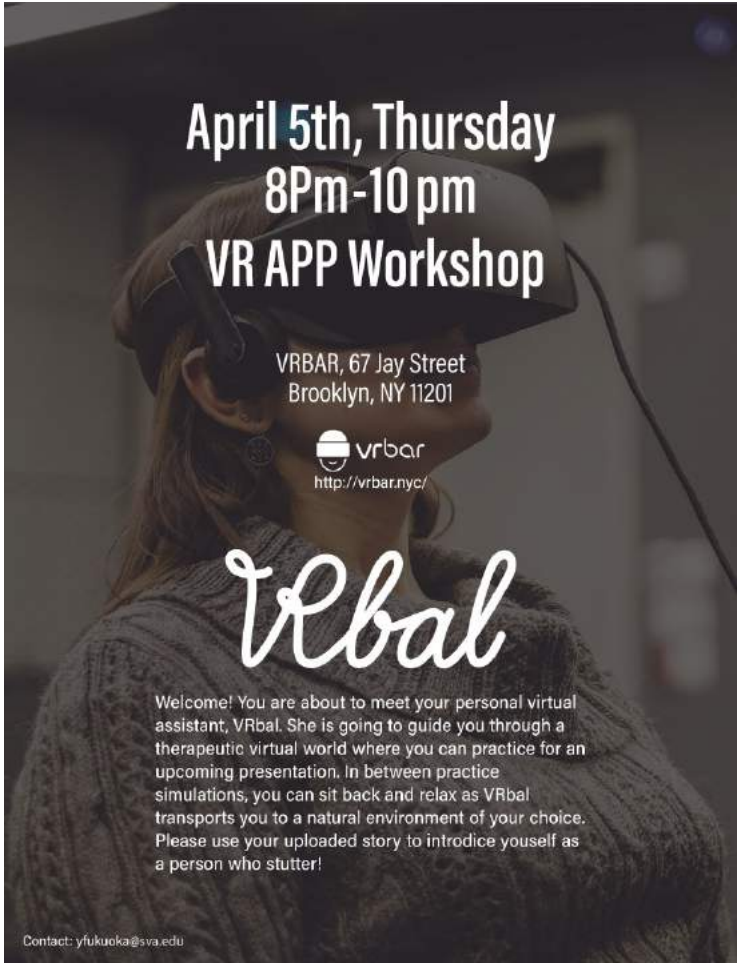
Virtual Reality Application “VRbal”

Currently, there is no effective way for individuals with social anxiety to practice coping techniques for an upcoming anxiety inducing event in a realistic environment. The most common method for practicing for a job interview or a presentation is by role-playing with a relative, friend, or therapist. The problem with role-playing however is that the person with social anxiety is already comfortable with the individual they role-play with and therefore it is not an accurate representation of the event to be practiced. Through the use of our virtual reality and artificial intelligence hybrid solution, the user can practice for an upcoming social event in the most realistic and personalized way possible.

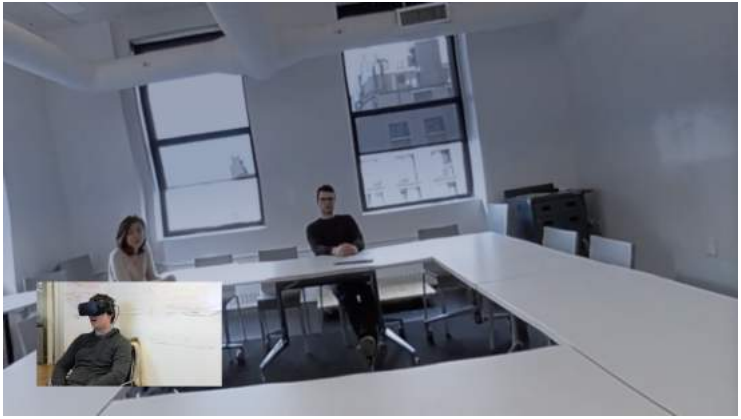
VRbal is a smart VR experience that uses machine learning to help the user prepare for a specific anxiety inducing event of their choice. By creating step-by-step daily tasks, VRbal gradually exposes the user to the situation.

Date: 2018

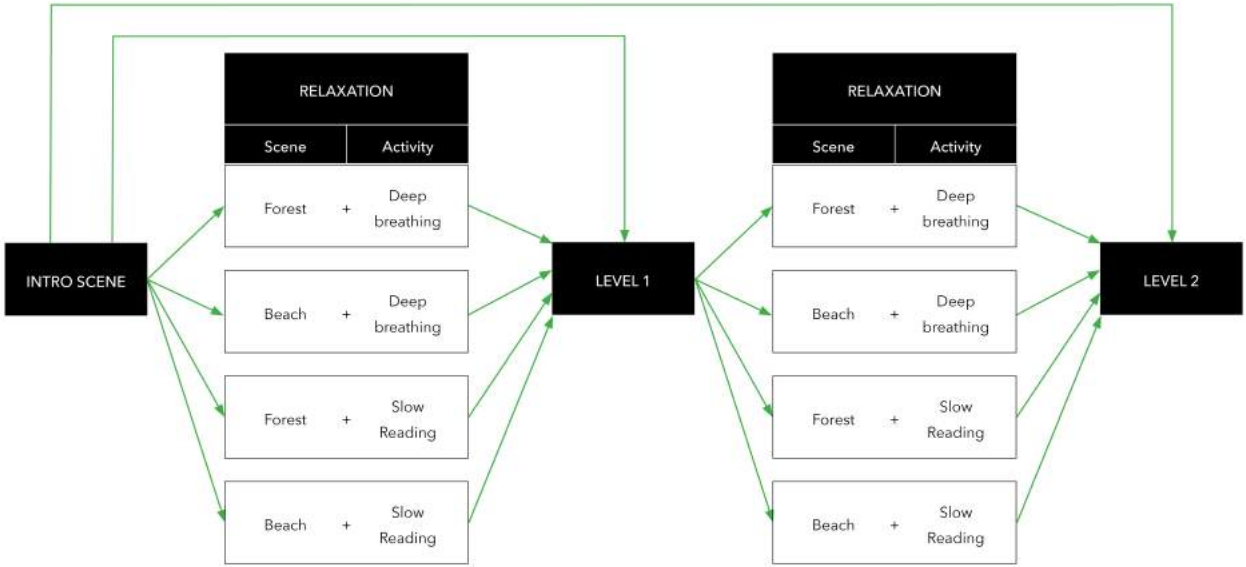
Workshop Poster



Demo Video *https://vimeo.com/261867472*



DEMO DAY USER FLOW



- Neutral grid, minimum visual, ambient sound
- Determine which relaxation scene & activity best fit for users

- Relaxing music
- Determine which level to go to based on users' self-perceived anxiety level

- No audience

- Some audience
- Background noise

Website

Poster

VRBAL BRANDING GUIDELINES : DRAFT 01

LOGO

Logo Small:

VRbal

Logo Medium:

VRbal

Logo Large:

VRbal

TYPOGRAPHY

Print:

Title Text in Acumin Condensed Bold

Subtitle Text in Acumin Condensed

Body Text in Acumin Semicondensed Extra Light

*Notes: Subtitle & Title texts' type sizes should be at least 30% bigger than body text.

Web:

Title Text in News Cycle Bold

Body Text in Lato Regular

PALETTE

Primary Color	Secondary Color	Secondary Color
VRbal Blue	Paper White	Dark Horse
#0666bc	#ffffff	#4c4c4c

Tertiary Color	Tertiary Color	Tertiary Color
Sky Blue	Silver	Milk Coffee
#7dbcdb	#d3d3d3	#d3c8ae

VRbal VRbal VRbal VRbal

*Notes: VRbal logo should only be in Primary or Secondary colors. Tertiary colors can be used for background and texts only.

Vrbal

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Concept Statement

Vrbal is a smart VR experience that uses machine learning to help the user prepare for a specific anxiety inducing event of their choice. By creating step-by-step daily tasks, *Vrbal* gradually exposes the user to the situation.

Link to our demo video:

http://bit.ly/vrbaldemo

Problem Statement 1/2

Many of us get anxious before a public speaking event, or a job interview. The anxiety is worse for people who stutter, who have a difficult time speaking and find it very stressful, especially in social situations.

Currently, there is no effective way to practice coping techniques for an upcoming anxiety inducing event in a realistic environment.

The most common practicing method is by role-playing with a therapist. However, the person with social anxiety is already comfortable with the individual they role-play with and therefore it is not an accurate representation of the event to be practiced.

Problem Statement 2/2

Through the use of our **virtual reality** and **artificial intelligence** hybrid solution, the user can practice for an upcoming social event in the most **realistic** and **personalized** way possible.

Challenge Area

VR/AR and AI

We are making *systematic desentization** more accessible through VR and AI.

Assets Used

Oculus Rift
Watson SDK for Unity
Unity3D
Blender
Kodak PIXPRO SP360 Action Cam

** removal of the fear response and substitute a relaxation response gradually using counter conditioning.*

Team University Affiliations

Parsons School of Design
NYU Tandon School of Engineering
School of Visual Arts
Teachers College Columbia University

Target Users

Adults or adolescents with social anxiety.

For the purpose of this prototype, we are testing with a population of individuals who **stutter** and present symptoms of social anxiety as a consequence of their stuttering.

User Feedback on Concept 1/2

Using a user centered design methodology, we shaped our prototype based on the user's feedback.

General Statistics

Ages 20 - 30

Members of National Stuttering Association (NSA) & students from Parsons, Columbia, NYU Tandon

Statistics by Prototypes

Prototype	No. of users	Age	Background
I	6	22-28	Students
II	7	22-30	NSA
III	6	22-30	NSA

User Feedback on Concept 2/2

Highlights

For our final prototype, 5 out of 6 users expressed **reduced anxiety** and a **high sense of presence** while immersed in the virtual experience.

Participants felt **at ease** with the artificial intelligence agent and expressed **satisfaction** with the personalized experience it provided.

Connected Futures III Program Statement 1/2

As our team learned more about our potential customers through initial interviews and three rounds of user testing, we shaped a product that is targeted at eliminating specific obstacles faced by individuals who want to improve their communication skills in social settings.

Connected Futures III Program Statement 2/2

We started the program with simply an idea and by the end of the program, we went through three iterations of prototypes.

This wouldn't have been possible without the valuable help from our mentors and the guiding feedback we received during our weekly meetings.

Through our participation in the Connected Futures program, our team received guidance in terms of which technologies would be most suitable for us and mentorship when we were unsure of which direction we should be taking our prototype (e.g. our mentors helped us decide whether we should go for a realistic or low poly simulation environment when we obtained inconclusive testing results on the subject).

Overall, the Connected Futures program helped us take our idea further than we thought was possible in a short time span of six weeks.