

SIMmersion Develops Virtual Role-Players to Help Clinicians Develop CBT Skills Needed to Fight Substance Abuse Disorders

CBT is one of the most effective treatments for substance use disorders. Practicing using CBT with role-players helps clinicians build the needed skills.

COLUMBIA, MD, UNITED STATES, July 27, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Introduction

Effective delivery of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) depends on a wide variety of nuanced skills and building those skills requires practice.

The [SIMmersion](#) team created a computer-based training system with three virtual role-players to support the development of the necessary skills to apply CBT effectively. While the training is intended to build general CBT skills, clinicians will have the opportunity to apply the skills to a specific therapeutic goal focused on reducing their clients' drinking. (see <https://trainingcbt.simmersion.com/>)

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Research shows that building Cognitive Behavioral Therapy skills with SIMmersion's role-players is highly effective.”

Dale Olsen, Ph.D.

The virtual role-players have simulated emotions and memory, so they behave like real people. Thus, in addition to learning the core CBT skills, learners must also maintain a conversational tone, establish a collaborative relationship, and show empathy. Without maintaining these standards, the application of CBT may not lead to the desired changes.



Practicing CBT with a role-player, Tanisha

The Virtual Role-Players

Tanisha Mosley is a role-player who is looking to cut back on her drinking and to reduce her stress. When working with her, learners will practice introducing her to Cognitive Behavioral

Therapy as a method to help change her drinking habits.

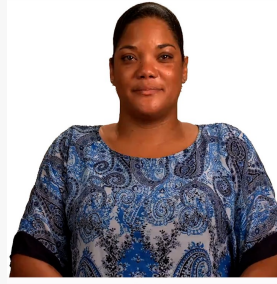
Roger Ellison is playing the role of someone who has been working through CBT techniques to help reduce his drinking. Users practice helping him fill out a self-monitoring record and to examine a recent drinking episode to show how thoughts, feelings, and behaviors interact with each other during a drinking episode.

Role-player Melody Denison has been using Cognitive Behavioral Therapy to reduce her drinking. In this session, learners practice building a change plan and identifying her motivations and barriers for change.

Research Outcomes: Training Significantly Improves CBT Skills

A [research study](#) evaluated whether the virtual role-play experiences improved trainee skills for the treatment of clients with substance use disorders when compared to training as usual. Sixty-five graduate students in social work or clinical psychology completed initial standardized patient interviews and were then randomized into two groups. One group trained with the CBT role-play training program and the other group trained using the traditional [Project MATCH](#) manual. Three months after the training, the participants completed new standardized-patient interviews. An analysis of the results indicated there was a significant difference between the two groups, with students assigned to the role-play training showing greater improvement in “extensiveness” and “skillfulness” ratings across three skill categories:

- General agenda setting (p-value = .03, significant difference)
- Explaining CBT concepts (p-value = .007, high significant difference)
- Understanding of CBT concepts (p-value = .001, high significant difference)



Role-Players Tanisha, Roger, and Melody

The logo for SIMmersion Immersive Simulations features the word "SIMmersion" in a large, blue, stylized font with a white outline. Below it, the words "Immersive Simulations" are written in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font. A blue horizontal line with a white outline runs across the middle of the logo, passing through the 'M' in "SIMmersion" and the 'S' in "Immersive".

SIMmersion

To learn more visit <https://trainingcbt.simmersion.com/>.

The SIMmersion Team

The training systems were developed in collaboration with Binghamton University's Dr. Nadine Mastroleo, Brown University's Dr. Molly Magill, and a panel of experts from Binghamton University, Brown University, and Yale University. This work was supported by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism [Grant number R44AA023719].

About SIMmersion

SIMmersion's mission is to train communication skills faster and more effectively by combining the world's most realistic simulation experiences with interactive training content and extensive feedback. For more information contact SIMmersion by calling 443 283 2555 or online at www.simmersion.com/contact.

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