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EmbodiMap VR. A tangible and immersive body-mapping experience.

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Keywords— Virtual Reality, Body-mapping, Therapeutic tool, Research protocol

EmbodiMap is a creative research and therapeutic tool that enables users to connect with and explore how thoughts, sensations and emotions are experienced in the body. It extends existing body-mapping research and protocols by facilitating a tangible immersive experience.

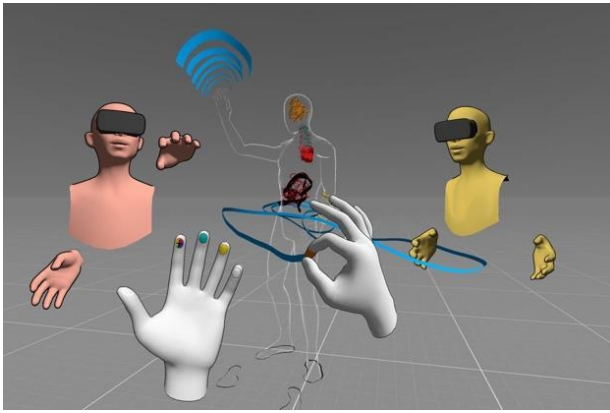


Fig. 1. *EmbodiMap* as a shared experience with participants represented as avatars and hand interaction.

EmbodiMap consists of tools, protocols and facilitated engagements, that use 3D immersive drawing technologies. Each time a sensation or emotion is identified, it can be mapped, by drawing into a figure. The participants can move around the immersive space to observe or enter into their mapping. Or start afresh using new a body and leave behind the mapped traces of how the body felt at a particular moment in time. In this way, participants create a field of 3D sense or emotion state maps, which tell a story of change and the processing of emotions. These images can be saved, exported, and revisited to be worked on further.

I. FEATURES

EmbodiMap is designed to support a single user or a remote session with multiple participants, represented as avatars. The viewer can choose a self-directed session or a therapeutically guided mindful meditation. Participants can select from a range of 3D avatar bodies, and shape the posture by mirroring their own pose. Various stimulating or calming environments are available to choose from and the participant can interact and draw directly with their hands. A session can be streamed wirelessly to an external monitor or as an

Augmented Reality app to a tablet computer or mobile phone. *EmbodiMap* operates on the untethered portable Oculus Quest VR headset.

II. APPLICATIONS

EmbodiMap can be used and tailored by individuals or groups. It may be used with a facilitators or therapists. It is designed to work with a number of therapeutic protocols and approaches including: Body Mapping, Focusing, Sensori-motor psychotherapy, Trauma therapy, Relational psychotherapy, Yoga and meditation-based exercises or any other form of therapy that investigates embodied, psychosocial experience. It may also be used as a research tool for gathering data about embodied experience, for example: Microphenomenology, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.



Fig. 2. *EmbodiMap* VR drawing (l). Live stream into a custom Augmented Reality app (r).

III. CONCLUSION

Ongoing iterative development with diverse user groups (including projects with trauma survivors, people from refugee backgrounds, and men within the justice system) indicates that *EmbodiMap* has potential to support mental health and well-being, particularly in relation to emotion regulation.

IV. REFERENCES

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