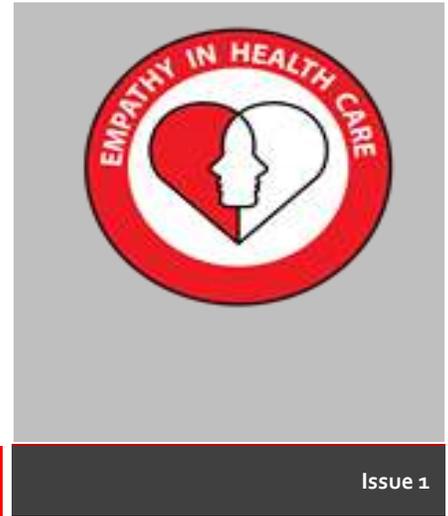


# Curriculum Development using VR technology to enhance empathetic communication skills in future health care professionals

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## What is empathy?

***"The capacity to put one's self in another's shoes and feel what that person is going through and share their emotions and feelings" can be defined as Empathy. More specifically, as far as the Healthcare section is concerned can be determined as "the recognition and validation of a patient's fear, anxiety, pain, and worry".*** Moreover, it is the ability to understand patients' feelings and facilitate a more accurate diagnoses and more caring treatment. Expressing patient empathy not only advances humanism in healthcare but it is also the key ingredient to enhancing the patient experience and patient encounter. Both empathy and compassion in healthcare play vital roles in the patient experience and are key components of the health care provider-patient relationship. When a patient arrives to see their healthcare provider, the patient's medical condition — whether it is a severe illness or injury, a chronic condition, or simply a routine check-up — will often manifest emotions that influence the way the patient experiences his/her illness and the treatment. So, it is extremely important for the patient to feel that he/she is receiving the very best care, and that is conveyed when his/her care team is empathetic and compassionate.

## Welcome to the Empathy in Health Care

Empathy in Health Care aims to develop curriculum and materials on empathetic skills, certified with ISO, that will be based on current research evidence and patient participation through their own personal experiences, ideas and expectations (for VET and Higher Education).

EMPATHY IN HEALTH develops high acuity scenarios in the areas of empathetic communication which (a) provides a consistent clinical communication experience, (b) enhances student confidence in developing new skills by allowing them to practice in a safe environment and (c) provides students the opportunity to develop empathetic skills and competences. Based on the above scenarios, the project will develop virtual reality videos, (sector specific), educational videos (sector specific) and role plays (sector specific) all aiming to develop the empathetic competence. Finally, the project aims to support tutors and trainers to integrate Virtual Reality in their teaching-/training through the development of their skills as far as virtual reality is concerned. The project provides the tools and techniques for this integration to the higher education and VET providers in the consortium, thus supporting tutors in delivering the

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training. At the same time, the results of the project will be available to other higher education institutions and other vet providers.

## Project Objectives

The main objectives of the project are:

1. Develop an empathetic skills curriculum and materials, certified with ISO that will be based on current research evidence and patient participation through their own personal experiences, ideas and expectations (for Vocational Training and Higher Education),
2. Use this curriculum to develop high acuity virtual scenarios in the areas of empathetic communication which will (a) provide a consistent clinical communication experience, (b) enhance student confidence in developing new skills by allowing them to practice in a safe environment and (c) provide student feedback on areas of strength and further improvement
3. Develop VR videos and educational videos (Sector specific) to develop the empathetic competence,
4. Support tutors and trainers to integrate VR in their teaching /training through the development of their skills as far as virtual reality is concerned.

## Deliverables at a glance

The following are the main deliverables of the project

- IO1: Qualification Framework: Empathetic Communication in Health Care Profession
- IO2: Certification Scheme for the Certification of Curricula and Materials
- IO3: Curriculum: Empathetic Communication in Health Care Profession
- IO4: A list of scenaria
- IO5: Interactive Virtual Reality Videos for Health Care Profession (using avatars)
- IO6: Educational Videos in Health Care Profession
- IO7: Tutor Guides (2) for Health Care Professionals (HE and VET)
- IO8: Virtual Reality Authoring Tool

## Our kick off meeting

On the 31 of October 2019 and the 01 of November 2019 Empathy partners met in Nicosia in Cyprus, to launch the new Erasmus+ Key Action 2 Project, "Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices Action Type: Strategic Partnerships for school education '.

During the meeting, Ms. Stella Leonidou from IDEP (the National Agency of Cyprus) made a short presentation on the requirements of the project and wished the consortium every success in their efforts.



Figure 1 Project meeting in Nicosia- Cyprus, 31 of October 2019 and 01 of November 2019

## Project progress until now

During the first months of the project the consortium implemented an in-depth literature review on empathy in general as well as on empathy in the health care sector. Based on this research the consortium formulated the focus group guide based on which the focus groups will take place. The objective of the Focus Groups is to investigate and describe the needs for achieving an effective empathetic consultation and interaction between the health care professionals and the patients. Based on the results of the focus groups the consortium will develop the necessary learning outcomes to be included in the two Qualification Frameworks to be developed: One for vocational education and one for higher education. Moreover, based on the results of the focus groups different VR scenario may be identified to be used under the IO4.

## Next Steps

The first important step of the project is the development of the first Intellectual Output, that is the qualification framework for empathy in health care. In order to do this, two Focus Groups will be implemented in each country: The 1st one will involve only patients. The second one will be a mixed one with professionals of the sector and students. In Cyprus three focus groups will be implemented. In fact, some countries have already proceeded in the implementation of the focus groups. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic some focus groups have been implemented online. The second meeting of the consortium that would take place in Lamia on 21 & 22 of May 2020, will take place as an online meeting

## Introducing the team



### **Mediterranean Management Centre (Cyprus)**

is a provider of CPD training and C-VET certification for workers and employability initiatives for disadvantaged groups. MMC has a vast experience in coordination of projects as it has already coordinated very big projects such as ERASMUS, EQUAL, Leonardo DOI, Leonardo TOI and Key activity.

**Contact Details:** 16 Imvrou street, Nicosia 1055 Cyprus, +357 22 466633, [eu@mmclearningsolutions.com](mailto:eu@mmclearningsolutions.com)



### **UNIC-University of Nicosia (Cyprus)**

is a private university that through its five Schools offers more than 100 Bachelor, Master and doctoral degrees in the areas of business, science, medicine, education and the liberal arts.

**Contact Details:** 46 Makedonitissas Avenue, CY-2417 P.O. Box 24005, CY-1700 Nicosia, Cyprus

### **C.C.C.-Cyprus Certification Company (Cyprus)**



is a Government-owned Certification Organization founded in 2001 and operating as a private company with the

Government being its only shareholder.

**Contact Details:** Kosta Anaxagorou 2014 Strovolos Nicosia Cyprus, +357 22411435, [info@cycert.org.cy](mailto:info@cycert.org.cy)

### **Vrije Universiteit (Brussels)**



founded in 1970, provides education for over 16,000 students in 8 faculties and has been participating in the Erasmus program since the start of the program in 1988.

**Contact Details:** Laarbeeklaan 103 1090 Jette, Tel: 322 477 47 20

### **EHB-Evangelische Hochschule (Germany)**



The Protestant University of Applied Science in Berlin, is a teaching and research institution with a long tradition in the education of social and health professionals. The University of Applied Science Berlin through its departments offers six Bachelor and three Master degrees in the areas of social work, nursing and midwifery with an overall student number of 1550.

**Contact Details:** Teltower Damm 118–122, 14167 Berlin, Tel: (030) 845 82 0, [info@eh-berlin.de](mailto:info@eh-berlin.de)

**University of Thessaly (Greece)** with 37 Departments, and 8 schools is a University with its own identity and with a prominent position in our national educational system. University of Thessaly provides undergraduate and postgraduate programs and extra-curricular modules in specific research and business fields, for over 43000 students

**Contact Details** University of Thessaly Argonafton & Filellinon, 38221 Volos, Tel: +30 24210 74000, [info@uth.gr](mailto:info@uth.gr)

### **Omega-Theofanis Alexandridis & SIA EE (Greece)**



IT provider company that serves Greek public bodies, private

sector and other non-profit organizations with technology and services. The company applies gamification and game mechanics in different domains and also provides expertise in Systems Integration and Communications as well as practical expertise in the fields of Validation and Trials.

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