HETI 2021 SEOUL

**Rehabilitation and Therapy
with Horses in Virtual Reality**

MiTale
Games Where Stories Come First

Founder's Background

Natasha Skult
Workoholic, geek & mother

- CEO & Creative Director of MiTale

- Chairperson of IGDA global

- Founder of HIVE - Turku Game Hub (game business center)

- Representative of "Serious Games" program at Finnish Game Developers Association

- Researcher and teacher of Game Design and Game Art at University of Turku

What do we do?

CREATING TAILORED EXPERIENCES

We at MiTale believe that future of gaming is in its integration with tasks and needs of everyday life activities that can be personalized and serve each user individually.

Company background

Our studio aims to deliver with each product an immersive narrative and aesthetic experience for specific needs of our clients!

MiTale is a game development company from Finland, with huge passion for interactive storytelling and serious games. We are team of experienced software and game developers that wish to integrate the commercial games playability value and interactive storytelling practices with mixed reality solutions for creating most unique, immersive and meaningful experiences!

We bring YOUR TALES into REALITY

VR in Healthcare and Wellbeing

Use of VR in Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy with Horses

EdTech in Finland

Finland is globally known for successful results in two disciplines - game development and education.

With wearable technologies such as smartwatches, movement tracking devices as well as speech recognition systems that are big part of gaming technology, we are able to improve various aspects of our everyday activities, from casual entertainment to learning and healthcare practices.
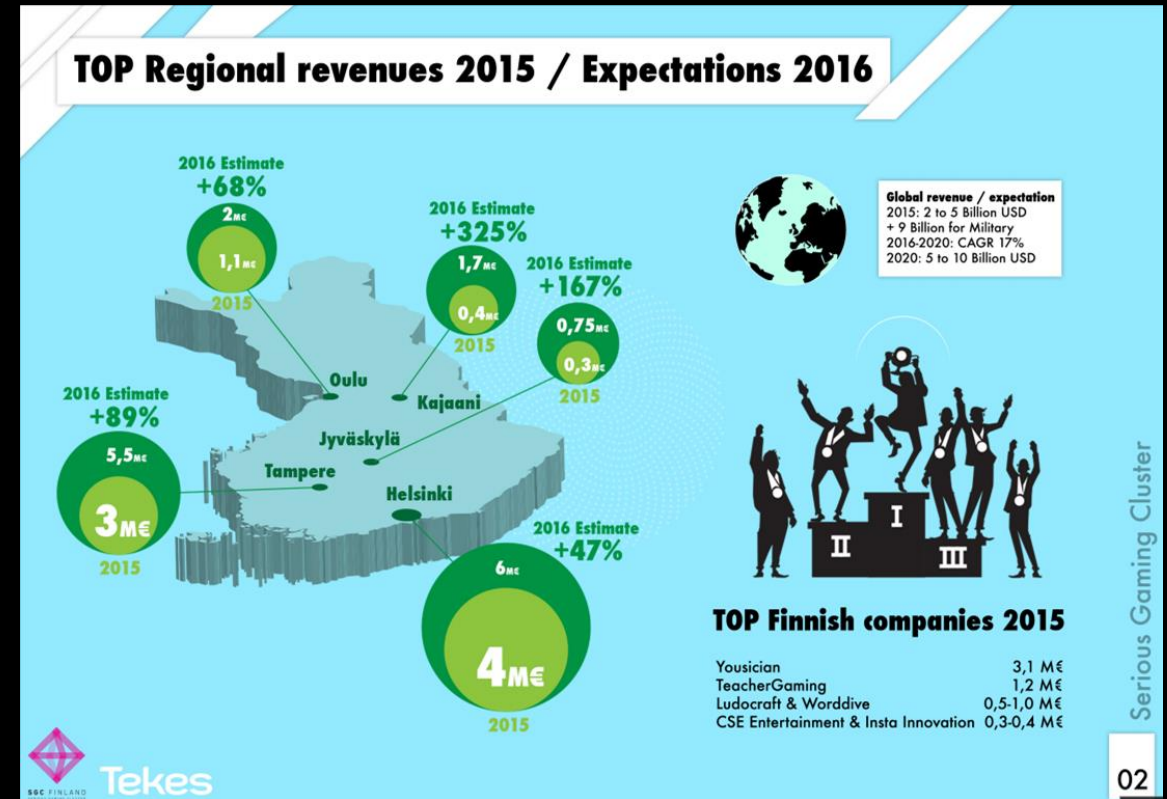
Tekes report 2016 on serious games development in Finland

- **What are "serious games"?**
  - **Education**
  - **Healthcare and wellbeing**
  - **Big brands**
  - **Businesses**

- **What does it require to gamify a product?**
  - **Teamwork!**
  - **Expertese from various disciplines**
  - **Listening**

- **Gaming technology in everyday life**
  - **VR/AR/MR = XR**
  - **Applications – cross-platform development**
  - **Wearable technologies**

- **Why to gamify?**

CHEAP + EFFECTIVE + SUPPLY THE CLIENT DEMAND

GLOBAL IMPACT + FAST + AVAILABLE ANY TIME ANYWHERE

GAMIFICATION

USER ENGAGEMENT   REWARD   ACHIEVEMENT   MOTIVATION   LEARNING   CHALLENGE

**Self-governed learning!**

PLAYER

Essence ->

- Where am I?
- What am I doing?
- What challenges am I facing?
- Did my choice of action succeed or not?
- Do I have what is needed to play successfully?
- Am I in danger of losing the game?
- Am I progressing towards victory?

+ expectations (previous experience with same genre)

VR in Therapy

Nowadays VR is becoming more accessible to the public use, enabling educators, healthcare professionals as well as engineering safety protocols to be taught in less physically demanding setups.
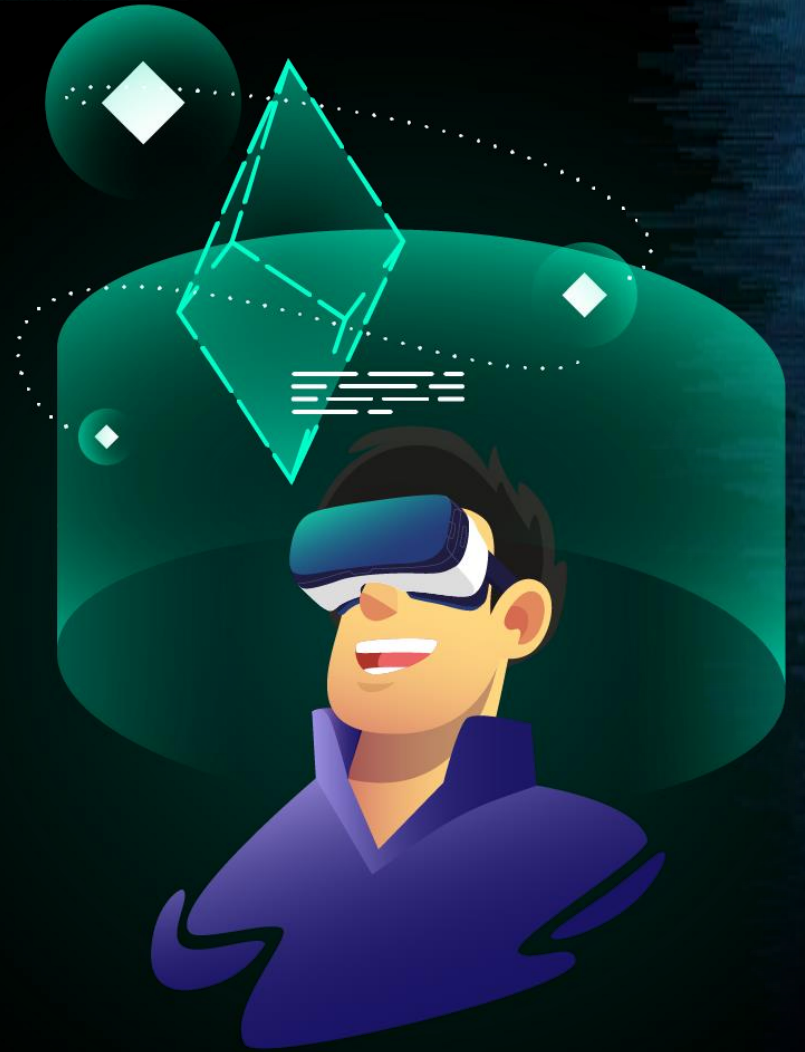
VR exposure therapy provides the opportunity for mental health professionals to not only reproduce real-life scenarios but also to adapt and control these environments to suit your patients' individual needs.
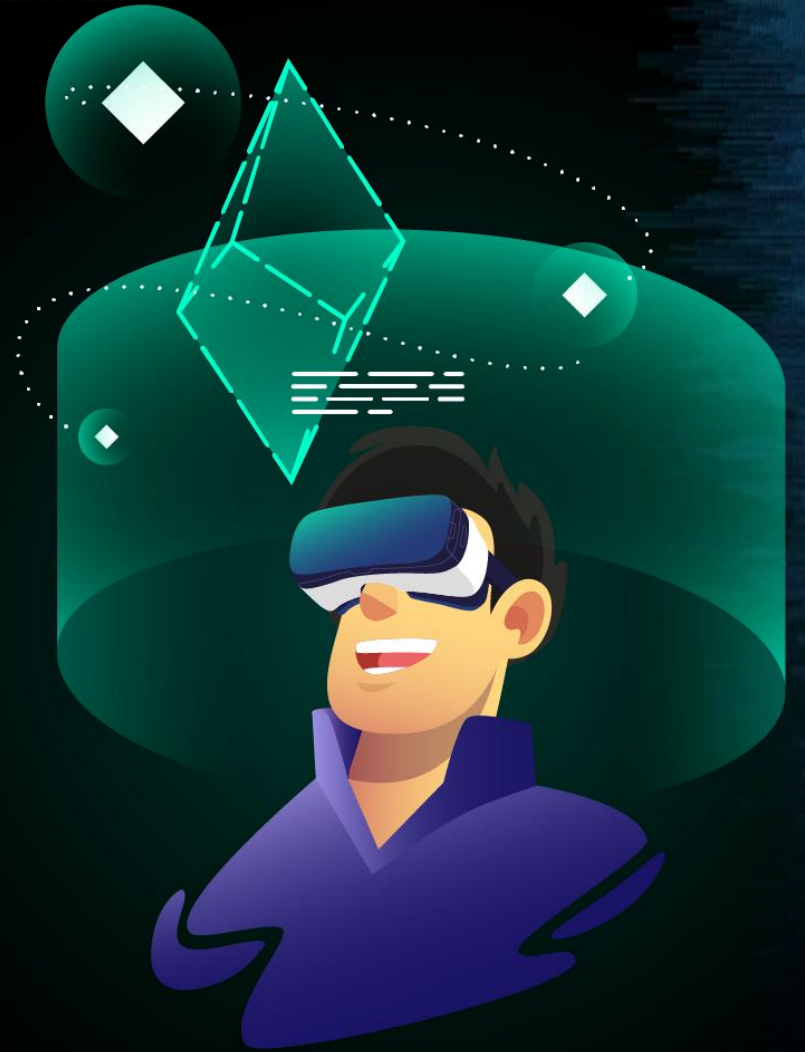
With aim to create an immersive and emotionally engaging experience for the clients, it is highly recommended to focus on an interactive storytelling practices, as stories resonate with the clients on a deeper level than just completing the given tasks.

VR in Therapy

VR combines different approaches to extend and support the physical reality with synthetic components, in comparison to other media for digital storytelling, VR poses a fundamental challenge of catching the interactor's attention and directing it to the right place at the right time.
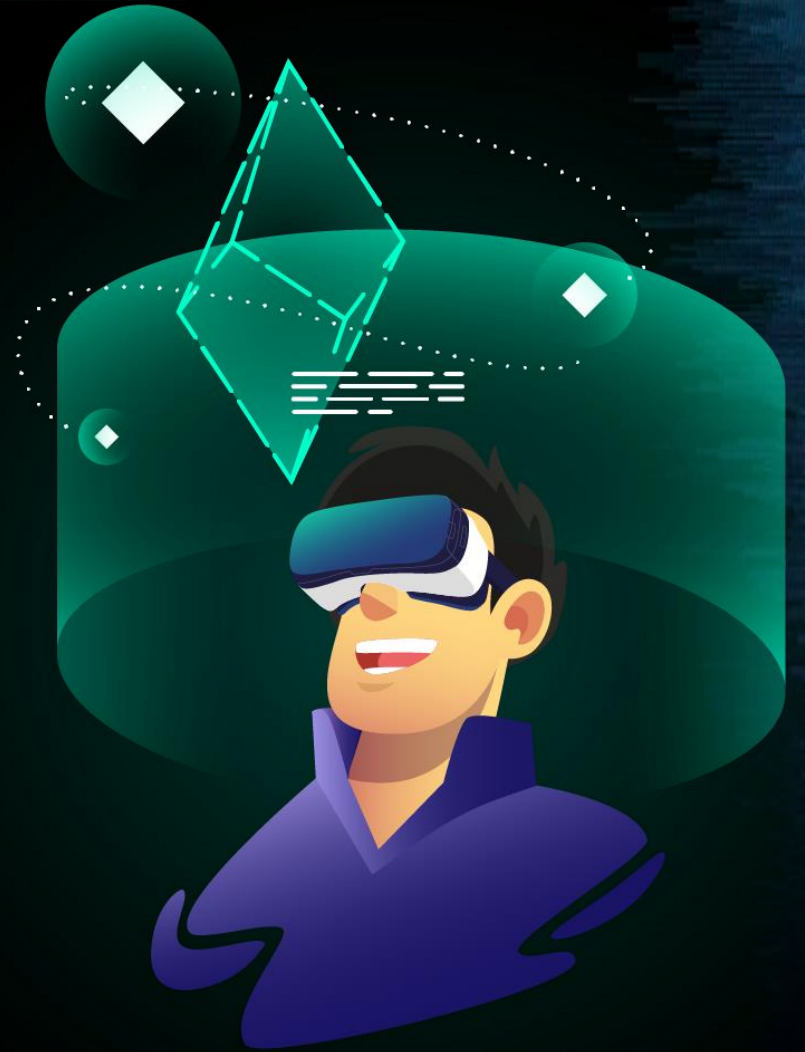
In VR, the interactor becomes an active part of the storyworld, fully immersed in the social network of fictional characters and in the environment filled with storytelling elements.
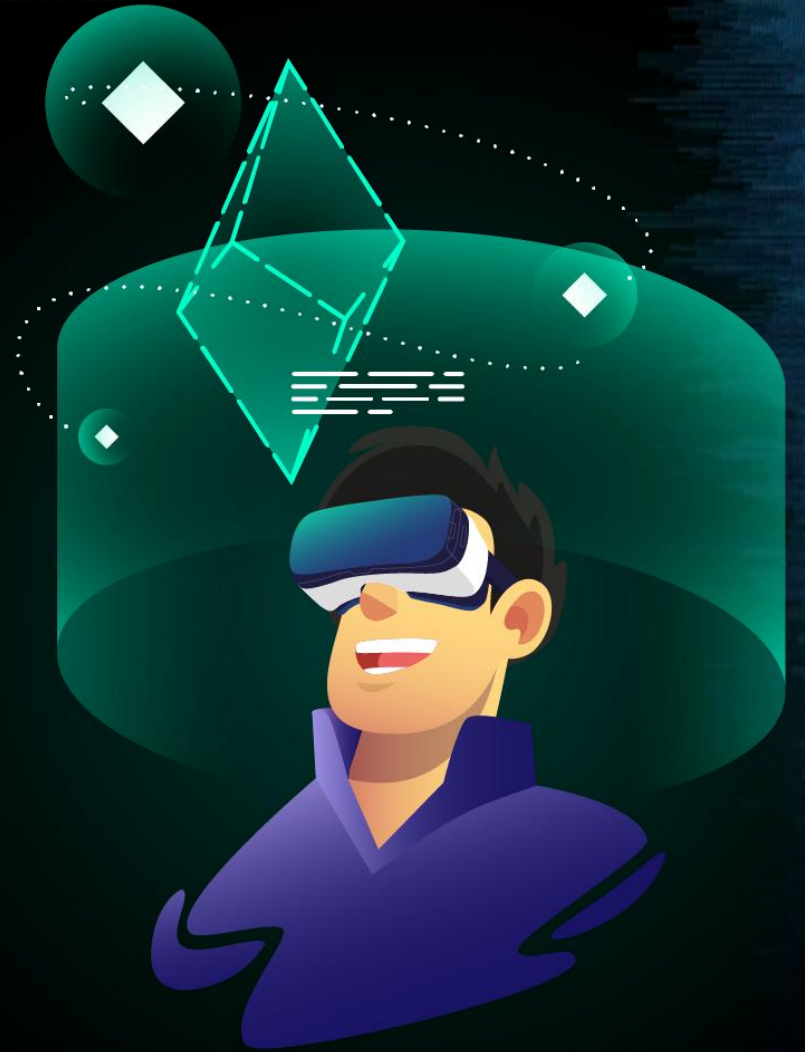
IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE

Creating safe and controled environment
to try new things

How does it work?

It offers a much different experience than traditional talk therapy as it brings clients outdoors and offers an opportunity to use all senses while learning and processing through emotional challenges.

Such approach can help children, youth, and people of all ages, to work on issues such as:

- Assertiveness
- Confidence
- Developing and maintaining relationships
- Emotional awareness
- Empathy
- Impulse control
- Problem-solving skills
- Social skills
- Trust in others
- Trust in self

How does it work?

Even that a variety of animals can be used in the psychotherapeutic process, horses offer unique traits that have made them a top choice for animal-assisted therapies.

Horses bring the following unique elements to the therapy process:

- Non-judgmental and unbiased approach
- Feedback and mirroring
- Managing vulnerability

VR – Development Challenges

Most common challenges:

❯ 360' view – can have distractions from the main goal

❯ Transitions between the scenes – tasks

❯ Fidelity – making all feel "real"

❯ When user should be actively involved with the story and when not

❯ Creating content that user can have emotional bond with

Conclusion

➤ Include the final users in the process of development and experiment as much as you can

➤ Prototyping fast! Test things as easy as possible

➤ User/player is creator of fantasy, we provide the building blocks!

➤ Listening is the key!

Thank You!

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