Easing the burden of coronavirus with virtual reality

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A new article discusses the psychological stresses imposed by the coronavirus pandemic and suggests that virtual reality can help alleviate the psychological impact of the need for social isolation. The article,

which provides a link to a free 3-dimensional 360 video and suggestions for how to use it, is published in *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*.

Giuseppe Riva, Ph.D., IRCCS Istituto Auxologico Italiano and Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Milan, Italy), and Journal Editor-in-Chief Brenda Wiederhold, Ph.D., Virtual Reality Medical Center (La Jolla, CA) and Virtual Reality Medical Institute (Brussels, Belgium), coauthored the article entitled "How Cyberpsychology and Virtual Reality Can Help Us to Overcome the Psychological Burden of Coronavirus."

The [coronavirus](link) pandemic is forcing people to manage three different psychological problems at the same time: the stress of the disease, the disappearance of places, and the crisis of the sense of community. The fear of getting sick is making us anxious and the need to quarantine is making us lose our sense of place and community. Virtual reality simulates reality. The cost of [virtual reality](link) technology has come down considerably in recent years. Now there is free access to the specialized 360-degree immersive videos that allow a person to feel like they are actually in a virtual space. The article provides a day-by-day suggested plan for how to use the free 360 video.

"As our society continues to face these difficult times, it becomes imperative to address mental well-being. It is uplifting to see practical uses of advanced technologies, such as Virtual Reality, making a positive impact. Although previously characterized by some as isolating, we see this new use of shared virtual spaces becoming increasingly important as a means to bring individuals and families together. We look forward to continued exploration of ways that can enrich our shared human experience," says Editor-in-Chief Brenda K. Wiederhold, Ph.D., MBA, BCB, BCN, Interactive Media Institute, San Diego, California and Virtual Reality Medical Institute, Brussels, Belgium.

   More information: Giuseppe Riva et al, How Cyberpsychology and Virtual Reality Can Help Us to Overcome the Psychological Burden of Coronavirus, *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking* (2020). DOI: 10.1089/cyber.2020.29183.gri