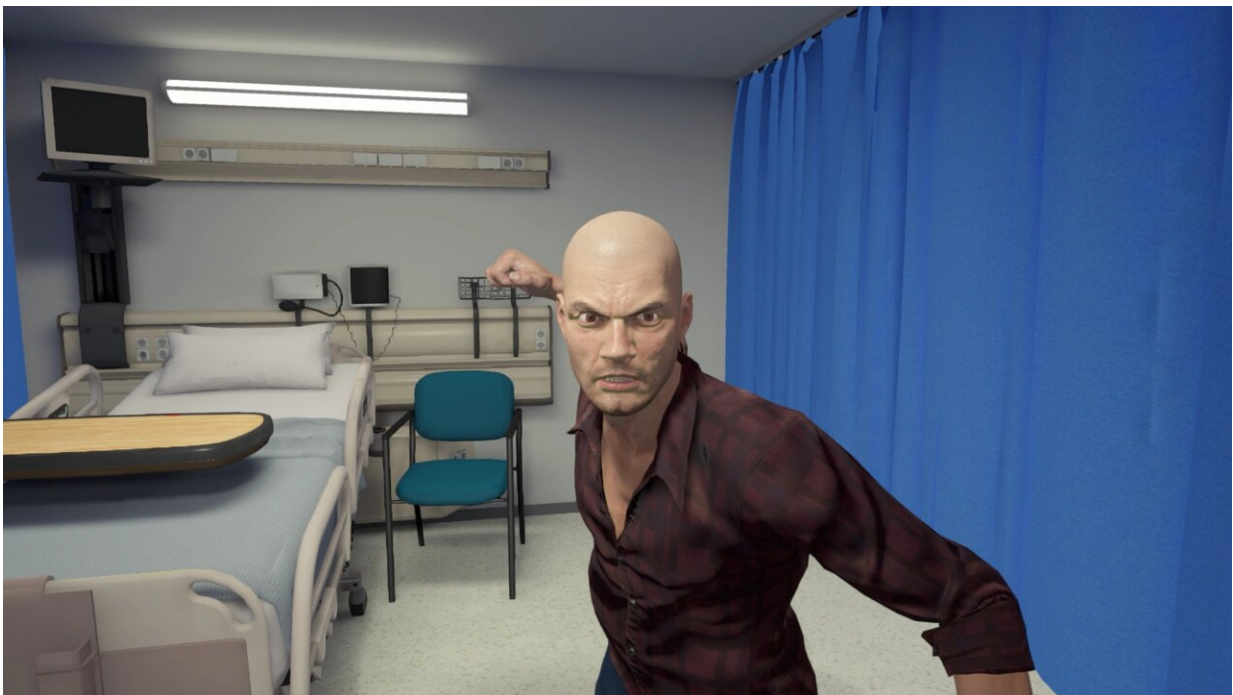


Virtual reality gives nurses first-hand experience in de-escalating aggression, without the risk

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Credit: Edith Cowan University

"F... you and f... this place—I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS S...!"

Unfortunately, [health care professionals](#) regularly have to deal with difficult situations where there is a risk of verbal and physical abuse.

However, a new award-winning project from Edith Cowan University (ECU) can put them right in the middle of these situations to learn how to negotiate such an experience, without actually being in harm's way.

IVADE is an immersive computer simulation program that helps nurses and nursing [students](#) practice making decisions when faced with a hostile patient.

It was named winner of the Innovating Government category at last week's [INCITE Awards](#), Western Australia's longest running tech awards program.

Participants can either wear virtual reality goggles or play via a desktop computer, where they are faced with an agitated patient named Derek.

They are given a number of options of how to respond, with their choices leading to six different outcomes ranging from Derek calming down, or his anger escalating to using explicit language and becoming physically violent.

Students from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts bring the immersive virtual experience to life through use of motion capture technology.

Ph.D. candidate Josh Johnson from ECU's Simulation and Immersive Digital Technology Group said IVADE used best practice guidelines and was an effective, easily accessible tool for teaching aggression and violence de-escalation.

"IVADE combines the theory with practical demonstration," he said.

"Being immersive through a virtual reality platform, it really is an engaging way to deliver de-escalation training; during trials, people were

so immersed that when Derek would physically lash out, people would instinctively move to avoid the blow.

"So it really is a realistic experience and the feedback we've received from both working clinicians and students has been extremely positive; nine out of 10 people we showed this to suggested they would like to complete more aggression de-escalation training in [virtual reality](#)."

Adaptable to other industries

After being presented in select conferences and events, IVADE has not only won an INCITE Award, but also received widespread praise from those in the workforce.

Though IVADE is currently tailored towards health care settings, its flexibility means it can easily be transferred to other industries which may also involve difficult interactions with the public, such as hospitality, retail, [social work](#) and more.

"Simulations such as these aren't just more engaging than traditional training methods, such as workshops or role-playing, they are also more easily adapted across other industries," Johnson said.

"Now the foundations of IVADE are in place, we can create different scenarios and move it from a hospital to a hotel, [retail store](#), classroom, or other locations relevant to the industry in question."

Provided by Edith Cowan University

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