

# The Emotion Room

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Emotions play a large role in the way people function in life. From positive to negative emotions, people's actions are often driven by the way they feel. Emotions also serve as a way for people to understand each other. At times this understanding might involve directly stating how one feels or it may be more discrete through physical language. Regardless, emotional expression is a personal way of giving someone else important information about oneself that they can then use to take action. However, oftentimes emotions are random and uncontrollable. The extremity of these uncontrollable emotions can lead to mental instability or psychological illness. Though mental illnesses require long-term medical care, the use of Virtual Reality may aid in attempting to control emotions. By learning to regulate emotional response, it could aid in therapeutic practices for those with illnesses. Therefore, this VR project will be a study of how visual and auditory aspects created in virtual reality can be used to regulate the way people experience emotions.

Though people express a multitude of emotions, this project will focus on the six primary emotions. These six emotions categorized by Paul Ekman and Wallace V. Friesen are joy, anger, disgust, surprise, sadness, and fear. This theory was based on Ekman and Friesen's studies conducted on the isolated culture of people from the Fore tribe in Papua New Guinea in 1972. The members of the Fore tribe, who could not have learned the meaning of expressions from exposure to media depictions of emotion, were able to identify these six emotions. Following, pictures of the Fori tribe depicting these emotions were presented to people of other races and cultures around the world. Regardless of culture and background, people were able to interpret the emotions in the pictures correctly. Thus, Ekman and Friesen's studies found these six primary human emotions to be universal.

With these six primary emotions in mind, the Emotion Room is a study of how visual and auditory aspects created in virtual reality can be used to enhance or impact the way we experience these six basic emotions. When the user enters the Emotion Room they will be

brought into a hallway of doors. Each door is representative of one of the six basic emotions. The user is free to explore and enter the door of their choosing. In doing so, it brings attention to the power of emotional control or guidance through Virtual Reality. With this ability, it allows further potential to aid in therapy and emotional stability by utilizing Virtual Reality.

