Midterm Presentation

Project Conceptualization

Project Title: Empathic Protagonist - Creation of a digital game with a protagonist that struggles with depression and suicidal ideation

Group: Anthony Pereira & Carlos Costa

Practical assignment goal: Development of a mini-game using VR that will be part of the main game.

Introduction

Empathic Protagonist - Creation of a digital game with a protagonist that struggles with depression and suicidal ideation

- Anthony's project;
- Lack of empathy in general nowadays;
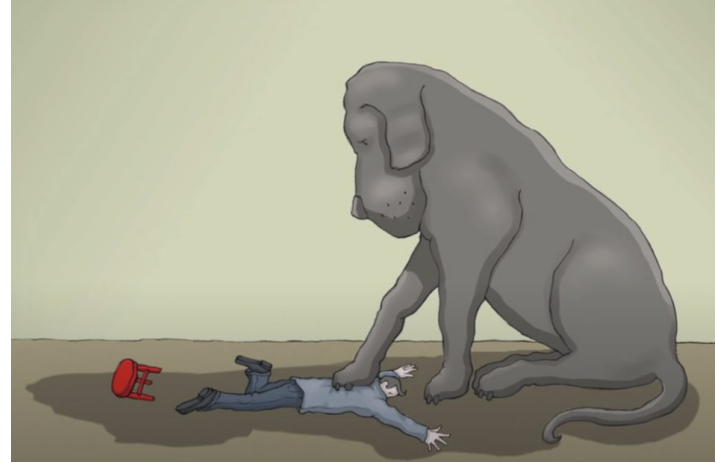- Too much stigma about mental illness.

Fig.1 - Screenshot from the videoclip *I had a black dog, his name was depression*, by the World Health Organization (WHO)

Project Vision

Empathic Protagonist - Creation of a digital game with a protagonist that struggles with depression and suicidal ideation

- Mini-game that materializes a loop of the protagonist's excessive and negative thoughts about himself and death;
- Test if the immersion caused by the VR technology can lead to greater empathy for the protagonist;
- Check if this mini-game can trigger empathy by the player;

Project Objectives

Empathic Protagonist - Creation of a digital game with a protagonist that struggles with depression and suicidal ideation

HIGH-LEVEL GOALS
- Focus first on the gameplay:
  - Interaction between player/reality and the game/virtual
    - Hardware: Oculus Quest and controllers;
      - Puzzle-solving:
        - Player being able to pick up objects - e.g. a gun;
        - Player being able to throw/use these objects at a target location.
      - How to represent virtual states in reality:
        - Virtual-player arm being pushed out of the minecart;
        - Virtual-player, after grabbing an object, what to do with it.
- Focus second on the storyline:
  - Use of multiple 3D models with gore-like thematic to better illustrate the protagonist's state of mind during his negative loops;
  - Possible use of sound/speaking.

Project Objectives

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EXPECTED OUTCOME & BENEFIT

- A functional mini-game that can be already tested with participants regarding the levels of empathy.
- A mini-game that, finished its development, can be added to Anthony's project.

Personas

Empathic Protagonist - Creation of a digital game with a protagonist that struggles with depression and suicidal ideation

Bryan

Job Title
Student

Age
21

Highest Level of Education
Some college, no degree

Goals or Objectives

- Bryan suffers from depression
- Wants to stop feeling alienated because of his condition

Biggest Challenges

- Lack of empathetic characters in media to relate to

Environment

Born on the 21st century, he does well with new technologies; For him, the important thing is to feel like his mental condition is not something uncommon.

Betty

Job Title
IT

Age
27

Highest Level of Education
Master's degree

Industry
Technology

Goals or Objectives

- Wants to experience media with heavy subjects
- Wants to become more empathetic towards people

Biggest Challenges

- Lack of works with empathetic characters

Environment

With a master's degree in technology, she is no stranger to the newest tech; Feels like today's society has a lack of empathy towards other people and wants to experience media with emotional attatchments
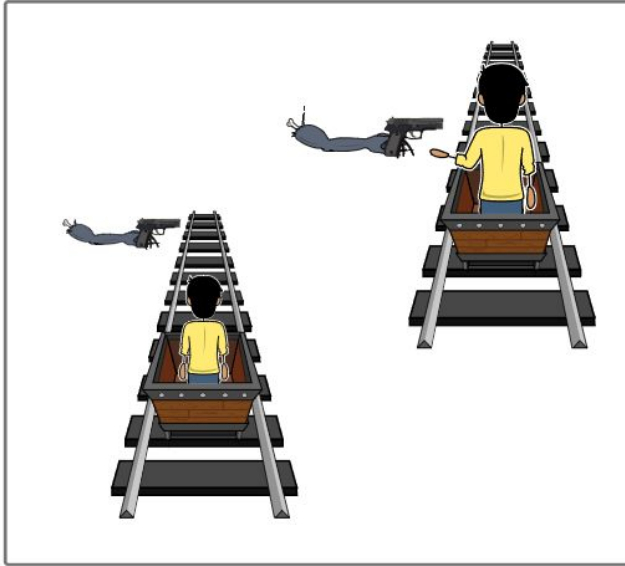
User Stories

Empathic Protagonist - Creation of a digital game with a protagonist that struggles with depression and suicidal ideation

- As a depressive user, I want to enjoy an immersive game experience and connect with a character that struggles with similar problems as myself.

- As a common user, I also want to play a narrative-driven game experience and know more about mental illness in general.

Storyboards

Empathic Protagonist - Creation of a digital game with a protagonist that struggles with depression and suicidal ideation

User picks up a gun
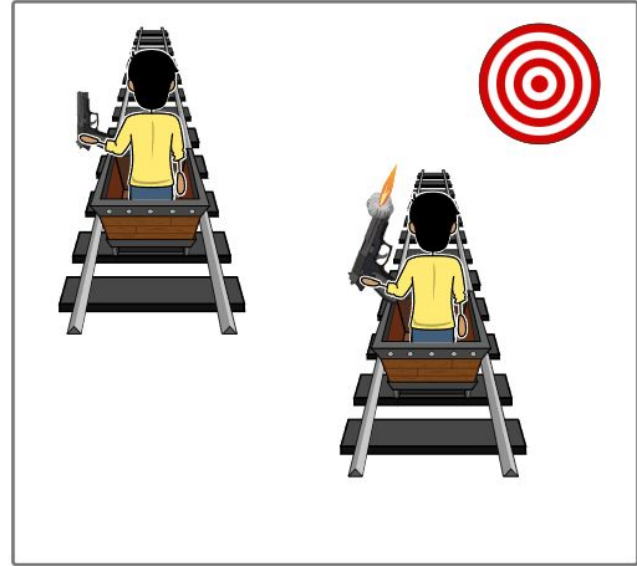
User shoots the target

Requirements

Empathic Protagonist - Creation of a digital game with a protagonist that struggles with depression and suicidal ideation

- Quality requirements - Platform compatibility, Performance, Usability.
- Functional Requirements
    - Pick up objects;
    - Use objects (throw, shoot, etc.);
    - Avoid enemies (arms that want to push you out of the minecart).

Project Constraints

Empathic Protagonist - Creation of a digital game with a protagonist that struggles with depression and suicidal ideation

- Not making the first part of the game (that uses the BITalino and microphone) can lead to lower levels of immersion and empathy;
- Mapping between *virtual hands* and *real hands*;
- Check if the *puzzles* are challenging enough;

Next Steps

Empathic Protagonist - Creation of a digital game with a protagonist that struggles with depression and suicidal ideation

- Make the integration of the BITalino, if it was not made before;
- Make the first part of the game, in particular the mechanic regarding the protagonist to pick up an object and instantly kill himself;
- Integrate this project with Anthony's project.