

# Choosing a Clinical Supervisor for Gaming and VR Therapies

A Guide for Therapists · Atrium Clinic Gaming Therapies

## GAMING THERAPIES

Atrium Clinic

Clinical supervision is a cornerstone of safe, ethical, and effective therapy practice. When integrating gaming and VR into therapy with young people, supervision takes on additional complexity — combining traditional therapeutic skills with emerging digital and technological competencies. This guide helps therapists select the right supervisor.

### KEY CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CHOOSING A SUPERVISOR

A supervisor with the right expertise will support you to deliver interventions safely and ethically, align gaming and VR with therapeutic frameworks (CBT, trauma-informed care, systemic approaches), reflect on your own professional practice and client outcomes, and process your own emotional responses to the work.

#### 1. KNOWLEDGE OF GAMING AND VR THERAPIES

- ▶ Understand therapeutic principles for digital interventions, including gaming mechanics, VR applications, and immersive environments.
- ▶ Be familiar with research evidence on gaming and VR for young people (trauma, ASD, anxiety, ADHD).
- ▶ Recognise the therapeutic potential and limitations of digital interventions.
- ▶ Understand the impact of digital engagement on motivation, attention, emotional regulation, and social skills.

#### 2. CLINICAL AND THERAPEUTIC COMPETENCE

- ▶ Hold a relevant clinical qualification and registration with an appropriate professional body, plus clinical supervisor registration.
- ▶ Have experience with youth mental health across children, adolescents, and young adults.
- ▶ Be competent in assessment, formulation, intervention design, monitoring, and risk management.
- ▶ Understand ethical considerations for working with minors, digital media, and immersive technologies.

#### 3. SUPERVISION SKILLS SPECIFIC TO DIGITAL THERAPIES

- ▶ Guide therapists in integrating gaming or VR interventions into therapeutic practice.
- ▶ Support case formulation and session planning for mediated digital experiences.
- ▶ Identify client suitability and contraindications for gaming or VR interventions.
- ▶ Help therapists reflect on client engagement, emotional responses, and therapeutic outcomes in digital settings.
- ▶ Advise on evaluation and monitoring tools, including quantitative metrics and qualitative observations.

#### 4. ETHICAL AND SAFEGUARDING EXPERTISE

- ▶ Understand informed consent in digital contexts, including parental and carer involvement.
- ▶ Recognise and manage risks: screen time, cybersickness, dissociation, or exposure to harmful content.
- ▶ Provide guidance on confidentiality, online safety, and data protection.
- ▶ Offer guidance on gaming across contexts — home, school, and community settings.

#### 5. KNOWLEDGE OF TECHNOLOGY AND PLATFORMS

- ▶ Be familiar with common gaming platforms (PC, console, mobile) and VR systems (Meta Quest, HTC Vive, PSVR).
- ▶ Understand interactive mechanics and immersive experiences that can be therapeutic.
- ▶ Stay informed about new digital tools and emerging trends in therapy-oriented gaming and VR.

#### 6. EXPERIENCE IN SUPERVISION AND REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

- ▶ Have a track record of supervising therapists or counsellors, ideally in child, adolescent, or digital therapy contexts.
- ▶ Encourage reflective practice: helping supervisees analyse decisions, explore ethical dilemmas, and evaluate outcomes.
- ▶ Understand multidisciplinary contexts — therapy in schools, clinics, and community settings.

#### 7. CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- ▶ Maintain up-to-date knowledge through CPD, research, and professional networks in gaming, VR, and digital mental health.
- ▶ Be able to recommend further training, workshops, or resources to enhance supervisees' competence in digital interventions.

### RED FLAGS — CAUTIONS

- ✗ Lack of experience or familiarity with digital technologies in therapy.
- ✗ Treating gaming or VR as a gimmick rather than a legitimate therapeutic tool.
- ✗ Absence of awareness of ethical or safeguarding issues specific to digital interventions.
- ✗ Over-reliance on theoretical knowledge without practical application.
- ✗ Lack of awareness of when gaming can be beneficial and when it can be harmful.

## CHECKLIST FOR THERAPISTS

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When evaluating a potential supervisor, ask:

- Do they understand how games or VR can support therapy goals?
- Can they guide assessment, planning, and evaluation in digital interventions?
- Do they have experience with youth and child mental health?
- Can they advise on ethical, safeguarding, and confidentiality issues?
- Are they up to date with research and digital trends?
- Will they encourage reflective practice and outcome evaluation?

## CONCLUSION

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Selecting a clinical supervisor for gaming and VR therapies is about finding someone who can bridge traditional therapy skills with digital competence. The right supervisor provides safe guidance, fosters reflective practice, helps therapists process their own emotional responses, and translates research and theory into effective, engaging interventions for young people.