

How Virtual Reality Therapy Can Help Make Bad Memories More Manageable

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Jonathan Tissue, 35, returned home from combat missions in Afghanistan and Iraq with invisible wounds. He had been injured twice but was physically mobile. It was his anger at home that made him seem like a different person to his friends and family. Every time he drove by a garbage truck, he became tense, recalling the vehicle-borne improvised explosive device that hit his convoy while overseas.

The doctors at Veterans Affairs prescribed traditional talk therapy for his combat-related post-traumatic stress disorder. For five years, he met with psychotherapists but nothing improved. He became more difficult, irritable, anxious, depressed, with occasional angry outbursts.

Frustrated, he stopped the treatments but after several years he realized he was no longer the husband or father he once was and wanted to be. This time, VA doctors suggested a new kind of treatment: virtual reality immersion therapy.

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