

# VR for Mental Health The Dala Project

VR PRODUCER  
CAMILLE DONEGAN





# THE PROBLEM

## anxiety is a big problem and getting bigger



of referrals to CAMHS in 2018 were for anxiety

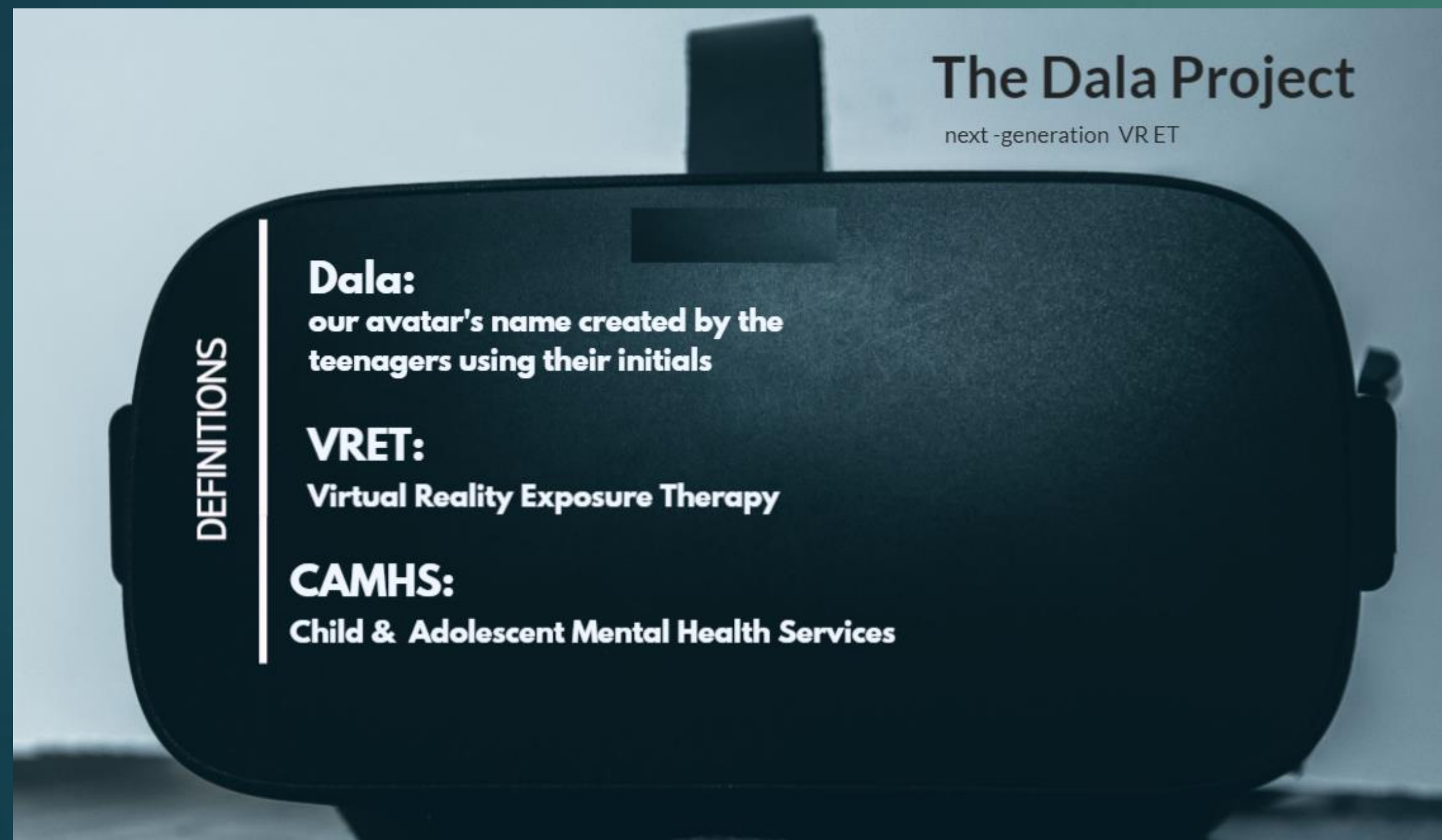


Up to 5% of students experience anxiety related school avoidance



increase in anxiety in 12-19 year olds from 2012 to 2019

# The Solution - The Dala Project



- A series of immersive VR films to help teenagers who suffer with anxiety
- Embodied scenarios with audible self talk from Dala
- Co-created with teenagers at CAMHS led by occupational therapist Niamh Morrin
- Metaphors, scripting, characters came from their lived experience

WHEN YOU

# Embody DALA

in the Going to Class Videos, they are hiding in a school toilet cubicle. Dala has three different experiences

VIDEO 1

## Anxious App Open

Dala gets more anxious & can't go to class

VIDEO 2

## Pathfinder App

Dala is coached by Moxie & goes to class

VIDEO 3

## Good to Go

Dala doesn't need Moxie to go to class



# THE DALA PROJECT



# FINDINGS

**77%**

found it very  
believable and  
totally believable

**68%**

felt they were inside  
the world 75% &  
100% of the time

**61%**

related to the  
avatars a lot  
or very much

**83%**

rated the sound  
very good &  
excellent

**100%**

said it could help  
school anxiety

**100%**

would use more  
VR in CAMHS

**46%**

rated the  
graphics very  
good & excellent

**45%**

reduction in  
anxiety from first  
to last video

**10% REDUCTION IN EMOTIONAL SYMPTOMS**

'it was cool seeing things  
that go on in my head  
animated in real life'

'I liked how accurate  
it was in its portrayal  
of school anxiety'

'there's no real danger  
nearby that's just our  
thoughts playing tricks'



# The Dala Project

## Next Steps

Winner of Health Tech Innovation Award 2021 for Most Collaborative Project



- Being used at Galway and Roscommon CAMHS on 12 x Quest 2 headsets
- Building an app for easier roll-out

THEN

- Roll-out and evaluate across CAMHS
- Roll-out to schools for early intervention
- Replicate for eating disorders, depression and self harm