

AVenueS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

01 Value Proposition

What does virtual reality (VR) have to do with human services?

- Caseworkers make decisions every day that impact the safety and well-being of kids and families, and developing the required skills—observing, engaging, interpreting—takes time. Typically, caseworkers do this over years of sitting with families: asking questions, gathering information, making tough decisions. Virtual reality provides an avenue to accelerate the pace at which caseworkers become seasoned decision-makers.

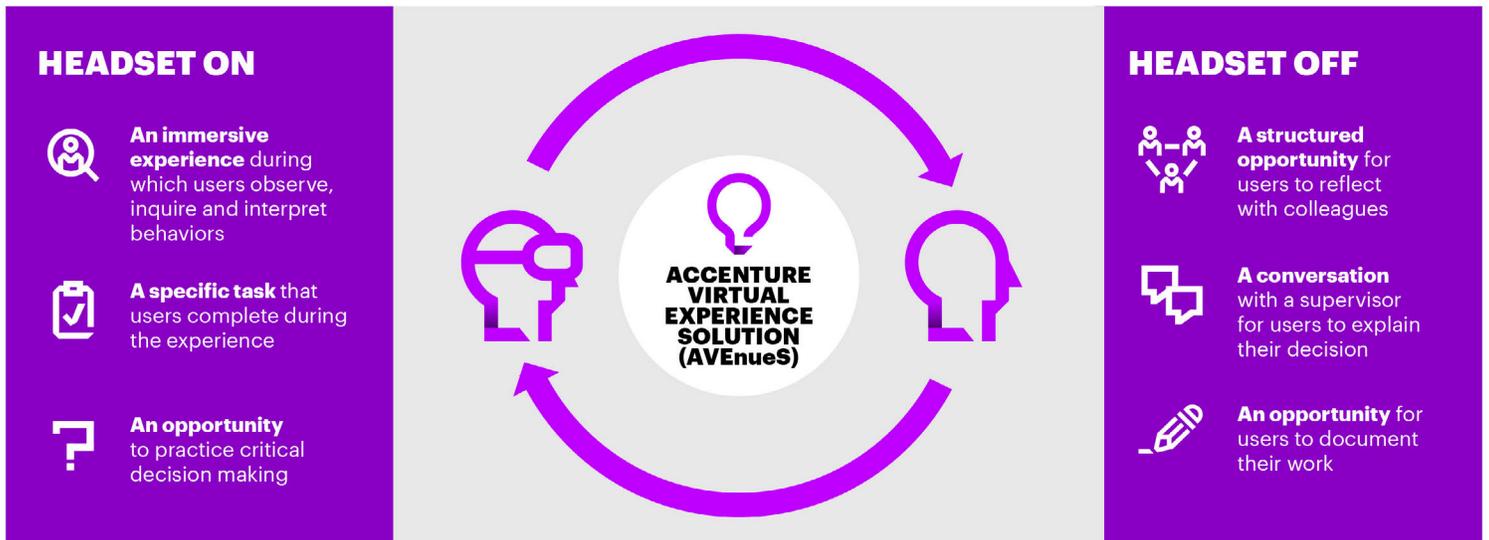
How does virtual reality accelerate learning and experience building in human services?

- Virtual reality can replicate the environments and emotions that caseworkers are likely to encounter in the field, making them more prepared to face them in real life.
- Immersive experiences can realistically simulate high-stress situations in a low-risk setting, allowing workers to build confidence through practice.
- Using VR, we can create scenarios that help workers navigate ambiguity, confront bias and hone observation skills.
- When athletes train in VR, they increase their scores. When doctors train in VR, they decrease their errors. When students learn in VR, they perform better on tests. We have every reason to believe this will hold true in human services.

What differentiates AVenueS from other training approaches?

- In **AVenueS**, you learn by doing and saying. This approach, known as *active learning*, causes motivation, engagement, and learning retention to skyrocket when compared to traditional *passive learning* approaches. In fact, people remember up to 90 percent of what they say and do, compared to only 30 percent of what they read, hear, or see.
- **The AVenueS Learning Cycle** (see Figure 1) differs from other simulated learning experiences because it leverages virtual reality to simulate the environments and scenarios of the field, offering an approach that is as effective as live training at a fraction of the cost. It can free up workers who would otherwise have to provide the training, and it allows users to immerse themselves in a situation repeatedly to practice their observation and decision-making skills.
- **AVenueS** differs from other virtual reality experiences in that it's intentionally not game-like. The work that human service caseworkers perform isn't a game, and neither is this learning experience. Once initiated, the experience is entirely voice-controlled versus controlled using a hand control or joystick. It also means that there are no avatars or computer-generated imagery. We filmed **AVenueS** in a real home, with real actors. You look them in the eye when you engage with them, just as you would with a real-life family.

Figure 1. The AVenueS Learning Cycle



02 The AVenueS Experience

What should I expect when I go through AVenueS?

- The **AVenueS** proof of concept is a virtual training experience that uses immersive storytelling within an interactive voice-based scenario. Using **AVenueS**, you will assume the role of a caseworker assigned to conduct a safety assessment in response to allegations of neglect. After hearing the hotline call containing the allegations, you'll find yourself at the doorstep of the family's home. You'll have the opportunity to speak one-on-one with three individuals in their home: Monica, Lance and Sophia. During each engagement you will make choices as to how you want to inquire about the safety of the children in the home.

What should I do if a character within the experience doesn't respond to my question?

- Periodically, users will encounter a situation where a character does not respond to the question. This is due to a gap in communication with the server providing responses from the conversation engine. If this happens, simply re-read the question aloud.

There were times within the experience when I wanted to ask follow-up questions based on the characters' response. Is this possible?

- The proof of concept we developed for **AVenueS** follows a scripted interview flow. However, the technology used to create it supports branched logic and dynamic pathways, which will allow users to drill down into specific topics in more detail. Future versions of AVenueS will allow users to ask follow-up questions.

Did I choose correctly? What was the "right" answer?

- AVenueS** is designed to replicate a real home environment and provide an opportunity to practice making tough decisions in tense moments. It is not oriented to a correct choice or a right answer. The fundamental principle in play is options. Just like in real life, users make decisions to the best of their ability based on what they can see, what they can hear and how they interpret the behaviors of the individuals around them.

Can I stop along the way and discuss what I am seeing?

- **AVenueS** is designed as an immersive experience. The idea is to engage the user as completely as possible—mentally, visually, audibly, physiologically. For that reason, we recommend completing the experience in one sitting without taking a break.
- Reflecting on the experience is an equally important task. It is our experience that the real learning happens when the headset comes off and users have the chance to reflect, examine their own choices, discuss those choices with others and consider other ways of managing these critical tasks in human services.

What else is on the AVenueS roadmap?

- We are in the process of developing a library of child welfare modules, allowing caseworkers to work through a series of scenarios. Each scenario will simulate real-life situations faced by caseworkers and allow them to practice the critical skills they need to keep kids safe.
- We also plan to expand **AVenueS** into other health and human services program domains. Any role that entails face-to-face interaction with clients—especially in uncomfortable or high-stress situations—is a good candidate for VR-enabled training via **AVenueS**.
- Accenture is also exploring opportunities to partner with higher education institutions to use **AVenueS** with students in the classroom. For example, **AVenueS** could be an effective way to expose and prepare students considering a career in human services to the realities of their chosen field. Likewise, human services agencies might use **AVenueS** as an upfront screening tool to help with candidate/job matching.

Can AVenueS be modified to align with our local needs?

- Nearly all aspects of **AVenueS** are customizable: the character interaction, the interview flow, the decision points, etc. We created **AVenueS** to be easily adaptable to local policies, procedures and practice models.

03 Commercial Model

How can AVenueS be purchased?

- There are a variety of ways to purchase **AVenueS**. We have solicited input from some of our public-sector client partners and a subscription model seems to be the preferred contracting mechanism. Other options could include purchasing a single or set of custom scenarios or bundling **AVenueS** with other child welfare-related work, such as a new or transitional CCWIS program. We look forward to working with you to co-define a mutually beneficial commercial approach for **AVenueS**.

How much does AVenueS cost?

- **AVenueS** pricing will depend on the contracting mechanism that Accenture and our client partners agree on. We look forward to working with our client counterparts to determine the appropriate pricing approach for **AVenueS**.

Do you offer any companion training services along with AVenueS?

- Yes, Accenture offers services related to both training program development and training delivery. We are also interested in exploring curriculum co-creation approaches with our client partners to leverage their subject-matter expertise and local practice model knowledge.

04 Technology

What are the technology requirements for operating AVenueS?

- The only things needed to run **AVenueS** are an Oculus Go VR headset and a Wi-Fi internet connection.