**Needs Identification and Problem Statement**

# Customer Statements

* People of different backgrounds should be able to use it
* Often left feeling neglected/ignored by the government
* Constantly feeling misunderstood
* Wanting to feel equal to other people
* Encourage empathy between people
* Provide people with a perspective that allows them to be more empathetic rather than sympathetic

# Interpreting Customer Needs

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Question | Customer Statement | Interpreted Need |
| Typical Uses | Encourage empathy between people | Need to take away focus from one’s own self; consideration |
| Provide people with a perspective that allows them to be understand others’ circumstances better | Need more empathy, less sympathy |
| Primary Risk | Often left feeling neglected/ignored by the government | Allow users to feel what others would in a situation where aid is refused  Provide disabled users with the ability to navigate their environment in a smoother way |
| Constantly feeling misunderstood | Need to allow for an evaluation of one’s approach to others |
| Secondary Risk | Wanting to feel equal to other people | Encourage an equitarian approach to situations |
| Important Considerations | People of different backgrounds should be able to use it | Cost-effective  User-friendly  Different languages |

# Needs and Their Relative Importance

Using a scale of 1-5, 5 being most important

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Number | Need | Importance |
| 1 | Need to take away focus from one’s own self; consideration | 5 |
| 2 | Need more empathy, less sympathy | 5 |
| 3 | Allow users to feel what others would in a situation they’re in | 2 |
| 4 | Provide users with the ability to navigate their environment in a smooth way | 4 |
| 5 | Need to allow for an evaluation of one’s approach to others | 4 |
| 6 | Encourage an equitarian approach to situations | 2 |
| 7 | Cost-effective | 4 |
| 8 | User-friendly | 5 |
| 9 | Different languages | 3 |

# Problem Statement

The need for a mechanism that promotes empathy and consideration of other people’s circumstances. It also needs to provide a perspective on the other side of an interaction to the user, whether with a person or an environment. The tool should incorporate VR technology in a cost-effective and user-friendly way.

# Points of Clarification

* Does the client have to be the user of this tool? Or is it to be used by other people? Both?
* Does VR have to be the main way of experiencing this tool? Or could it only be just another part of the experience?

# Benchmarking

* According to Dr. Jamil Zaki, empathy is a skill that can be built. This means that our product will have to actively promote empathy and help others develop it. He explains many methods which can help promote empathy, and these can be used in our product. For example, he states that taking time to reflect on one’s recent experiences, for example on the internet. More can be read here: [5 exercises to help you build more empathy | (ted.com)](https://ideas.ted.com/5-exercises-to-help-you-build-more-empathy/)
* In the Netherlands, it has been tried to use virtual reality as a treatment for acrophobia. The conclusion of the study was that virtual reality was a helpful tool which could be made cheaply using cardboard goggles and a smartphone. The study may be found here: [Effectiveness of Self-guided App-Based Virtual Reality Cognitive Behavior Therapy for Acrophobia: A Randomized Clinical Trial | Psychiatry and Behavioral Health | JAMA Psychiatry | JAMA Network (uottawa.ca)](https://jamanetwork-com.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/journals/jamapsychiatry/fullarticle/2728184)