

An Exploration of Mental Health in Video Games

by

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Abstract

Over the years, games about mental illness have risen in quality and quantity. I have taken inspiration from these games and applied them to my project. My senior project, *Into the World*, is a text-adventure RPG that attempts to simulate the experience of what it is like to have social anxiety. My project takes from the experience of others as well as my own and portrays it in the best way I can. Social anxiety can affect many aspects of someone's life, and I tried to include these topics that include but are not limited to simple interactions with others, going out in public, and relationships. The game contains narrative elements that will put the player in the shoes of someone with social anxiety. It is developed using HTML, CSS, and JavaScript hosted online for easy access. In addition to creating this game to help others understand an otherwise foreign experience better, I wanted to reflect on myself through art.

An Exploration of Mental Health in Video Games

Video games are a revolutionary invention that allow people to escape to new worlds. They can be so powerful that they cause the player to lose track of real time, getting caught up in the reality of the world behind the screen and even adapting to time in that universe. There have been large strides made since the first game was created, and now there are even VR games that allow us to shut ourselves out from the real world completely, in favor of a new one. Aside from entertainment, video games have various different uses, including but not limited to art, education and storytelling. In the world of video games, one of the most popular genres enjoyed by both casual and hardcore gamers alike, is simulation. A simulation game can be defined as a game made to emulate some sort of real-world experience. There are many different types of simulation games that are made for different reasons, but the most popular examples include *The Sims*, *Stardew Valley*, and *Roller Coaster Tycoon*. Growing up playing simulation games, I have been a fan of them for as long as I can remember. Naturally, when thinking of possible ideas this was the type of game I became interested in making for my senior project. A simulation game, when created for narrative purposes, can build a powerful, immersive story about a personal experience that can be understood by others. With the continuing rise of the simulation genre and games with a personal narrative, interest in games about mental illness have risen, resulting in the creation of various different games that tell their own story.

Creative freedom makes games a unique way to tell a story. For example, Cassie McQuater's *The Black Room* tells a story about falling asleep at your computer

as you browse the internet. The game contains different game functions, sounds, and imagery to tell this story, putting the player into a strange world meant to simulate the coming and going of consciousness as one falls asleep. Personally, I have become interested in how people portray mental illness in video games. With the invention of games about mental illnesses, there have been both positive and negative societal side-effects. There are many video games about mental disorders that lean more towards the horror genre, as well as instances in which a creator writes antagonist characters as having a mental illness. Past video games would represent a character with a mental disorder as a “straight-jacket wearing, drooling and babbling, creepy character stumbling around in a horror title” (Herrera). The negative connotation mental illness had in games, however, has slowly been toned down and is moving in the right direction with social progression and the rise of indie games. In this paper, I present examples of works representative of this genre, describing what is unique to this community and how it has informed my own work.

While there are various video games that address mental health in this traditional format where it is presented as being *within* the game and contains a narrative of some sort, games that tackle mental health by turning your real, daily life into a game should also be discussed. In these types of games, goals are achieved by performing tasks in the real world, rather than an artificial world in a video game. One of the most notable of these games is *SuperBetter*, created by Jane McGonigal. The player gains points towards their in-game mental resilience, social resilience, etc. These in-game skills are scientifically developed to apply to the real world as well. This is in an attempt to address the mental wellbeing of the actual player and provide results with hands-on

real-life activities to help one better themselves in their actual lives. The goal of *SuperBetter* is to help you; the player, not an in-game character, or give insight into difficulties another might have. The real world becomes a game, and you are the main character.

My interest in the research of mental illness in video games comes straight from my personal experience, as someone who enjoys video games and also struggles with social anxiety. This was a discovery I had made only recently, as I had always been made to believe that my social anxiety was just a “confidence issue,” something I could get over if I got a little more motivated and tried a little harder to be more like my siblings and close friends. In my family life, it has been the source of various arguments and disagreements with family members, who were unable and unwilling to understand my experiences and why I had trouble doing certain things. On many occasions I was led to believe, by my closest confidants, that who I was wasn’t good enough and that I needed to change. As a result, I began to hate myself and my anxiety. Social activities such as going to school had become my own personal hell, and when I got my first job, I was disliked by my coworkers who thought I was being rude because I did not speak often. I consistently avoided potential opportunities I was interested in because I was too anxious to try. My social anxiety took over my entire life, with permanent consequences. Games about social anxiety are one of the things that give me peace of mind that my anxiety is not a defect or fault of my own. It is only something that many people struggle with, while still being capable of living a perfectly normal life.

I struggled a lot with deciding what to make for my senior project. During this time, I was also beginning to learn how to manage my anxiety and get help. Putting a lot

of focus on my anxiety led to me to finally get an idea of what I may be able to work on for a year as my last school project. I was going to make a game about social anxiety. I'd known I wanted to make a game, though I wasn't sure what the game would be about until a series of life events during my senior year led me to a final decision. A game like this has the potential to contribute to a better society by providing an educational, or understandable, experience. Social anxiety disorder can greatly disrupt someone's life, and I feel that more individuals should try to understand it. Many people have similar experiences to me, and another large group can have it even worse. Social anxiety has always been a weakness of mine, and I saw this project as an opportunity to use it to my advantage for once.

In addition to telling a story, a game can encourage a player to build a personal understanding. Some examples of games that do this are *Depression Quest*, *Night in the Woods*, and *Adventures with Anxiety*. They show the creators' own creative representation of mental illness and how it effects an individual. *Depression Quest* by Zoe Quinn is an interactive "text adventure" game built using HTML, CSS and JavaScript, created to simulate an experience of depression. Even though *Depression Quest* is a game, it was not meant to be fun or entertaining. The goal was to bring to focus the struggles of someone who lives with depression, as well as tell Quinn's own story in a way that people can understand and identify with. The mechanics are fairly simple, focused mostly on a narrative about a character suffering from depression. There are choices a player can make throughout the game that affect how the story progresses. When making choices at certain points, some options are there but are visibly crossed out to indicate that they cannot be chosen. These crossed out options

signify a reasonable choice or thought that a healthy person would normally make.

Depending on the main character's level of depression, options are able or unable to be chosen.

Do you...

~~1. Order some food, grab a drink, and hunker down for a night of work.~~

2. Reluctantly sit down at your desk and try and make yourself do something

3: Turn on the TV, telling yourself you just need a quick half hour to unwind from work

4: Crawl into bed. You're so stressed and overwhelmed you couldn't possibly accomplish anything anyways.

Leaving these choices in while making them unable to be chosen leaves a meaningful message to the player, highlighting how difficult it can be for someone who is struggling to make the right choice or come to a rational decision under their circumstances.

“Asking people to take some time out to see what ‘rules’ other people have to live with, I think, is a powerful use of the medium,” Quinn states (Parkin). Even though the answer to getting better may seem obvious, getting there is a seemingly unattainable goal for an individual who is depressed. This was one of the features in the game that stood out to me the most. Although it was a simple mechanic, it communicated a powerful message on the subject of depression and what it can be like to experience it.

Night in the Woods is a game created by Alec Holowka that centers around several characters and the problems they face in their day-to-day lives. The main characters are a group of friends that each have their own individual struggles and support each other through the different trials they face. The main character, Mae, suffers from anxiety and depression, which ultimately resulted in her dropping out of college. According to a survey conducted by the National Alliance on Mental Illness,

approximately 64% people who withdraw from college said they left for mental health related reasons (Gruttadaro & Crudo). Overall, it tells a lighthearted, humorous story about friends, while throughout the game you spend time with each character and get to know them as individuals. You learn that Gregg, one of Mae's best friends, seems happy all the time, but he suffers from low self-esteem and poor impulse control because of his bipolar disorder. Bea had completely given up on life after losing her mother to cancer and was being forced to stay in her hometown, unable to live her dreams. Angus was permanently damaged as a result of an extremely abusive household. Even though these characters are struggling, they still live a normal life without letting their problems define them. They are presented with a life-or-death situation towards the end of the game that tests their strength as friends and individuals, and the game ends shortly after. In the end, they each still have their problems, but they learn that it is okay to look for support. This was one of the major overall messages conveyed in the game, and it was told in such a way that it was lighthearted and fun while at the same time addressing serious topics. James Law from Medium writes, "A lot of the time, I struggle to consume media that had an emphasis on mental health. It often triggers my anxiety and makes me relive my most traumatic and scary moments. *Night In The Woods* doesn't do this. It made me feel listened to."



Night in the Woods proves that a story relating to mental illness does not have to be dark and saddening, that it is a natural part of many people's lives and can be managed. The game also brings attention to mental health issues that do not get as much attention, including bipolar and depersonalization disorder. "In treating its characters' mental health issues as something they simply need to cope with in their day-to-day lives, *Night In The Woods* is doing something quietly revolutionary," Nissa Campbell states in an article titled "How Night In The Woods Normalizes Mental Health Issues."

Nicky Case's *Adventures with Anxiety* is another online game that tells a short story about someone struggling with anxiety. The main character's anxiety manifests itself in the form of a fox. You are placed into the role of being the person's anxiety, clinging to "your human," always prepared to "protect them from danger." Nicky Case symbolizes fights between a person and their anxiety by engaging the two in actual, turn-based combat, with the goal being to exploit the character's fears including the fear of being unloved, being harmed, and being a bad person. To make the game easier to relate to players, it encourages them to focus on a fear that they personally experience

themselves. Case utilizes the power of this medium to give the game a more personal experience, saying “I could use the choices in the game to force the player to reflect on, and express, their own deepest fears and then create a healthier relationship with those fears” (Cannon). Depending on how you play, the anxiety wins every time until the end of the game, putting the main character into distress over various trivial situations. The game also addresses unhealthy methods used to cope with anxiety, such as drinking. At the end, the game provides a pretty clear message about how you should learn to live with your anxiety rather than be consistently at odds with it, even giving advice on ways to work on your irrational fears. The game, while seemingly aimed at players who already have some form of anxiety, provides a creative representation of it in a way that could be understood by many.



Many creators create games based on their own personal experiences, as emphasized previously. For some, the purpose of these games is to educate and

hopefully bring people to an understanding when it comes to a certain experience. Other people make these games for people who understand their circumstances already because they have already gone through it or are going through it. Of these creators, there are many who feel that the educational “empathy games” do not work. As one would expect, it is hard to recreate something like the experience of mental illness in the short time span of a video game. No matter how many games related to the subject one might play, a person would never truly understand what it is like to have a condition such as depression or social anxiety unless they have had it themselves. Game developer Anna Anthropy brings this topic to light with her gallery exhibition titled “The Road to Empathy” created in response to the feedback she had received on a game she had made in the past. *Dys4ia* is a flash game developed to explore the hardships of being a transgender woman. Much like games *Depression Quest*, the game highlights the creator's personal experience and the challenges she and many others face. However, Anna Anthropy became frustrated with the fact that people had claimed to have developed a sort of “understanding” and “empathy” after playing the 10-minute game. *Dys4ia* had itself become an empathy game, much to Anthropy's frustration. “If you've played a 10-minute game about being a transwoman don't pat yourself on the back for feeling like you understand a marginalized experience,” she said in response to these reviews (D'Anastasio). Anthropy's goal had been to reach out to others who shared her own experience, not make people feel immersed in the experience or achieve a sense of empathy by making other people walk a mile in her own shoes. She challenges the very idea of this, suggesting that the simple act of playing a video game cannot replace a personal struggle on that scale.



In Anthropy's "The Road to Empathy," she created her own "empathy game" about someone taking a literal walk in her shoes, with a pedometer and a pair of her boots to earn points. To further explore the failure of empathy games, Anna Anthropy created a game titled *Ohmygod Are You Alright?*, as a direct sequel to *Dys4ia*. It was an autobiographical "survival horror" game that simulated her personal experience with being hit by a car in New York City. The game is heavily influenced by the classic *Frogger* game. The main goal is to help Anthropy cross the busy streets, avoiding each line of cars to get to the other side of the road, in a fashion that is much like *Frogger*. As you continue to progress, the game eventually gets so difficult that you become unable to avoid the cars and end up getting hit. Upon being hit, the player gets a glimpse into the thoughts that had run through Anthropy's head when she had gotten hit by the car,

relating mostly to her own financial troubles and how they will only be made worse if she were to get injured. As a sequel to *Dys4ia*, the purpose of this sequence of events was to highlight the idea that one can try to play an empathy game and feel that they have built an understanding of someone's experience, but in the end, "privileged folks will use them as a kind of shortcut to allyship, using a game like *Dys4ia* as a substitute for truly educating themselves on issues surrounding trans women's lives and how to support them" (Priestman). With *Ohmygod Are You Alright?*, Anthropy stresses that empathy games are not replacement solutions for real-world problems.



The debate about empathy games has resulted in the analysis of this genre of games as a whole, attracting the attention of experienced individuals such as Creative Director at Minority Media Vander Caballero and Margaret Morris, a clinical psychologist. When making an empathy game Caballero suggests questions such as “I

want to take someone on an emotional journey. What is that emotional journey?” and “what can I bring to someone’s life that’s going to be important and meaningful for them, a lesson that will help people in their life?” (Graft). In addition, Morris discusses two types of empathy; physically feeling what someone else feels, and seeing from another person’s perspective. Video games tend to rely on achieving the latter (Solberg).

While Anna Anthropy rejects the idea of empathy games, Vander Caballero chooses to embrace them. Having created various different forms of empathy games such as *Papo & Yo* (a game about an abusive relationship between a father and son) and *Silent Enemy* (related to bullying), Caballero aims to create meaningful experiences relating to people’s real emotions. To do this with video games, he stresses an importance on deciding the specific emotion or experience you want to focus on before working on game mechanics, using the experience to decide what mechanics will convey them best (Graft). While this may seem backwards in comparison to how games are typically made, with an importance on mechanics and other systems coming first, it makes sense for something like an empathy game to be made differently. The main focus is the personal experience or emotion and how it can be conveyed through the game, while entertainment factors and related mechanics are secondary. “[Our games are] are more about healing yourself. We all have pain in our lives – immense pain,” Caballero says. “I don’t see a better way as an artist in helping other people cope with that pain” (Graft).

In many video games, one of the most important factors that can greatly affect the experience of a player is the character they play. For empathy games especially, the main character of the story that the player is meant to empathize with has an effect on

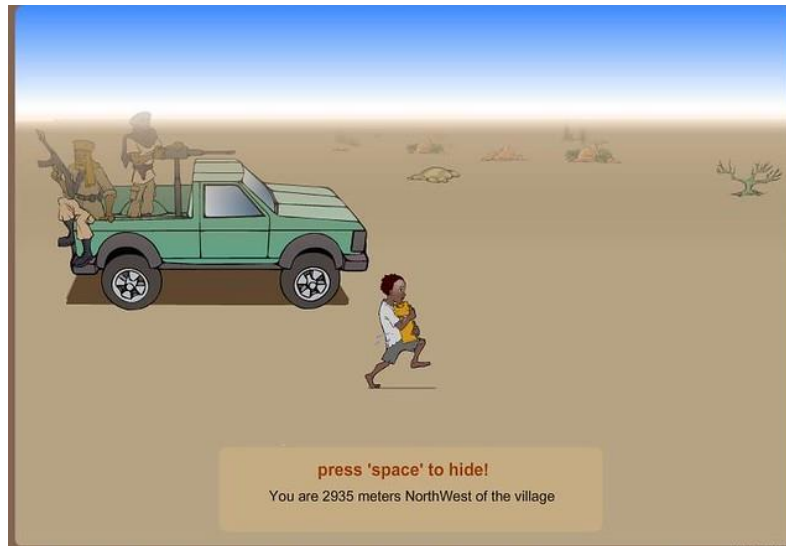
the entire experience. “One of the unique properties of videogames is their ability to put us in someone else’s shoes,” Ian Bogost says in his book, *How to Do Things With Videogames*. In the chapter titled “Empathy,” Bogost describes how the characters and their story in some games are meant to provoke empathy in its players. In general, most games will place you in powerful roles that surpass anything you could possibly hope to experience in the real world. This is the power that games have, to turn you into someone stronger and more able than yourself, which is a large part of the appeal of video games. On the contrary, an empathy game may do the complete opposite, enforcing a feeling a weakness one might feel in a difficult situation. This is usually necessary to be able to provoke a sense of empathy for the real-world experience the game tries to simulate. While less appealing to some, these games may have more of an ability to “put us in someone else’s shoes,” as the experience can and is actually happening in real life.

Bogost compares games such as *Splinter Cell* and *Metal Gear Solid* with an empathy game called *Darfur Is Dying*. In the former games, the character uses their exceptional skills in stealth to overpower their enemies. You can do things like asphyxiate guards and hide their bodies to reach the end of your goal. Being skillfully stealthy is one of the core components of these games, earning them the genre of “stealth action” (Bogost 18).



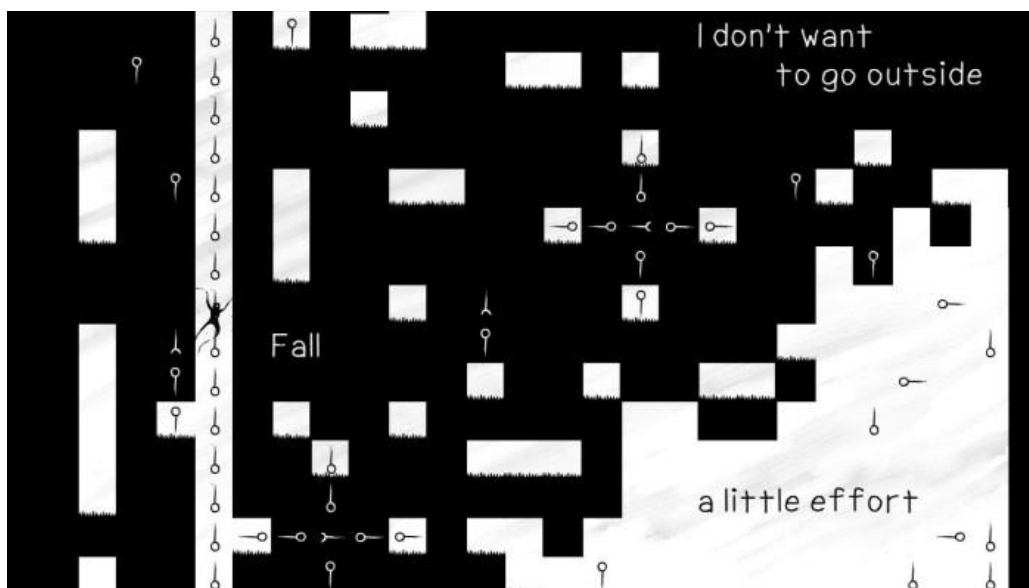
On the other hand, *Darfur Is Dying* is a game about a Darfuri child who must leave his village to get water for his family. The child, controlled by the player, must do this by running across the desert and avoiding the faster, more powerful Janjaweed militia. While stealth does also play a role in this game, it differs from games like *Metal Gear Solid* due to the fact that the main character has no choice but to cower and hide behind barriers, as it is the only thing they can do to survive. The player can't use their honed skills to overcome obstacles, limited only to running away and hiding. In addition to the simulation of a real-world tragedy, this core weakness component of the game is part of what makes *Darfur Is Dying* an empathy game, because it brings the feeling of helpless directly to the player, unlike games more similar to *Metal Gear Solid*. This is the story of the main character, putting the player into a real-life situation of a Darfuri child in the midst of a violent conflict. In the words of Ian Bogost, "if a game about the Sudanese genocide is meant to foster empathy for the terrible real-world situations in which the players fortunate enough to play videogames might intervene, then those games would do well to invite us to step into the smaller, more uncomfortable shoes of

the downtrodden rather than the larger, more well-heeled shoes of the powerful” (Bogost 19).



I’ve established and explained the concept of empathy games, now I would like to bring the topic to a more focused point relevant to my project; empathy games about social anxiety. There have been various indie games created around the experience of social anxiety. Each have their own unique take, because while they are all about social anxiety, everyone experiences and expresses it differently. In the game *The Average Everyday Adventures of Samantha Browne*, Andrea Ayres tells the story of Samantha Browne, a socially anxious college student who struggles to do the simple task of going to the community kitchen to make a bowl of oatmeal. There are little favorable paths you can take in the game, and sometimes it seems like every option is a bad decision. This was a reflection of Ayres experience with social anxiety. “With anxiety, I’ve always felt like I was choosing between two terrible situations,” she says (Couture).

While *The Average Everyday Adventures of Samantha Browne* has a more straightforward approach to social anxiety, another game, *Sym*, developed by Atrax Games, is more abstract. *Sym* attempts to put someone directly into the mind of someone with social anxiety. It is a puzzle-platformer where the main character travels between a light and dark world. The white world is meant to symbolize the mind, while the black world symbolizes the world outside. Switching between these two worlds while avoiding obstacles is the game's way of getting the socially anxious character to cope with their overwhelming feelings (Carmichael). Negative thoughts are displayed on screen throughout the game as the player attempts to traverse strange maps. "You can choose to hide or fight it, but at the same time you need the strength of your inner world to fight the problems that you face in the real world... You need to use your mind to reduce the dimensions of the fear of the outside world," Sebastiano Morando, a developer at Atrax Games, states (Carmichael). Through the interaction of these two worlds, the character navigates and deals with their social anxiety.



I thought that both concepts for these games were creative, effective ways of bringing to attention the struggles one with social anxiety might face. While they are wildly different approaches in terms of game design, concept and storyline, they are able to get their message across and immerse a player into the experience. In my game, I took inspiration from the “every decision is wrong” concept in *The Average Everyday Adventures of Samantha Browne*, which is a similar concept to the decision making in *Depression Quest*. That type of restricted decision-making in a game can work well because it relates the player to the experience through a direct interaction between them and the game. *Sym* does something similar, making the character have to switch between worlds as they progress. In *Sym*, however, I feel that the most effective addition was the text that would appear on screen. When it came to the social anxiety element of the game, the text displayed the clearest message out of all the other symbols, enhancing the experience and helping the player to better understand what was happening. At times, the text would even animate by becoming mixed up or shaky. I used a similar element in my project, where I applied an effect to text that would directly relate to social anxiety.

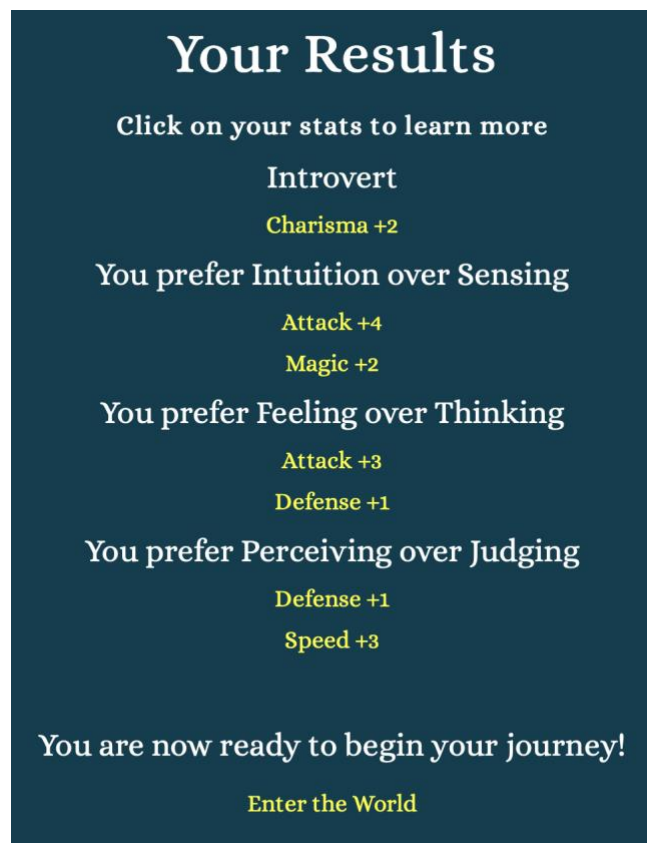
My project, called *Into the World*, is an online RPG style text-adventure game built on HTML, CSS, and JavaScript, about the experience of social anxiety. Much like many other RPG's, you play as a character who leaves home to go on an epic adventure, though the difference is that the obstacles you encounter mainly come up as a result of your character's social anxiety. It is your job to make sure they can overcome their anxiety enough to reach the end of the game without losing tragically because of an anxious mishap. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has been a difficult time for

us all, and I was unable to finish a working, playable version of the game beyond a short demo in time for the end of senior year. However, the game as a concept is able to be explained. I decided to make *Into the World* an RPG for several reasons. The first reason is personal preference. I have been a fan of RPG games since childhood and was fascinated with the idea of creating one of my own. Another reason I decided to take this route was because I felt it would be the best genre for what I was trying to create; a game where you are put into the role of someone else. If the goal is to simulate the experience of social anxiety, putting the player into the shoes of someone that had it seemed to be an effective strategy. Lastly, I noticed that characters in RPG's seem to have no emotions and will run into any and every area or battle with no real sense of caution, worry, or other normal human feeling. This is a standard trait of many main characters in video games, so I was interested in creating a character that gets put into the same situations but was more human about things.

My decision to make the game a text-adventure stemmed from a simple lack of artistic skill on my end. It was an experimental concept I decided to try and was assured through player feedback that the only-text format did not take anything away from the gameplay. With that said, I did attempt to add variation with the addition of CSS gradients and background color animations.

In the initial stages, I thought about the best way to get people to understand the feeling of social anxiety. People of all types experience it in different ways, so I thought it would be better for the game to have multiple storylines rather than a single linear plot, unlike the previous games discussed. From this, the idea to base the player's unique story on their personality type emerged, using the famous Myers Briggs

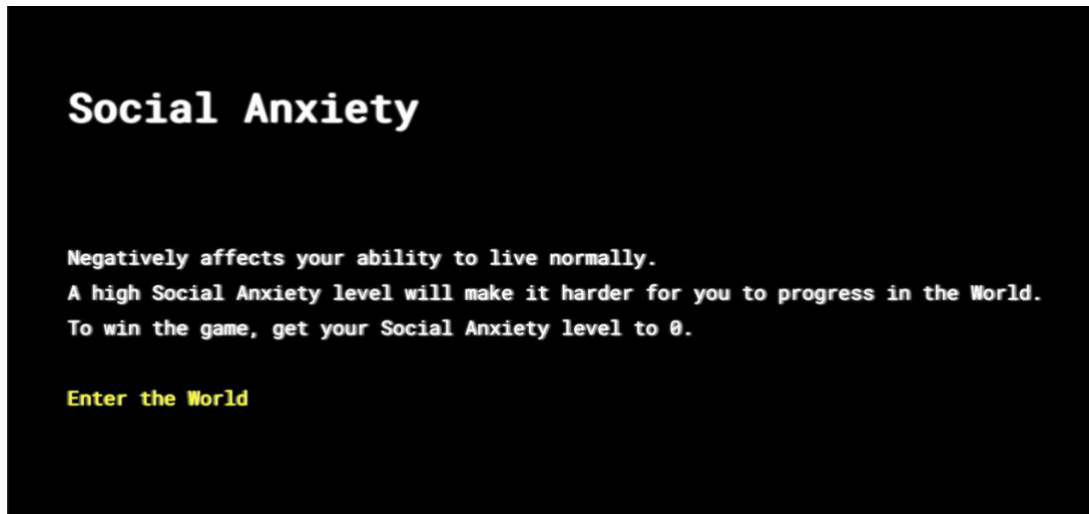
test as a reference. I built in a brief personality test, meant to categorize the player into their personality type. The goal wasn't complete accuracy, it only needed to be accurate enough to be able to choose the storyline that suited their personality type the most. Unfortunately, according to the Myers Briggs experiment there are 16 total personality types, and I would be unable to create a storyline for every type. The end result was two storylines, one for those who were extroverted and another for those who were introverted, with some areas where the two main story lines would branch off into other more unique lines at certain points.



The personality test also determines the stats one has at the start of the game. These stats include Attack, Defense, Magic, Speed, Charisma, and SA (Social

Anxiety). These stats are affected by the wellbeing of your character. If a character's SA is high, stats will fluctuate depending on their personality type and situation they are in. They may experience a higher attack, but lower defense, or a higher defense with lower attack, a maxed-out speed while all other stats are 1, etcetera. These stats will balance out when the character is out of the anxiety-inducing situation. Stats can also be built by training with your team and fighting enemies throughout your journey. The drawback of this is that depending on your relationship with your team and your experience fighting certain monsters, these methods of building stats may be less effective and may even contribute to a higher level of SA.

In the game, I attempted to make social anxiety a hidden entity that only the player knew about. I tried to make this clear through the sudden changes in visuals whenever social anxiety was mentioned. My purpose of doing this was to keep the joyful, casual game moments separate from the more serious components about social anxiety, fearing that one would overpower or subdue the other if they were combined. I don't think this very effective, and judging by player feedback, it seemed that this only served to confuse the player. While elements of this concept will stay in the game, the two components won't be as separated as they were before. Hopefully this will ease some of the confusion while keeping the same experience.



In *Into the World*, your Social Anxiety level varies based on how your character feels about the situation they are in. In a new situation, there will be a definite rise in their Social Anxiety stat. This is why it is important to not attempt to progress too quickly, as their SA level may get so high that they choose to quit their journey or make a hasty decision that causes harm to themselves and/or their team. Time should be spent building a bond with your team and becoming comfortable being out in the world outside of your hometown. These acts of keeping your social anxiety to a minimum are attempts to hint at how immersion and taking things one step at a time can do a lot to help with social anxiety. In addition, completing a successful interaction that is considered a new situation to the player will award them with a significant decrease in their SA stat and make it easier to perform that interaction in the future.

The game comes to an end when the character quits, dies, or makes it to the end. At the end of the game, the player will beat the final boss and return home. At this point, the game assesses how much SA you built throughout the game, and the level your SA is at in the end. If your SA level is low, the game will congratulate you on your

ability to manage social anxiety. If it is high, the game will still congratulate you, but will also give you tips on what you could have done better and how to better handle social anxiety in general. I do not want it to simply end when the main character finally beats their social anxiety once and for all, as this is not a realistic approach to social anxiety. My main goal for this game was very simple; to help people better understand social anxiety. Hopefully, this understanding would come as someone went through the duration of the game. This is why it was difficult for me to come up with an ending for *Into the World*. I am still thinking of and coming up with new ideas for how it could possibly end. While the ending will be rewarding to the player after coming such a long way, I hope for the journey to have much more meaning to the player than the destination. For those that play my game that already have social anxiety, I hope to provide some guidance to someone who may really be struggling, through the in-game character as they become better at managing theirs. Please note that my goal is not to be some sort of therapist. As stated before, I only hope to provide insight and understanding. After saying this, it may seem contradictory when I say that I somewhat agree with Anna Anthropy when she says that one cannot play a short game and suddenly understand the trials of another. In saying that I want people to understand social anxiety, I am not referring to the experience. You cannot come out of *Into the World* suddenly understanding how people with social anxiety feel. I only want people to understand *why*. Why someone with social anxiety is different from someone without it. This is obvious. Socially anxious people are different from those who are not socially anxious. However, many may not understand what exactly goes through a socially anxious person's mind that leads them to act the way that they do. I want to highlight

the differences between how someone with social anxiety may handle a situation that may otherwise be simple to someone else, by letting the player into the mind of a person with social anxiety. As I continue to develop my game, I hope to achieve this in the best way I can.

Video games are entering a new era where they are catching the attention of society as a whole, rather than being limited to certain demographics. From this new cultural evolution, games about mental illness have gained traction and more indie developers are contributing to the trend. These types of games are important as they bring to light actual societal issues, bringing matters to attention that are often seen as “taboo” in most circles. As seen in the examples above, there are already great games tackling mental health in their own ways. Mental illness in video games continues to evolve and reach out to greater distances and will likely continue to do so in the future. Whether future games take an educational, narrative approach like Depression Quest, or a hands-on approach like SuperBetter, every game will have their own take on mental health and how one experiences it. This will hopefully lead to a better understanding of mental illness as a whole. As around video games continue to become increasingly normalized in society, in due time there will be a game for everyone.

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