

## Can virtual reality treatment mimicking a psychedelic trip help relieve depression and PTSD?

What if you could unlock the same altered state of consciousness that psychedelics do — as well as their potential to treat [PTSD](#), [major depressive disorder](#), and other mental health conditions — whilst completely sober?

Some virtual reality experiences could offer just that.... The University of Sussex's [Hallucination Machine](#) mimics the swirling hallucinations triggered by classical psychedelics like psilocybin (the main compound in shrooms) and LSD.

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I spoke with Matthew Johnson, a professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Johns Hopkins Medicine, about the extent to which VR apps can mimic psychedelics — and their therapeutic potential.

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"I highly doubt whether an app alone is going to approximate the magnitude of the efficacy of psychedelic therapy," he says. That's partly because VR can only directly manipulate the perceptual, but not the emotional, aspect of a trip.

It's the emotional aspect — especially the mystical experience observed at higher doses, which can include revealed truth and ineffability, among other powerful qualities — that seems to underpin psychedelics' therapeutic potential. Studies have correlated it with long-term positive outcomes for [treatment-resistant depression](#), [lowered depression and anxiety in cancer patients](#), and [greater likelihood of quitting smoking](#), for example.

**[This is an excerpt. Read the original post here.](#)**