

# Tenovus Innovation Grant 2012: Case For Support

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| <b>Lead Applicant Name(s):</b> Dr Ceri Phelps, CPsychol, AFBPsS, HPC registered Health Psychologist                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                            |
| <b>Organisation: Centre for Psychology &amp; Counselling, Swansea Metropolitan University</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                            |
| <b>Address:</b> Swansea Metropolitan University<br>Townhill Campus<br>Townhill Road<br>Swansea<br>SA2 0UT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>Daytime Telephone Number:</b><br>Tel 01792 482084<br><br><b>Email Address:</b><br>ceri.phelps@smu.ac.uk |
| <b>Co-applicants:</b><br>Dr Paul B Hutchings CPsychol AFBPsS; Lecturer and Social Psychologist, Centre for Psychology & Counselling, Swansea Metropolitan University<br>Mr Andrew Baker; School of Applied Computing, Swansea Metropolitan University<br>Helen French, Counselling Services Manager and BACP-accredited Counsellor, Tenovus the Cancer Charity<br>Carol Hughes; Lecturer and BACP-accredited Counsellor, Centre for Psychology & Counselling, Swansea Metropolitan University                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                            |
| <b>Collaborators (Project Steering Group Members):</b><br>Beverley Cole, Lecturer and BACP-accredited Counsellor, Centre for Psychology & Counselling, Swansea Metropolitan University<br>Lucy Beddall, Community Engagement Officer at SMU<br>Lorraine Sherman, Lecturer and BACP-accredited Schools-based counsellor.<br>Liwsi-Kim Protheroe Davies, Cancer Genetics Counsellor                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                            |
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| <b>Project Title: The C:EVOLVE Project. Evaluation of an online virtual environment for counselling young people affected by cancer.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                            |
| <b>Lay description of project (250 words max)</b><br><br>Tenovus the Cancer Charity have recognised a need to offer an alternative form of counselling (other than face-to-face counselling) for young people in Wales who either have a personal diagnosis of cancer or who are caring for someone with cancer. The aim of this project is to develop an internet-based counselling service and explore the acceptability and potential psychological benefits of this service. The online counselling service will take the form of a “virtual reality counselling world” in a format familiar to many young people today who use computer games such as X-boxes. Young people across the South Wales area will be involved in all stages of the project including its initial design. Following the initial development of the service, 6 – 8 young people aged 12-25 years affected by cancer in the South Wales area who are either on a waiting list for face to face counselling or who contact the research team following recruitment/advertising will be offered the opportunity to take part in online counselling over a three month period. The pilot project will explore uptake rates and retention for online counselling, the demographic profile of those who choose to take part in online counselling, key therapeutic outcomes and overall attitudes towards the virtual reality counselling world. If shown to be successful, the virtual reality counselling world may be adopted by Tenovus for ongoing delivery of cancer support services to young people throughout Wales with huge scope for offering a wider alternative to face-to-face counselling for all age groups. |                                                                                                            |

### **Abstract (750 words max)**

The current Tenovus Counselling Service has identified an urgent need to provide a form of counselling which is appropriate for young people in the 12-25 years age range who may be struggling to cope with the effect of cancer (either a personal diagnosis or in their role as carer/family member of an affected individual) and who are currently not accessing face-to-face counselling. Evidence suggests that young people readily engage with virtual reality environments, are used to communicating through online media, and can benefit from online counselling. This project is an exciting collaboration between the Centre for Psychology & Counselling and the School of Applied Computing at Swansea Metropolitan University, Tenovus and external expert collaborators and proposes to develop a *virtual counselling world* which will provide an accessible, effective way of helping younger individuals affected by cancer cope with the many challenges that they face.

The design of the proposed project involves the development of a virtual reality counselling world and a pilot study of its acceptability and psychological benefits amongst young people affected by cancer in Wales. This virtual counselling world will enable young people to design their own personal avatar and that of the counsellor and to engage in a therapeutic session (through text, images or speech) via these avatars. Young people affected by cancer in their lives will be involved in all stages of the project through a Project Steering Group. This Project Steering Group will also include all co-applicants and collaborators (the latter representing qualified counsellors with a diverse range of experience in counselling young people, people with cancer or in engaging young people generally). The young people who form part of the project steering group will also contribute to the ongoing evaluation of the virtual reality counselling world as it develops and share their experiences of being part of this project through a closed project Facebook page.

Following a six month period of developing and piloting the virtual reality counselling world (two part-time computer games development officers will be recruited for six months of the project in order to ensure the appropriate skill mix, overseen by co-applicant Mr Andrew Baker) the online counselling service will go live for a maximum five-month period, seeking 6-8 young people affected by cancer to engage with the online service for up to a three-month period (mirroring standard practice currently offered by Tenovus for face-to-face counselling). During this phase a suitably qualified hourly paid counsellor will be funded through SMU's Swansea Innovation Early Stage Development Grant Scheme to engage with the virtual counselling world and deliver the synchronous and asynchronous counselling. Ethical guidelines relating to the consent of young people, protection of confidentiality and online research ethics will be adhered to at all stages of the project and participants (and parents if appropriate) in the live pilot phase will be asked to provide written informed consent following detailed information about this pilot study. During the "live" pilot period data will be collected from participants on two occasions: at baseline (prior to engaging with the virtual reality counselling world) an online questionnaire will capture key demographic variables, measures of perceived social support and psychological well-being. These outcome measures will be repeated at the end of the study alongside measures of key therapeutic outcomes and satisfaction with counselling in order to explore potential changes over time. In addition to data collected from the participants, the counsellor involved in delivering the counselling for the duration of this project will keep a narrative diary of his/her experiences which will be analysed at the end of the study in order to explore the perceptions of the person delivering the counselling in relation to the impact on the therapeutic relationship.

It is intended that the results of this study will inform the final development of an appropriate online counselling service for young people affected by cancer in Wales, with huge potential for rolling out to a more widely available service for those reluctant to undergo face-to-face-counselling/facing geographical barriers, other client groups such as those undergoing cancer genetic risk assessment or testing, and the inclusion of additional elements such as online self-help coping interventions. Importantly, in addition to the ongoing delivery of the online virtual reality counselling world, this project will produce recommendations regarding the potential pitfalls and challenges (practical and ethical) in relation to the future delivery of such online interventions for both clients and counsellors.

### **Background (500 words max)**

Large numbers of people are now choosing to access internet counselling online which has grown significantly in the last decade (Barak, Hen, Boniel-Nissim and Shapira 2008; Chester and Glass 2006). Young people have been shown to be drawn to this method of therapy as they have grown up with computers and may conduct many relationships through them. Research suggests that effective therapeutic relationships can be formed with young people online (King, Bambling, Reid & Thomas 2006; Hanley 2012) and that it is a service which is valued and

used by young people (e.g. Beattie, Cunningham, Jones & Zelenko (2006). We are not aware of any other cancer charity in the UK who have already developed an online counselling service in the manner intended within this project, with most charities/support groups (including those aimed specifically at younger people) offering online support groups/forums/digital stories as distinct from delivering online counselling. Whilst most forms of online counselling for people with cancer still involve simple email exchanges (David, Schlenker, Prudlo & Larbig, 2011), the use of avatars as a mechanism through which to achieve psychological benefit is starting to be explored in other counselling settings (e.g., Beattie et al., 2006; <http://www.Kooth.com>) and engagement with avatars is recognised as being familiar to most young people who are used to engaging with virtual reality computer games. Younger age groups affected by cancer have been found to have higher levels of internet use (e.g. Eysenbach, 2003) and have been found to report positive experiences from engaging with online counselling (e.g. Hanley 2012; King, Bambling, Reid & Thomas 2006).

The proposed project offers an exciting collaboration between the Centre for Psychology & Counselling and the School of Applied Computing, SMU, and the Tenovus Counselling Service (Helen French is a named co-applicant on this bid). The lead applicant, Dr Ceri Phelps, has led a variety of psychosocial research studies in the area of cancer and cancer genetics since 2001 with a focus on the development and evaluation of complex psychosocial interventions (see attached CV for relevant publications). Co-applicant Dr Paul Hutchings is an experimental social psychologist with expertise in researching the impact of computer-generated facial expressions and online communication tools. Ms Carol Hughes is a Practising Counsellor and Gestalt Therapist who has developed the Counselling Programmes within SMU including the Masters in Counselling Practice. Alongside Helen French, Ms Hughes will ensure that the individual recruited to deliver the counselling has the appropriate skills and aptitude to engage with the delivery of online counselling and that all ethical guidelines of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy are adhered to at all stages of the project. The School of Applied Computing at SMU have significant expertise in computer games development involving avatars (co-applicant Andrew Baker will oversee the technical aspects of the development of the virtual counselling world). The strong collaborative links and easy availability of the student population for feedback and piloting of the virtual counselling world add further strength to the project team.

### **Aims and Objectives (250 words max)**

The aim of the project is to gain pilot data on the acceptability and therapeutic value of a “*virtual counselling world*” for younger individuals affected by cancer. The final design of the virtual counselling world will be heavily influenced by the ongoing input/feedback provided by a “project steering group” which will include young people aged between 12 and 25 who have been affected by cancer. The project is expected to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. The development of a virtual reality avatar-based counselling world for young people affected by cancer, informed by the young people who are likely to make use of such a service
2. Quantitative pilot data on the acceptability, likely usage, and therapeutic value of this virtual counselling world for young people affected by cancer
3. Qualitative data evaluating the impact of the virtual counselling world on the therapeutic alliance from the counsellor’s perspective
4. Recommendations regarding the potential pitfalls and challenges in relation to the future delivery of such online interventions

It is recognised that the scope of this pilot project will not enable any inferential statistics or effect sizes to be calculated in regards to the quantitative data overall, but this element of data collection will instead focus on the changes within individuals over time in order to gain an understanding of potential trends and outcomes within this process.

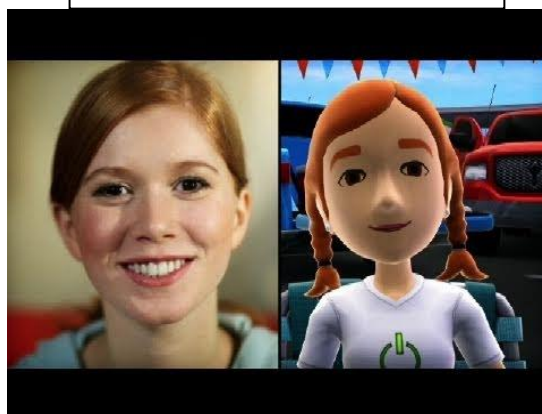
### **Methodology & Project Plan (750 words max):**

#### **Phase I: Initial Development of Virtual Counselling World**

This virtual counselling world will enable young people to design their own personal avatar and that of the counsellor (in a format similar to X-box 360 animated avatars and to engage in a therapeutic session (through text, images or speech) via these avatars. The development of the virtual counselling world will evolve over a six month process incorporating initial development and ongoing piloting and refinement. Two computer games development

officers will work on the project over this six month period to ensure the correct technical skill mix and that timescales are met.

Example of an Avatar



**Project Steering Group:** Crucial to this phase of the project is the “project steering group” which will be made up of the project team (psychologists, counsellors and games development experts), young people aged 12-25 years with some experience of cancer (themselves or within the family) and qualified counsellors with experience of working with young people and within cancer settings. The role of the project steering group is to ensure the following:

- 1) that young people have a key role in developing the virtual reality world in order to ensure it is acceptable to the target audience (please see section on Patient Involvement);
- 2) that the virtual counselling world facilitates and does not impede the essential components of a therapeutic counselling relationship
- 3) that the virtual counselling world is able to be systematically evaluated in order to meet the project’s overall objectives.

## Phase II: Piloting of the Virtual Counselling World

Within the last six months of the project the virtual counselling world will be piloted and evaluated.

**Participants:** Six to eight volunteers aged between 12-25 years will be sought through young people already on the Tenovus waiting list for face-to-face counselling, advertisements placed on the Tenovus website, flyers sent out to Friends of Tenovus groups, Tenovus Sing With Us choirs and other support groups across South Wales and displayed within SMU and other collaborating organisations e.g. Cancer Genetics Service for Wales, following appropriate ethical approval (see ethical considerations section).

**Delivery of Counselling:** During this period the counselling will be delivered through an appropriately trained counsellor within the Centre for Psychology & Counselling (funded through SMU’s Swansea Innovation Early Stage Development Funding Scheme) with no additional cost to Tenovus (supervision costs of 1.5 hours per month will also be provided as part of this development grant). The online counselling intervention will consist of a minimum of one online “instant” (or synchronous) exchange session of up to one hour a week over a six-week period (to map across the standard counselling provision within Tenovus), with additional non-instant (or asynchronous) exchanges also possible. This service will allow clients to write e-mails at a time which is convenient to them and receive a reply from a fully qualified counsellor within an agreed time frame (to be decided by the project steering group).

**Outcomes:** Participants will be asked to complete an online questionnaire prior to their first online communication with the counsellor and at the end of the pilot study (after six weeks or after the last email counselling exchange if sooner e.g., if the participant decides to withdraw or to take up face-to-face counselling if available). All measures will be piloted for ease of comprehension and readability by young people in the project steering group. The questionnaire will include the following data and will be analysed appropriately using SPSS:

- Key demographic variables (gender/age/region/whether affected or carer) and uptake/retention rates
- Key therapeutic outcomes captured through the Young Person’s CORE (Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation) assessment system. CORE is currently used by Tenovus and many other cancer charities (and other counselling services) to evaluate the outcomes of counselling along core dimensions. The Young

Person's CORE is a brief ten-item version of this scale that is easy to comprehend.

- Cancer-specific distress as measured by the Impact of Event Scale (Horowitz et al., 1979) which captures intensity of intrusive thoughts and attempts to avoid thoughts about a specific event, in this context, "thoughts about cancer".
- Satisfaction with counselling measured through an in-house satisfaction questionnaire adapted from existing measures for the current context of online counselling and appropriate for young people.

In addition, qualitative data will also be collected from the counsellor delivering the online counselling through a reflective diary focusing upon the perceived impact on the therapeutic alliance. This data will be analysed using a thematic narrative analysis (Riesman, 2008) which will enable a critical qualitative analysis of the experience of engaging with the virtual counselling world.

**Proposed Timetable** (please also see attached Gantt Chart uploaded as separate file)

|               |                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Month 1       | Recruit young people for Project Steering Group<br>Start work on basic set-up of virtual reality counselling world                                                 |
| Months 1 - 3  | Prepare all recruitment materials for evaluation phase (starting at Month 6) and obtain ethical approval.                                                          |
| Months 1 - 7  | Co-ordination and management of Project Steering Group (responsibility of Study RA)                                                                                |
| Months 2-6    | Ongoing development/evaluation of virtual reality counselling world with project steering group input                                                              |
| Month 5       | Start recruitment for pilot "live" evaluation phase                                                                                                                |
| Month 6 - 11  | "live" pilot period – provision of online counselling and ongoing evaluation                                                                                       |
| Month 9 - 11  | Ongoing data inputting/downloading and analysis of evaluation data<br>Analysis of counsellor reflective diary (upon completion of each participant's involvement). |
| Month 11 - 12 | Final analysis and report writing                                                                                                                                  |

### **Public/patient involvement plans (500 words max):**

A crucial element of this project is to engage young people with both the initial development and piloting of the *virtual counselling world* but also as the participants themselves during the evaluation phase. This involvement will primarily be creating a project steering group which will include four to six young volunteers with some experience of cancer (either affected themselves or within the family) obtained from the following routes:

- 1) Two to three school children aged 12-16 from existing links with a school e.g. the Dylan Thomas Community School in our area;
- 2) Two to three SMU students between 18-25 (both Psychology & Counselling students and Applied Computing students) expressing an interest in the study following advertising.
- 3) Two to three young people affected by cancer through existing links with Tenovus and the Cancer Genetics Service for Wales.

These volunteers will attend all project steering group meetings and will also form a separate "volunteer panel" that will take part in the ongoing piloting of the intervention and provide input into all design stages of the project. The volunteer panel will also be used prior to the evaluation phase of the project in order to ensure that all evaluation and consent materials are comprehensible and easy to complete, and will track their experiences through an online closed Facebook page. SMU's Community Engagement Office (Ms Lucy Beddall) is a collaborator on this project. Ms Beddall has vast experience of engaging young people in innovative projects including those in danger of becoming marginalised and will bring many engagement skills to the project. It is recognised that children who have suffered from cancer often miss out on schooling and may be disadvantaged in later years in employment (e.g. Larcombe et al, 1990; Pang et al., 2008). In this way, these young people will be co-producers of rich data that will capture their thoughts about the future delivery of online counselling services. Taking part in this project would therefore provide a unique opportunity with the following specific benefits:

- A chance to have their opinions heard

- Gain experience of research
- The option to learn IT skills including online communication skills
- Involvement in a project which looks good on their CV
- Financial remuneration (costed in at £100 per young person in the Project Steering Group).

An important consideration with this project is to recognise that the “users” of the proposed intervention are not only the young people or potential “counselees”, but also the individual counsellors themselves who will be delivering the counselling through a mechanism which may also be unfamiliar to them. To this end, the project team consider it equally important to have a number of counsellors on the project steering group, all of whom will have had direct experience of counselling young people, and who will also be consulted at all stages of the project (please see details of collaborators’ skills and experience).

### **How will the results of the study be used? (250 words)**

The results of the study will be used in three key ways:

- 1) To confirm whether the virtual reality counselling world is an appropriate and acceptable for young people affected by cancer;
- 2) To provide important insight into how such a service can meet key therapeutic outcomes expected in counselling service provision;
- 3) To develop the final version of the Virtual Reality Counselling World in order to implement it into on-going practice and service-delivery.

In particular, within the field of counselling and psychotherapy, the increasing use of online communities or “e-therapy” has been much acknowledged and debated in terms of the ethical issues involved, the effect on the therapeutic relationship, and the overall therapeutic outcomes (e.g. Lee, 2010; Yonan et al., 2011;). The results of the study will be delivered to Tenovus through a written report which will detail the following:

- uptake, drop out and completion rates for participants
- changes in psychological functioning pre and post online counselling
- the demographic profile of individuals most likely to make use of and benefit from online counselling
- satisfaction with the online counselling received
- identification of barriers to effective engagement with online counselling
- potential ethical or practical problems encountered from a service delivery perspective
- recommendations for any future online service offered by Tenovus

### **What are the expected benefits to people affected by cancer? (250 words)**

Ultimately, the results of this pilot study will be used to guide the future development or implementation of an appropriate online counselling service for younger people affected by cancer, with huge potential for rolling out to a more widely available service for those reluctant to undergo face-to-face-counselling/facing geographical barriers, other client groups such as those undergoing cancer genetic risk assessment or testing, and the inclusion of additional elements such as e-mentoring and online self-help coping interventions.

The provision of online counselling in whatever format immediately eliminates one of the most well-recognised barriers to the provision of any health-related services in Wales; that of geographical location. Problems of enabling equal access to those disadvantaged through living in rural/remote communities has long been recognised (e.g. Iredale et al., 2005; Shepherd et al., 2008). Moreover, within the field of cancer services specifically, internet-based provision has been recognised as a clear alternative to face-to-face counselling for patients who may be too unwell

to travel and who may miss out on conventional counselling services due to limited functionality due to treatment side effects and ill-health (David et al, 2011; Eysenbach, 2003).

Finally, the nature of the community within which SMU is based within a “Communities First” and Objective One area means that many of those volunteering to become part of the project steering group will be local to this area and will help ensure that the final intervention will be sensitive to any potential issues of accessibility, computer literacy and literacy levels as a whole.

### **Plans for sustainability/next steps of the project after Tenovus funding comes to an end (250 words)**

The proposed project has huge potential for sustainability in terms of creating a unique community network for people affected by cancer. At the end of this project an innovative, easy to implement resource will have been created with the potential to help many people affected by cancer across Wales and beyond.

Ongoing funding would be available through SMU’s Innovation Development funding to facilitate the creation of a not-for-profit spin-off company to manage the ongoing implementation of this intervention into practice (in line with the IP requirements stated by Tenovus) should Tenovus not wish to pursue the implementation of the virtual counselling world into their own service delivery.

There is clear potential to build the virtual reality counselling world into the existing Tenovus counselling offered here at SMU through the Community Counselling Clinic. A potential mechanism to take this forward includes seeking future funding from community engagement funds to provide confidential computer access through this clinic for those that do not have computer access in their own homes. Alternatively, funding could be sought to establish such computer access based in the local Community Development Trust premises which are well-used by local residents and young people within the area.

Finally, the research team as the creators of this project would continue to seek opportunities for further research and evaluation funding to establish longer term outcomes with a larger sample than the current proposal can allow.

### **Relevant Peer Reviewed Publications (up to ten)**

Barak, A., Hen, L., Boniel-Nissim, M. and Shapira, N. (2008) ‘A comprehensive review and a meta-analysis of the effectiveness of internet-based psychotherapeutic interventions’, *Journal of Technology in Human Services*, 26, pp. 109–60.

Beattie, D., Cunningham, S., Jones, S., Richards, J. & Zelenko, O (2006). “I use online so the counsellors can’t hear me crying”: creating design solutions for online counselling. *Media International Australia Incorporating Culture and Policy*, 118, 43-52.

Chester, A., & Glass, C. (2006). Online counselling: A descriptive analysis of therapy services in the Internet. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 34 (2), 145–160.

David, N., Schlenker, P, Prudlo, U & Larbig, W. (2011). Online counselling via email from breast cancer patients on the German internet: preliminary results of a psycho-educational intervention. *GMS Psychosocial Medicine*, 8, DOC05. DOI: 10.3205/psm000074

Eysenbach, G. (2003). The impact of the internet on cancer outcomes. *CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians*, 53(6), 356-371.

Hanley, T. (2012): Understanding the online therapeutic alliance through the eyes of adolescent service users, *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research: Linking research with practice*, 12:1, 35-43

Iredale, R., Jones, L., Gray, J & Deaville, J. (2005). “The edge effect”: an exploratory study of some factors affecting referrals to cancer genetics services in Wales. *Health & Place*, 11(3), 197-204.

King, R., Bambling, M., Reid, W., & Thomas, I. (2006). Telephone and online counselling for young people: A naturalistic comparison of session outcome, session impact and therapeutic alliance. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 6 (3), 175\_181.

Lee, S (2010). Contemporary issues of ethical e-therapy. *Journal of Ethics in Mental Health*, 5(1), 1-5.

Yonan, J., Bardick, A.D. & Willment, JH. (2011). Ethical decision-making, therapeutic boundaries and communicating using online technology and cellular phones. *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy*, 45(4), 307-314

## **Ethical Requirements**

For the recruitment and evaluation aspects of the project the lead researchers will follow the British Psychological Society's *Code of Human Research Ethics* (2010) and supporting *Guidelines for Ethical Practice in Psychological Research Online* (2007) and ensure all procedures also fall within the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) *Ethics for Counselling and Psychotherapy* (2010) framework. This will be ensured by the project undergoing ethical review by SMU's Psychology & Counselling Research Ethics Committee.

The project team recognise the clear confidentiality and consent issues involved in this project, particularly with the potential age group involved (i.e., those under 18 years of age). In line with good practice and ethical guidelines a clear and thorough written contract will be needed and limits to confidentiality with minors carefully considered as part of the consent process. Due to the age group being targeted and the option to recruit participants from cancer services, NHS ethical approval will be sought for this project (this can be obtained within the first three months of the project alongside the initial development of the virtual counselling world, and the process will commence should funding be successful). The lead applicant has much experience of obtaining NHS ethical approval and is currently a Committee Member of the South West Wales Research Ethics Committee.

In all elements of the design of the intervention itself, the BACP ethical framework and other relevant guidance e.g., the Online Therapy Institute's *Ethical Framework for the Use of Technology in Mental Health* (Anthony & Nagel, 2009) will be consulted. Lee (2010) discussed five common ethical concerns of online counselling which need to be dealt with during the informed consent process: appropriate concerns for e-therapy, possibility of misunderstanding, maintenance of professional boundaries, issues of confidentiality, and interruption of services. In the proposed project this information will form part of the detailed written informed consent procedures prior to agreeing to take part in the pilot phase of the study. As recommended by the Ethical Framework for the Use of Technology in Mental Health, this informed consent process will address issues such as the advantages and disadvantages of online counselling, boundaries, confidentiality, technology, and emergency contact details.

Following full ethical approval from SMU's School of Psychology & Counselling Research Ethics Committee and the NHS, clients on the Tenovus waiting list for counselling will be informed about the pilot study and invited to participate. Written informed will clearly state:

- that this is a pilot online counselling service that is being evaluated,
- that taking part in this pilot study does not mean that they are ineligible for face-to-face counselling,
- that they may choose to withdraw from the pilot study at any time or as soon as face-to-face counselling becomes available
- that taking part in the study will require them to complete a secure online questionnaire on two occasions, and that the individual data from these questionnaires will not be seen by Tenovus staff or anyone involved in the provision of counselling through Tenovus.

## Costs and brief justification:

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|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| <p><b>2 X .5 FTE Games Development Research Assistants for 6 months:</b><br/>Funding is requested for two part-time Games Development Research Assistants for the first six months of the project for the development, piloting and refinement of the virtual counselling world prior to the pilot live evaluation phase.</p> <p>The skills required to produce an avatar are a mix between programming and artistic (designer) skills. It therefore makes more sense to employ two separate individuals on a 0.5 basis who each have their own individual skill-sets (i.e. Artist/Designer and Programmer) for six months, rather than to employ a single person who may not possess all the skills needed to successfully complete the project. This six month phase of development includes ongoing piloting/feedback involving the Project Steering Group prior to “going live” for the evaluation period.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | £10,550 |
| <p><b>Hosting costs for virtual counselling world:</b> This is a maximum costing based upon the web-site creation, design and hosting/maintenance of the virtual counselling world for the duration of the project.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | £4,000  |
| <p><b>0.6 FTE Project Research Assistant for 12 months (3 days a week):</b> The project RA, based within the Centre for Psychology &amp; Counselling will assist with the day-to-day overall co-ordination of the project and will have the following specific responsibilities (overseen by the Lead Applicant)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation of appropriate documents for ethical approval in first three months of project</li> <li>• Preparing advertising materials and assisting with recruitment of young people for the Project Steering Group in the first three months of the project</li> <li>• Setting up and monitoring the Project’s closed Facebook site</li> <li>• Central point of contact for any project queries with appropriate dissemination/liaison throughout the project</li> <li>• Co-ordinating the monthly Project Steering Group meetings throughout the project</li> <li>• Finalising recruitment materials and data collection materials for the pilot evaluation phase</li> <li>• Downloading and analysing data from the online questionnaires and contributing to other analyses/report-writing in the final stages of the project (overseen by Dr Ceri Phelps &amp; Dr Paul Hutchings).</li> </ul> | £13,396 |
| <p><b>Survey gizmo licence for online questionnaires</b><br/>We request funding for a Survey Gismo licence in order to set up the online questionnaires for the evaluation phase of the project. Survey Gismo is an online package which provides more interactive features than Survey Monkey.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | £500.00 |
| <p><b>Payment of young people volunteers in Project Steering Group</b><br/>(£100 per volunteer X 6 volunteers)<br/>The retention of the young people in the Project Steering Group is an important challenge to the wider Project Team and vital to the success of the first phase of the project. We therefore request funds to enable us to provide a payment of £100 per young person (up to six young volunteers will be sought for this phase of the project), payable at the end of their involvement in the project.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | £600.00 |
| <p><b>Refreshments at project steering group meetings (held monthly)</b><br/>10 Project Group Members X 10 meetings @ £2 per head<br/>Monthly Project Steering Group meetings will be held, incorporating all co-applicants, collaborators and the young volunteers. We therefore request a small amount of funding to provide refreshments (tea/coffee/snacks etc) during these meetings (10 in total across the duration of the project).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | £200.00 |
| <p><b>Total Costings to Tenovus</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | £29,246 |

**Additional Project Costs (funded by SMU)**

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Counsellor Costs @ approx. £40 an hour = 87 hours commitment to project over the five month pilot period (equating to approximately 4 – 6 hours a week over this period).</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>£3,500</b>                                                                                    |
| <b>Counselling supervision costs @ approx. £40 an hour. 1.5 hours of supervision a month for up to five months =</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>£300</b>                                                                                      |
| <b>Matched funding of staff time</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dr Ceri Phelps: One day a week @ £29.41 an hour = £205.87</li><li>• Dr Paul B Hutchings: Half a day a week @ £27.71 an hour = £96.99</li><li>• Ms Carol Hughes: Half a day a week @ £27.71 an hour = £96.99</li><li>• Mr Andy Baker: Half a day a week @ £27.71 an hour = £96.99</li><li>• Ms Lucy Beddall: Two hours a week @ £14.34 an hour = £28.68</li></ul> | <b>£9,264.15</b><br><b>£4,364.55</b><br><b>£4,364.55</b><br><b>£4,364.55</b><br><b>£1,290.60</b> |
| <b>In-house production of promotional materials for recruitment of project steering group/participants</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>£200</b>                                                                                      |
| <b>Total other funding</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>£27,648.40</b>                                                                                |