

Obliti: Empathy Game Regarding Depression

by

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Abstract

Obliti is a game meant to promote empathy for people with depression, and applies a personal story to the experience. Empathy is the experience of understanding another person's condition from their perspective. You place yourself in their shoes and feel what they are feeling.¹⁷ The story follows the character through corrupted dream states, stuck in an infinite loop; reliving the tarnished dreams. This paper will discuss the story of *Obliti*, its history and the way the design helped the story come to the forefront of the experience. Using lighting, first person character and art assets, *Obliti* puts the player into the shoes of the main character. The paper also includes a post mortem in order to discuss the challenges of working with paid art assets, making a game about your past and the overall outcome of the project.

In order to test the effectiveness of *Obliti*, 20 subjects were asked to fill out a series of questions regarding mood and depression. The results of the study showed a change in mood from pretest and posttest, pointing toward empathy being transferred to the player. Part of the study asked players if they understood depression, in which there was a 10% change from "No," to "I don't know," suggesting some internal thoughts were changed on the topic.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisor, Dean O'Donnell for teaching me a new engine, Unreal Engine 4. The amount of tutorials, and advice helped me expand my knowledge in game design and different engines. I would also like to thank my readers, Lee Sheldon and Ralph Sutter for making sure I was staying on track with modeling and story, for this game has been made better with their constant advice.

My last thank you is to everyone in my life, always there for me. It's hard making a game about my depression and the story that haunts me. My family, and friends; I couldn't have done this alone. The support through my depression and the advice, has made me stronger and made me push through this project. Thank you.

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1. Introduction

Obliti (Latin) – To forget or to be forgotten.

Obliti's main goal is to showcase a personal story of depression, by seeing and living it firsthand. With this story, people without depression will gain more knowledge and empathy of general depression, while people with depression will use this as a potential outlet and not feel alone in this struggle. People with this illness will see this personal story, and apply it to theirs, in a way to connect with each other. *Obliti* will focus on being a serious game based on depression and adding to the current field. In the author's opinion, many games regarding empathy for depression cover specific topics, which add to the overall games covering this topic. *Obliti* hopes to add a page to this book, to better cover this topic; in hopes of bringing depression more to the light in this media.¹

Obliti is a first person story driven mystery, utilizing Unreal Engine 4; taking advantage of the built in blueprint system for coded systems. *Obliti* will be released on the PC and the target market ranges from 18 to 40 years of age. *Obliti* will also target individuals diagnosed with depression and people who do not have depression.

2. Research

2.1 Depression in America

According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America or ADAA, "anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness in the U.S., affecting 40 million adults in the

¹ "Facts & Statistics." *Anxiety and Depression Association of America, ADAA*. ADAA, n.d. Web. 12 Apr. 2017.

United States age 18 and older, or 18% of the population.”¹ Many sufferers turn to prescription medication and/or therapy. The point of this research is not to treat depression, but to showcase it to people who do not suffer from this illness. It is meant to open dialogue between people about this illness, start the discussion that is needed. This small research was to show the amount of people this illness effects in America and the need for games to address this real problem.

2.2 Video games and depression

An article from the American Psychological Association, states that “Video game play may provide learning, health, social benefits.”² This article mainly focuses on mainstream games, like first person shooters and role playing games, but it suggests that games have an impact on players’ physiology. An article written by Louie Castro-Garcia, lists five games that helped him cope with his depression. Kotaku even wrote an article about “4 Video Games that help you understand and deal with your depression.”³

An article from Pando discussed a game called “*Sparx*”, which “proved more effective in treating depression in adolescents than face-to-face therapy. A randomized clinical trial showed that the remission rate among adolescents with mild to moderate depression who participated in the clinical trial was 44 percent, compared to 26 percent for therapy as usual.”⁴

² Bowen, Lisa. "Video Game Play May Provide Learning, Health, Social Benefits, Review Finds." *Pardon Our Interruption*. APA, Feb. 2014. Web. 12 Apr. 2017.

³ Owen, Phil. "4 Video Games That Help You Understand And Deal With Your Depression." *Kotaku*. Kotaku.com, 19 Apr. 2013. Web. 12 Apr. 2017.

⁴ McKenzie, Written on June 25, 2013, Hamish. "A Game That's Better than Therapy for Treating Depression – and the Startup behind It." *Pando*. Pando, 25 June 2013. Web. 12 Apr. 2017.

The games and articles listed above go into detail of how these games are comparative to therapy in illnesses such as depression. *Sparx*, for example, is an RPG like dungeon crawler that tackles dealing with depression. This game was made to treat depression, unlike the ultimate goal for *Obliti*.

Obliti will be adding an outlet for people without this illness to feel its effects, using empathy. To get this information out to people is needed in order for people to recognize the importance and impact of this illness; using empathy games.

Games in both a serious and fun topic, have grown over the years in America, leading to empathy games coming into this new media.

Video games are widely available according to a Polygon statistic. “155 million Americans regularly play video games, 42 percent of Americans play for at least three hours per week and four out of five American households contain a device used to play video games.”⁵

2.3 *Obliti*'s Goal

Just like *Depression Quest*, *Flower*, *Papo and Yo*, *Chrono Trigger*, *Journey*, and *Thomas Was Alone*, *Obliti* aims to raise awareness for depression, through a new style of media.

Teaching people who do not have depression and making people who have depression feel that they are not alone are the main goals of *Obliti*. The importance of showing this illness to people who are not effected by it, is to open a certain narrative. This narrative is understanding and compassion for friends, family and strangers. It's hard to understand someones problems without

⁵ Campbell, Colin. "Here's How Many People Are Playing Games in America." *Polygon*. Polygon, 14 Apr. 2015. Web. 12 Apr. 2017.

being in their shoes; which *Obliti* does; puts the player in the shoes of a man battling depression.

2.4 Empathy Games

“Empathy is the experience of understanding another person’s condition from their perspective. You place yourself in their shoes and feel what they are feeling.”⁶ The article that this definition was pulled from, *Empathy Games: Birth of a Genre?* and discusses the new movement that is empathy games. With these games being relatively new, the article *Why Empathy is the Next Big Thing in Video Games*, says empathy games are “a newly defined genre of games that seek to foster a sense of empathy with a character.”⁶ This article goes on to say, adding to the definition, “Empathy-driven games simulate an experience constrained by rules in which the player is *not* empowered, and they may offer commentary on experiences ranging from...”⁶ Regarding empathy games, which *Obliti* is at its core, has effected different fields with positive conclusions. For example, it was found when students played an Aging Simulation “One hundred fifty-six student pharmacists completed the instruments. Empathy using the KCES and JSE-HPS improved significantly. Of the 13 items in the ASES, 9 significantly improved.”⁷ In this case, the simulation helped students overcome challenges.

Another article, which tries to teach empathy in students, found “Compared with a control group, students who played the simulation game as part of their curriculum expressed

⁶ CBC Radio. “Why Empathy Is the Next Big Thing in Video Games.” Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts at Georgia Tech, 25 May 2015, www.iac.gatech.edu/news-events/stories/2015/5/empathy-big-thing-video-games/407491.

⁷ Chen, Aleda M.h., et al. “Impact of an Aging Simulation Game on Pharmacy Students’ Empathy for Older Adults.” *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, vol. 79, no. 5, 2015, p. 65.

more global empathy and greater interest in learning about other countries”⁸ What these articles show, is the impact of empathy games on a targeted field, in which *Obliti* will target empathy for depression.

3. Development Overview

Influences

3.1 *Depression Quest*

Like *Obliti*, *Depression Quest* is a game oriented around depression. It is, however, completely text-based. The game has no real ending, just like depression and it is a great way of telling the story. The goal of the story attempt to make the viewer sad and that is what I want to induce in my game’s players as well.



The game description is:

Depression Quest is an interactive fiction game where you play as someone living with depression. You are given a series of everyday life events and have to attempt to manage your illness, relationships, job, and possible treatment. This game aims to show other sufferers of depression that they are not alone in their feelings, and to illustrate to people who may not understand the illness the depths of what it can do to people.⁹

⁸ Bachen, Christine M., et al. “Simulating REAL LIVES.” *Simulation & Gaming*, vol. 43, no. 4, 2012, pp. 437–460.

⁹ Quinn, Zoe. "Depression Quest." *Depression Quest: An Interactive (non)Fiction about Living with Depression*. N.P., 2013. Web. 12 Apr. 2017.

Depression Quest tells a narrative through empathy, targeting two groups; people with depression and people without depression. *Obliti* matches that by telling a personal story like *Depression Quest*, for it lets the player in on the character's life.

The main differences between *Depression Quest* and *Obliti* is, *Obliti* takes on more of a spectator role, as the events are being re-lived, while *Depression Quest* focuses on choices made by the player to progress the main story as it happens.

3.2 Asemblance

Asemblance is a first person narrative mystery, in which you interact with the environment. You go through the main storyline trying to piece together what is happening and what you are trying to do. The sense of mystery keeps the player involved through the entire story. With my game, adding a sense of mystery will help to engage the audience.



The game description is:

You wake to find yourself trapped inside an experimental machine...A machine built to simulate memories. You no longer recall why you entered, but an AI voice guides you. Trying to escape, you face memories from a past you may not want to remember. But what is real? Are these memories your own? Can you even trust your own mind anymore? Are you even in control? ¹⁰

¹⁰ "Home." Asemblance, asemblance.com/index.html.

Asemblance has the main character stuck in this dream like state, diving into the past of the character, in which we find as the players; is not so good. The main character tries, through interacting with the environment, to figure out these memories.

The main difference between *Asemblance* and *Obliti* is the notation of finding out if the memories are yours or not; for in *Obliti*, the memories are your own and you are living through them. In *Asemblance*, a machine is controlling the repeating of the memories, where in *Obliti*, your own mind is making this occur, diving into more of the mental illness side of the issue.

3.3 *Gone Home*

Gone Home is a first person narrative mystery game, which aims at environmental story telling. Through mystery and interaction, the player attempts to make sense of the lonely house and its contents. Interacting with most objects, also gives the game a realistic feel to it.



The game description is:

Gone home is an interactive exploration simulator. Interrogate every detail of a seemingly normal house to discover the story of the people who live there. Open any drawer and door. Pick up objects and examine them to discover clues. Uncover the events of one family's lives by investigating what they've left behind.

Gone home brings the interact mechanic to the front of the experience, where you piece together the story mainly through the objects you interact with. Following a maze of hallways and rooms, you discover each part of the house and the story told throughout it. It also features sections of the house where you go back to in which to find secret crawl spaces; an interesting topic regarding used space in level design, which was used in *Obliti*.

The main differences between *Gone Home* and *Obliti* is the advanced object interaction and the story told through those objects. In *Obliti*, the main story is told through audio triggers, while the objects offer small details to the main story, for support. *Obliti* also heavily relies on level designs of used space, having multiple iterations of the house being traveled through.

3.4 *Thirty Flights of Loving*

Thirty Flights of Loving is a simplistic game where the story is broken up, to cause the player confusion on the timetable of events. Taking place in a heist, twists and turns bring you closer and closer to the truth. A very simple game with a heavy plot, players must piece together. With flashbacks or maybe even flash forwards, it sends the player for an adventure that is confusing, but compelling.



The game description is:

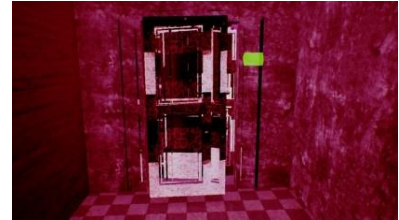
Explore the world of *Thirty Flights of Loving* through a first-person short story. In this sequel to *Gravity Bone*, take a deep dive with high-flying schemers, lovelorn criminals, and more stray kittens than you can shake a stick at. Saddle up, gunslinger.

Thirty Flights of Loving brings story into the main spotlight of this game, with a very short time of gameplay. The unique thing about this game is the story and how it makes the player question the actual storyline and the meaning behind the story. With *Obliti*, I wanted to make a story vague enough so players could assume certain endings, through the story beats provided.

The main difference between *Thirty Flights of Loving* and *Obliti* is its main pacing; where *Obliti* goes a calmer and nonviolent walking simulator. *Obliti* also used realistic art style to showcase the story, while *Thirty Flights of Loving* takes an advantage of a low poly art style.

3.5 Occlusion

A procedurally remixed glitch art game designed by a former WPI student, Klew Williams. Giving off a sense of dread and wonder, *Obliti* hopes to use that aspect to keep the players wanting answers, the further they travel.



The game description is:

Occlusion is a procedurally randomized interactive art experience which uses the motifs of repetition, isolation, incongruity and mutability to develop an experience of a *folie à deux*: a madness shared by two. It draws from traditional videogame forms, development methods, and tools to situate itself in context with games as well as other forms of interactive digital media.

Occlusion tackles used space in which the character is constantly walking in the same level layout, repeating the cycle until you eventually become slow enough to make no progress. Not everything is the same each iteration of the level, there are major changes with the furniture and even materials. In *Obliti*, the concept in used space is applied with the house levels, in which objects change throughout the level.

The main differences between *Occlusion* and *Obliti* is in *Occlusion*, materials changes, as well as some meshes. *Obliti* only changes mesh positions, and does not explore changing materials. The house in *Obliti* changes with different rooms opening each time you go through an iteration, which adds more to the used space concept.

4. The first idea

The ideas associated with *Obliti* didn't start with *Obliti*; it was molded after multiple attempts on this type of topic. It first started when I was diagnosed with depression by my doctor, and prescribed anti-anxiety to stop the racing of my mind. The reason for this depression was the main story found in *Obliti*; I had a girlfriend who cheated on me and left me.

Unfortunately, this was not the first time this type of event happened to me; my first girlfriend also cheated on me. After these two incidents, the mind starts blaming itself and I took the incidents to heart; blaming myself. With this type of mindset, I went into a state where nothing really mattered, and I viewed the world to be a very bad place.

The medicine that I took made me go into a trance- like state, where all my emotions were suppressed. I wasn't sad or angry but I wasn't happy either. I decided, against my doctor's word, to quit the medication and attempt to find an outlet.

Being a game designer, getting my bachelor's degree, I decided to make a video game depicting my emotions. The project that was produced was unnamed, and not saved; because of its randomness and lack of any sense. It was a side scroller platforming game, where you read text boxes showcasing the character's internal thoughts. It wasn't a game, more of a collection of levels thrown together, it attempts to get my mind on the screen. At the time, my brain could not put together the puzzle pieces that was my memories, so that reflected in the design. With that project quickly abandoned, I started working on the next version. This one unnamed as well but I actually saved the project this time, with the intent to finish the project. Attempting to find this game, in 2018, has led to finding corrupt unity files, which means the project is lost. The base game was a walking simulator, which was brought over into *Obliti* but that is where the feature

list started and ended. The main character was walking this strange path, winding through mountain passes, while walking through box triggers for dialogue to pop up.

There was no interaction with the environment, the character merely looked and listened to the landscape. The story was meant to be the main character in his own mind, diving into the problems he was facing. The main themes were loneliness, and depression, with the player playing detective to see what the story is. To give this game a name, *Obliti 0.5*, helped me understand the limitations and needs for my next game; for I knew 80% into development I needed to change some things.

The list I gathered was this:

- Walking simulators are fine but need more mechanics; other than walking
 - This led to the object interaction in *Obliti*
- Low poly used in *Obliti 0.5* was not capturing the emotion I wanted
 - This led to the use of a high poly asset pack being used for *Obliti*
- Unity had limitations when it came to lighting and the overall feel of the game
 - Moved *Obliti* to Unreal Engine to better suit that need
- Orbs of light were used to guide the player, making it seem “alien”
 - Used nature campfires and doors; as well as the girl to progress the story
- The story was all of my emotions, all my problems
 - I decided to tackle the main problem of my depression, give more focus. I dive into the effects of this in my post mortem.

This list, gathered over the course of time, helped *Obliti* become a viable game idea. Through this process of iteration, *Obliti* was the best parts of my previous games about this topic.

5. Initial Steps in the design process

Having the general concept of this game in the making, it was time to bring prototype into Unreal Engine. Having the first project done in my Freshman year, and the walking simulator version in my Junior of College, all of my experiences were in Unity. Up to this point, gathering resources and sources for my influences, I have never touched Unreal Engine before but was eager to learn. With this daunting task ahead of me, my advisor gave me tutorials to follow in order for me to formalize myself with the Engine, and the blueprint system.

Some of these tutorials include:

- Making a simple room, with a hallway attached
 - This was for me to understand mesh and mesh deforms
- Making doors open and close with blueprints
 - Introduction to the blueprint systems
- Triggered events, such as a gate opening
 - This helped me understand player influenced triggers
- Global volumes regarding lighting
 - This helped me understand the lighting system in Unreal

In order to gain familiarity with the engine, I went through a vast amount of tutorials. So in reality, this list can easily exceed 20 pages. The aforementioned were some of the more

foundational tutorials that I incorporated in my learning. With this basic knowledge, the time was to start creating the level designs. The reason for choosing Unreal Engine instead of Unity was due to two reasons. The first reason was my personal ambition to learn Unreal Engine, for it was a long term goal of mine to learn more engines. With extensive knowledge of the Unity Engine, the lighting was lower quality than found in the Unreal Engine. This distinction leads to using Unreal Engine for the project. The lighting was a huge part of *Obliti* and Unreal Engine helped with that process.

6. Level Design

Starting on paper, I knew I wanted to stick with two locations, one representing the past and one representing the character's mind, in a more abstract way. For the past, I went for a house setting that was very personal to me; my own house. Most of the memories discussed were made in that house, so I designed around the house. Every small detail with the level design can be matched to my own house, with some minor tweaks to sizes.

The forest was a different story, for it originated more in a free form type of way. There was no set plan for the level layout of the forest levels; I just made random paths snaking their way through the forest. The way I designed the layout of the forest was my current mood when concepting and building them in engine. As a result, the way the level looks is distorted; winding through endless trees in the forest. When going through these paths, you get the feeling of isolation, and away from civilization; stuck in the middle of a forest with trees for the next 50 miles.

With the overall concept done with both the levels in the house and the forest; I wanted to devise a plan for replay ability in those levels. Not only for the people playing *Obliti* more than once, but for players going through the levels. The overall design saw four house levels, four forest levels and an end level concluding the experience. However, the player would go through the house four different times and would soon grow familiar with the layout. The problem with this is that familiarity with the level, for it gets boring to go through a level four times. To change this, I played with this “used space” and wanted to make the same level fresh for the player each time they go through it.

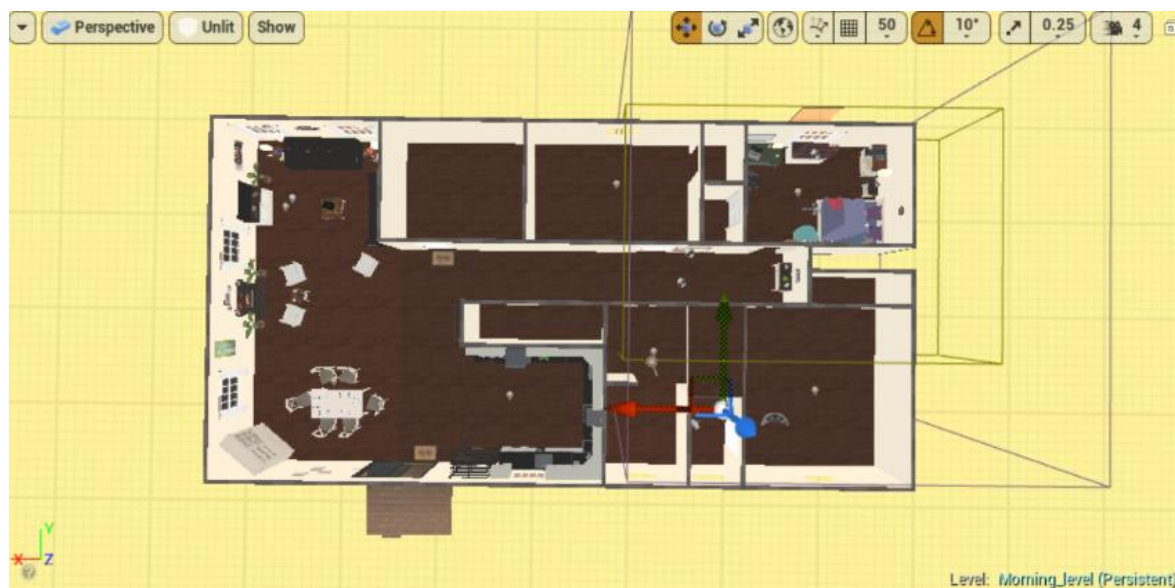


Figure 1. Overall layout of the house level.

The first house level contains the layout of the normal house but very limited access. You start in your bedroom before entering the hallway; where you wind the three other doors shut. This forces the player to explore down the hallway into the living room and kitchen area of the house. As each house level appears, one door is open, letting the player explore the new room.

The list of changes per level is below:

- House level one: Only the character's bedroom is open, leading to the hallway; which leads to the family room



Figure 2. The main character's room, where you start each time you enter the house

- House level two: Across the hall from the character's bedroom, the parents room door will be opened to explore

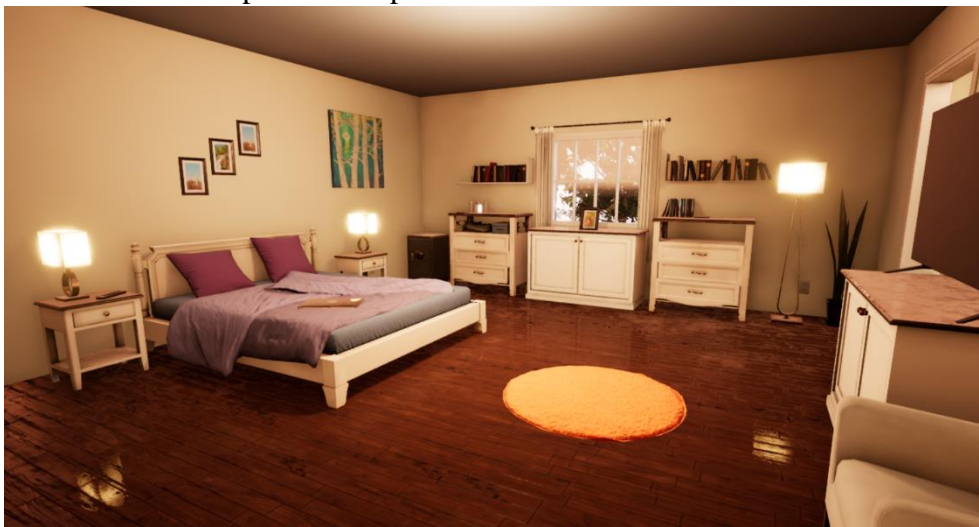


Figure 3. Across the hall from the character's bedroom is the parents room, accessible on the second house level.



Figure 4. Down the hall to the left, you can find the bathroom now open.

- House level three: When walking down the hallway, the bathroom door on the left will be open to explore



Figure 5. The fourth room, found on the right side of the hallway.

- House level four: When walking down the hallway, the computer room door on the right will be open to explore.

However, I wanted to explore used space more when dealing with the old rooms when reentering the house. There was a constant change in rooms being opened up, which led to more items and space being explored but made the preexisting rooms left to be the same. To stop the player from having to deal with the same old rooms, I added new items to the preexisting rooms, while also moving and getting rid of some items. When players went through the house environment the second, third or fourth time, there would be subtle changes to the level that would warrant investigation each time. Not only does this increase play time of each play session but lets the player get a fresh level, even though it was the same level the whole time.

Regarding the forest environment, there were major changes when it came to the design. Each iteration, major environmental pieces would be different, making it seem you were exploring a different section of the forest each time. The

forest was meant to showcase the players mind, being corrupt and twisted; so I wanted the player to feel lost each time a new forest level appeared. I didn't want them to be familiar with the path



Figure 6. Objects found in the first level of the house



Figure 7. House level two shows objects being moved and removed.



Figure 8. Forest Level

system, or know where they were; I wanted them to feel confused on where the path leads them next.

The list below showcases, with pictures, the level designs of the forest levels:



Figure 9. Forest level one.

- First level of forest: The player first starts in a valley, with a path leading up an embankment toward some hills. Once on top of this hill, the player spots a pedestal and door to the next level. The major set piece is just the chapel shining a spotlight on the pedestal.

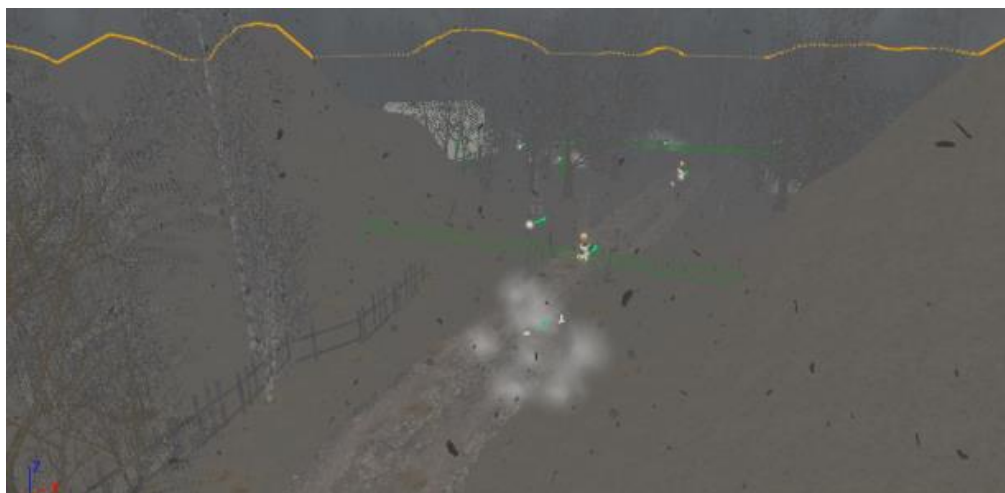


Figure 10. Second level of the forest.

- Second level of forest: This level is flatter, with a winding path leading the left. The path leads to the main character's room, in which the player interacts with part of his house in the corrupt forest. This path goes straight into a clearing which has sitting the pedestal and door to the next level. The major set piece is this section of the house, as the player walks and interacts with the space.



Figure 11. Third level of the forest.

- Third level of forest: This level has the player walk down a straight path that curves in front of this giant, closed, house. This path eventually curves into a clearing, which brings them to the pedestal, and door to the next level. The major set piece is the house to the right of the path, which serves as a landmark for the player in this level.
- Fourth level of forest: The player starts with looking down a straight path, looking at the same house before but in a different landscape. The player can enter the house now, with certain rooms and second floor being blocked off. Once through

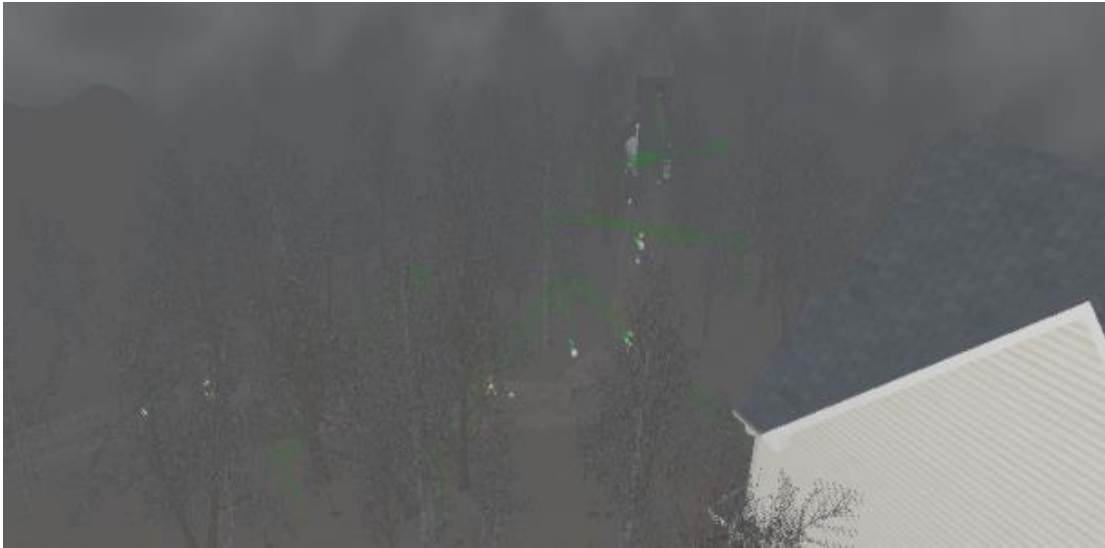


Figure 12. Fourth level of forest.

the house, the player walks down a path leading to the right, which dumps into a clearing, which holds the pedestal and door for the next level.



Figure 13. Last level showing the previous doors entered.

The final level is the conclusion of the story before the player is sent back to the main menu. Taking place in the forest, the path is relatively straight, with multiple doors on the side of the path. These doors represent the doors previously encountered, and cannot be entered. Walking down the path will lead to a door directly at the end, which leads the player to the main menu.

7. Mechanics

7.1 Walking Mechanic

- The main mechanic in the game will be walking, for that is how the player gets around in the scenes. Walking through triggers and activating dialogue will advance the main story in *Obliti*. The main storyline is progressed by walking and interacting with objects found in the environment.

- The walking works when the player hits W (to walk forward), A (to walk right), S (to walk back), and D (to walk left). The player can also use the arrow keys, for both work for *Obliti*. This is an accessibility factor for people who are left handed. Up arrow key moves forward, down arrow key moves back, left arrow key moves left and right arrow key moves right. Using the mouse, you can rotate your camera 360 degrees around the player. The view will be set in the first person mode to simulate real life.

7.2 Object Interaction Mechanic

- Being a story based game, objects can be found in the environment in which the player can interact with. Examples of this interaction is picking certain objects up, viewing them and proceeding to put them down. These objects will help support the main story delivered through the voice dialogue. The main

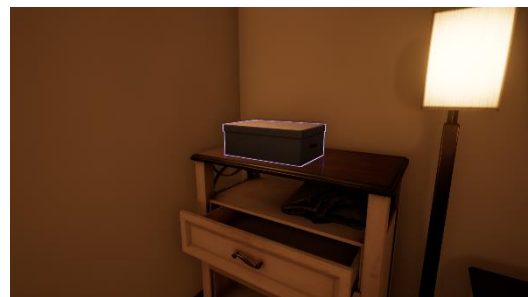


Figure 14. The blue glow around this object indicates it can be interacted by the player.



Figure 15. You can then view the object close up, for better looking.

story can be complete without the viewing of these objects but will add subtle details to the overall story. Objects that are interactive will have a blue outline to them, in which the player can use the F key to interact with it. When you interact with an object it will come closer to the camera, fading out the background so the player has an unobscured view of the object. Once the player has finished looking at the object, the player hits F to set the object down.

The interaction mechanic works by getting the object desired in the middle of your screen, in which the object will highlight. Once there, the object will show dialogue associated with that object, explaining its importance to the story.

7.3 Triggering the past Mechanic

- At the end of each level, the player will enter through either a door or walk into a trigger box attempting to reach the woman. These past events will be walkable levels in which the player will learn valuable backstory. Once the objective is



Figure 16. Showing one of the doors players enter, to trigger another house level.

complete, aka the memory is over, the player is sent back to the present. However, no matter how long the player is in the memory, it lasts only a second in the present. (To justify the passage of time not adding up, also you will be in a dream state)

- Once promoted by both voice dialogue and a screen popup, the player will hit 'F' and go through the door; taking them to the house levels. Normal mechanics apply in the

memory and once the memory is complete, the player enters a trigger box to return to the corrupt forest; the present. A memory portal will be to enter and exit these memories; in which was turned into a door.

8. Story

Obliti's main feature is its personal story and the emotional roller-coaster that it is. Based off a real life story, it had to be modified heavily.

- The real life story took place over 2 years
 - The story needed to be compacted down into a condensed version you see in the game.
- The forest level being the corrupted dreams
 - With the real life story, there is no actual corrupt forest. The corrupt forest is a stand in for the abstract feeling of my head during these times.
- Some parts of the story were spread over different aspects to enhance the story
 - Since I am writing a story for a video game, there can't be any dull points, and the story needs to follow a typical story found in a video game.

The brief story devised from my proposal read like this:

Follow a man as he lives his normal day life with depression. His life is gray, but he tries to keep active with friends and family, but finds himself drifting from them. Dealing with PTSD from past events, he goes through frequent flashbacks to how his depression started. Can he fill his present with color by forgetting the past?

The above excerpt is the original concept of *Obliti*, and the foundation of the story found in the game today. Due to scope reasons, I originally had a mechanic that had current day events, the house, in black and white. As the main character went back to memories, color returned to symbolize the past was brighter than his present. I dropped this type of color change due to time restriction and since half the game was going to take place in the house; I didn't want the player to be in a black and white scene that long.

After fleshing out the details of the story and the main progression, it was time to write the script for the main character, and eventually record a voice actor reading it. To do this, I filled out a screenplay template in which I turned *Obliti* in a screen play, to see the events in sequence. Below this paragraph you can find the screen play and the actions, and voice lines found in the game.

9. Assessment

Obliti was designed to showcase a personal story regarding depression, and through that story; empathy was hopefully retained through this game. The ultimate goal of *Obliti* was to spread awareness of this illness to people who do not have depression; as well as give people with depression the sense they are not alone in this fight. To assess empathy gained after the game was played, series of events occurred to test:

- Before playing the game, players signed a consent form to agree with participation in the study.
- A pre-test was given to the person, asking them six different questions regarding depression and general mood.

- Once the pretest was completed, the player went into the game and played from average of 10 to 20 minutes of gameplay. Please note: Players gave active feedback during this process, while the investigator sat beside them.
- After the player finished the game, a post-test was given, asking only four questions. Once completed the player left, and data was stored.

The below section is going in depth of what questions are found on both the pretest and posttest.

- Question number one for both the pre and posttest.

On a scale from 1 (Feeling sad) to 10 (Extremely happy), how happy do you feel currently? The definition of happy is feeling or showing pleasure or contentment. *

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Feeling sad Extremely Happy

- Question number one gauges the player's happiness, in order to see adjustments in pre and posttest.
- Question number two for both the pre and posttest.

On a scale from 1 (Extremely tired) to 10 (Energetic), how are you feeling?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Extremely Tired Energetic

- Question number two main reason is to assess if *Obliti* effects the player's mood.

- Question number three for both the pre and posttest.

On a scale from 1 (Not much care about other peoples problems) to 10 (Extreme care regarding other peoples problems) what is your current mood toward other peoples problems?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not Much Care Extreme Care

- Question number three is attempting to see if players become more sympathetic.
- Question number four is only found on the pretest.

Do you know someone diagnosed with depression?

Yes

No

I don't know

- Question number four is to gauge if previous empathy is already present, due to a past condition.
- Question number five is only found on the pretest.

Have you been diagnosed with depression?

Yes

No

I don't want to say

- Question number five was a general stat to collect to see how it ranges at WPI, and was not used during testing.
- Question number six is found on both pre and posttest.

Do you think you understand depression?

Yes

No

I don't know

- Question number six was to assess learning.

9.1 Methods

Out of the twenty testers, four testers were excluded from the study due to preexisting conditions. Question number five asks the testers if they have depression, in which they had the option to say Yes / No / I don't want to say. Four of these testers answered Yes, and were then excluded from the tests. The reason for this is due to their illness, they already have empathy for this type of topic; possibility skewing the data collected.

The data of 16 testers were then used to determine empathy gained during testing. The original hypothesis for *Obliti* is the personal story found in *Obliti* will cause empathy in players for depression and the side effects of this illness.

A side note for this test, one of the questions, question number four, asks the tester if they know anyone with depression, with the answers being Yes / No / I don't know. Out of the 16 testers, 11 of them know someone with depression, two saying no and three saying I don't Know. 68.75% of testers know someone with depression, which shows how many people can be affected by this illness. This question was more of an information gathering tool, to see basic stats, and does not impact the assessment of this project.

9.2 Results

Looking at question number one, regarding the scale from sad to happy, we can see changes in mood before and after *Obliti* was played. 12 out of the 16 testers saw a decrease in overall happiness from pretest and posttest. 2 out the 16 testers saw no change, negative or positive, in overall happiness and 2 out 16 testers saw an increase in happiness from pretest and posttest. Looking at the data, there was a huge shift in overall happiness, with 75% of testers reporting a decrease in overall happiness.

On a scale from 1 (Feeling sad) to 10 (Extremely happy), how happy do you feel currently? The definition of happy is feeling or showing pleasure or contentment.

20 responses

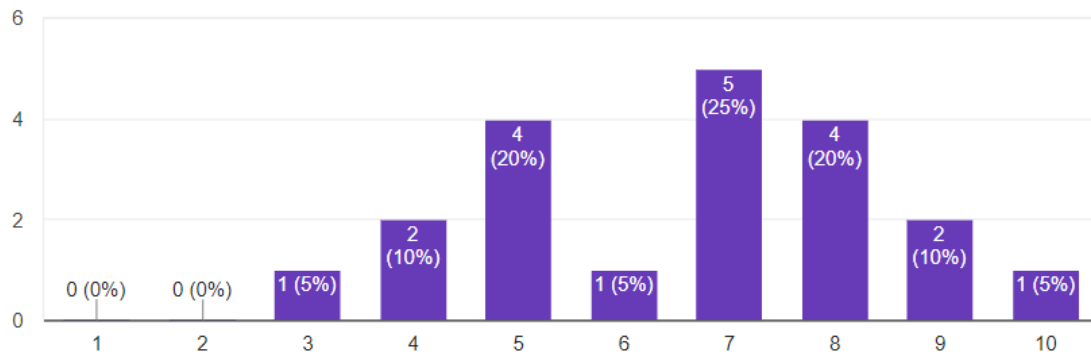


Figure 17. Pretest showing tester answers to question number one

On a scale from 1 (Feeling sad) to 10 (Extremely happy), how happy do you feel currently? The definition of happy is feeling or showing pleasure or contentment.

20 responses

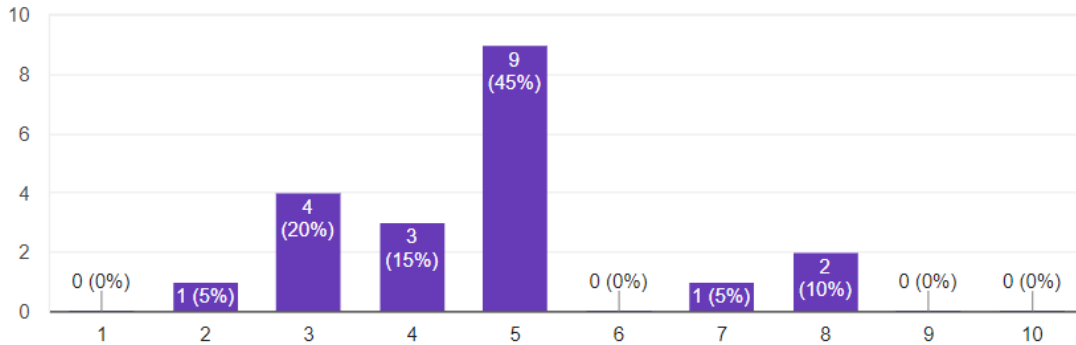


Figure 18. Posttest showing tester answers to question number one

Looking at question number two, regarding the testers energy levels, we can see slight changes in energy before and after *Obliti* was played. 8 out of the 16 testers saw a decrease in overall energy levels from pretest and posttest. 5 out the 16 testers saw no change, negative or positive, in overall energy levels and 3 out 16 testers saw an increase in energy from pretest and posttest. Looking at the data, there was a slight shift in overall

On a scale from 1 (Extremely tired) to 10 (Energetic), how are you feeling?

20 responses

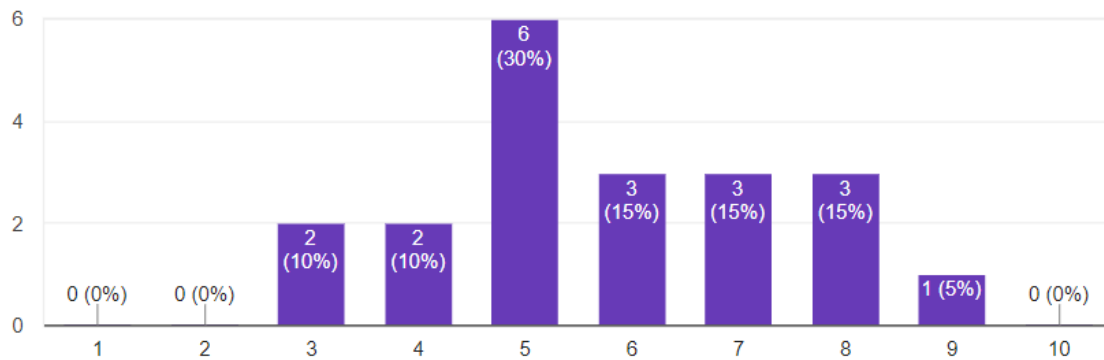


Figure 19. Pretest showing energy levels in testers

energy levels, with 50% of the testers showing decreases in energy, compared to the 18.75% of testers increasing energy.

On a scale from 1 (Extremely tired) to 10 (Energetic), how are you feeling?

20 responses

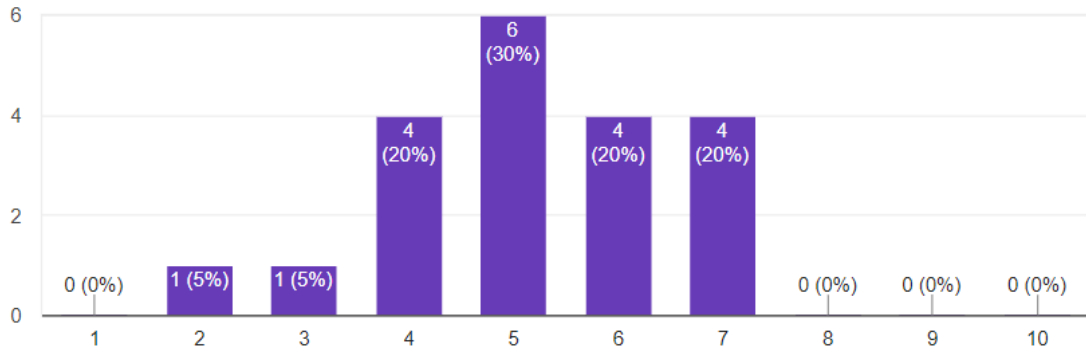


Figure 20. Posttest showing energy levels in testers

Looking at question number three, regarding the testers care levels for others, we can see slight changes in care before and after *Obliti* was played. Nine out of the 16 testers saw an increase in overall care for others from pretest and posttest. Six out the 16 testers saw no change, negative or positive, in overall care for others and one out 16 testers saw a decrease in care for others from pretest and posttest. Looking at the data, there was a

On a scale from 1 (Not much care about other peoples problems) to 10 (Extreme care regarding other peoples problems) what is your current mood toward other peoples problems?

20 responses

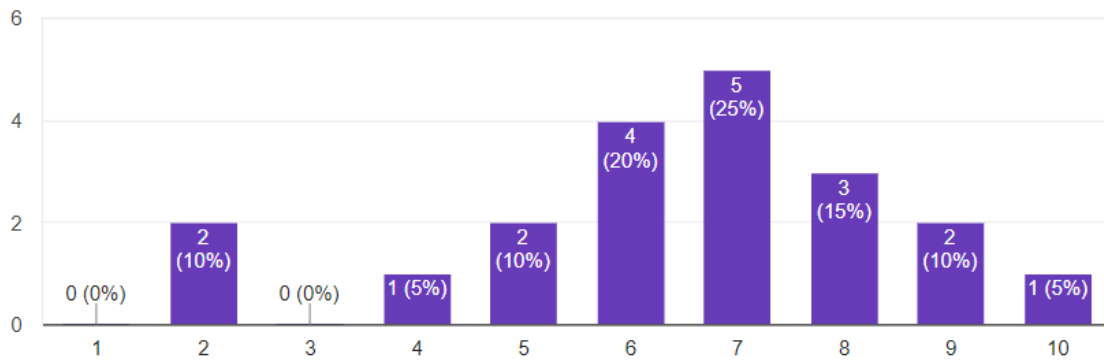


Figure 21. Pretest of overall care question for testers

On a scale from 1 (Not much care about other peoples problems) to 10 (Extreme care regarding other peoples problems) what is your current mood toward other peoples problems?

20 responses

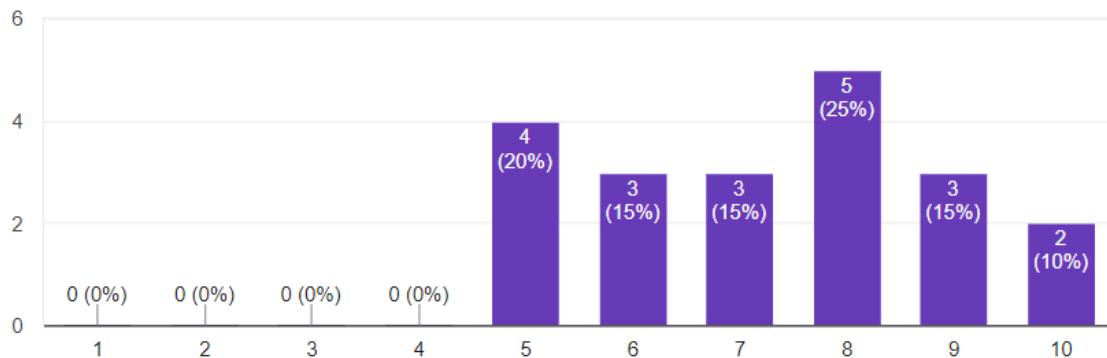


Figure 22. Posttest of overall care question for testers

slight shift in overall care for others, with 56.25% of the testers showing increase in caring for others, compared to the 6.25% of testers decreasing care for others.

Looking at the data regarding the last question, the one concerning if you understand depression, with Yes / No / I don't know. Out of the 16 testers, only one tester's answer changed between pretest and posttest. Their answer changes from "Yes" to "I don't know," while the other fifteen testers showed no change in their understanding. From this data, I can say *Obliti* is not a video game to educate what depression is, more of a game that lets the player experience the trauma.

After reviewing the data from the 16 testers, the data provides enough evidence to say *Obliti* can make players happiness levels decrease, with small changes to decreased energy levels and increase of care for others; therefore, creating short come empathy in the majority of players. Testing for the posttest was done under a minute to the completion of *Obliti*, where these stats were provided.

Obliti can, in light of this evidence collected, be added to list of empathy games that tackle depression, in order to increase the influence of these types of games. Looking at the data, empathy is achieved right after playing but these studies did not go into long term effects on happiness, energy level and care for others.

In the future, *Obliti* would test further to see if this empathy is transferred over a period of time, starting at one hour to one full day. This type of collection of evidence will prove or disprove if the empathy is long term. As of now, empathy is achieved in the short term for

players, which is great starting point for future research on *Obliti* as an empathy game regarding depression.

To dive into this topic, we can look at a research study titled “Seeing The World Through "Mortal Kombat" Colored Glasses: Violent Video Games and Hostile Attribution Bias ”⁹, and like the title suggests; discusses violence in video games. The reason for this study was to find if playing violent video games increases violence in the players, which were tested a few hours after playing the game. The results showed:

Results indicated that children playing the violent video game responded more negatively on three of the six ambiguous provocation story questions than children playing the nonviolent video game. These data suggest that playing violent video games leads to the development of a short-term hostile attribution bias. ¹¹

Taking what was found in the above study, to apply this method to future testing for *Obliti*, would be beneficial. The empathy gained for players during the experience *Obliti* had to offer, showed short term empathy gain, but no testing for long term empathy gain was tested.

The data found here, in speculation, can be applied to empathy games and the possible short term retention of this. *Obliti* hopes to attempt this type of study, where another test is applied 2 hours after the initial play of the game. This would check if empathy is still gained after a period of time.

¹¹ Kirsh, Steven J. “Seeing the World Through Mortal Kombat-Colored Glasses.” *Childhood*, vol. 5, no. 2, 1998, pp. 177–184., doi:10.1177/0907568298005002005.

10. Post Mortem

Through the process of learning Unreal Engine and its integrated blueprint system, there were certain items that went smooth in implementing, versus the systems that causes quite a few setbacks.

10.1 What went wrong

Our first focus will be the items and designs that did not work out in the end run and some of the problems that were associated with this. The first item is the limitations regarding getting asset packs off the asset store. This method, which I used for *Obliti*, is great for non-artists looking to streamline the process. For me, this saved me the time to avoid scoping myself too large, and my high poly art skills are very limited compared to my low poly skills. Even with those positives, there are some negatives that are associated with this type of method. Getting asset packs from the store is extremely limiting. When you first start looking, you will have your concept document and design documents with all scenes detailed, you will attempt to find asset packs that best fit your original idea. This is where the compromising comes in, where you will find asset packs that fit your idea but not 100%. Using this type of system, you will find not every asset pack with fit your needs and you might need multiple, which increases price. In my instance, finding the perfect “nightmare forest” and house asset pack, no pack fully fit my original plan for both levels. With no other choice, I had to mold my design around the limitations of these packs, which limited me of my original plan. Finding assets on the store and using them in your own design is completely fine, and cuts out a ton of work, but limits you in

the way of your original concept. Keeping in mind you will have to mold your experiences and designs around this is important to remember if you choose this method.

Another limitation that set back my project a couple of weeks, which is huge for a thesis, is where I wanted this project to go. I knew coming into this project, I wanted to make a game regarding depression but there were two routes to take. Going down the educational route where you teach the player what depression is and how to possibly take care of it, or going the empathy route; where you show a personal story and try to spread awareness of this illness. During my project proposal phase, I was stuck in the middle of those two, not making any notation to either side. This decision to not decide led to my thesis being sent back from being approved, wondering what my outcomes were going to be; educational or awareness? At this point, all design of the project halted while I attempted to figure out which path to go. These weeks of deciding and making the switch to awareness was a hiccup in my work on the project. Had I gone before and planned it out, I could have avoided this one-week hiccup and been further ahead in my designs. Lesson learned here is decide which route you want to take early on in development, so you don't find yourself tripping over yourself in front of an approval committee.

The last major speedbump in the project was using Unreal Engine 4. This engine is very powerful, with its visual based programming and amazing lighting system. I knew, when starting this project, I wanted my story to be realistic as possible and Unreal was the engine to use to achieve this. There was only one problem; I knew nothing of Unreal. I used it once before and I was making a simple 2 by 2 house with no terrain; this engine was foreign to me. I have extensive experience in Unity and assumed there wasn't much difference. Unity development did help me tackle the learning curve of Unreal but still left me with a steep cliff to scale. Being my first major project in Unreal, the amount of time spent of learning amateur controls took great

amount of time away from the project. In the section below this, I go into how this turned into something that worked out in the end but the lesson learned is stick with a system you have knowledge in for a project this important; it will save you the headache. This project could have been made in Unity but some factors were taken into account. The lighting in Unity is not something I enjoy setting up, and I've heard Unreal Engine lighting is more dynamic in its initial set up. The other reason is my quest to learn more and Unreal Engine was that milestone to reach. Using Unity for this project would have been fine but further expanding my skill set is something I always strive for.

10.2 What Went Right

Even though there were some complications and setbacks, the things that went smooth outweighs the bad; which is good in the long run for this project. In the above section, I did mention how the use of asset packs were rather limiting but they did have a positive effect on my project as well. What the asset pack did for me was save a bunch of time I would have spent if making the assets myself. With not worrying about supplying my own assets, it freed up time in order to focus on design of the worlds and the story associated with that. The lesson learned here was it is totally fine with using pre made assets, for it saves time, as long as you credit the artist who made them.

Looking at another great part of my project is the multiple examples used in molding my game. Since I am developing an empathy game regarding depression, I looked out at Google in order to find articles, books and other games to reference and compare. The number of articles and documentation not only on depression but games that tackle depression was immense; just looking at my references will confirm that. However, most of the best examples and design

choices were found in the games targeting the topic I am. Some include *Depression Quest*, or *Gone Home*; they all have their unique way of telling a story regarding this empathetic type of storytelling. Thankfully for Steam, users can put their positive or negative feedback on the game, for other users to look at. Seeing the reviews, I was able to make design choices on my project and avoid common problems with these games. The lesson learned here is start researching different games in your genre and see what works and what doesn't work; so you don't make the same common mistakes games before you did. This method makes your game better in the process.

In the above section where I talked about setbacks, I discussed about using Unreal Engine for the first time. However, going through on this project, I can now add Unreal Engine 4 to the list of engines I know to my resume. It was a rough road getting there and not all has been learned in this engine but this process has made me more versatile in types of skills. Learning of the blueprint system located in Unreal, it has helped me, a visual based learner, understand the basics of code. Before this project, I would dread writing in C++ because I knew nothing of what I was putting down, and hoping it was working. Not until now, I can sort of bug test my own code, which makes me more independent when doing game design. The lessons learned here is you will always be at a disadvantage when playing with new engines but once you get into the groove; you will have better skills at the end of it.

The last item on the list of things going great, is my overall design and execution of my idea. Through the years of being a game developer, I have had this idea of bringing my story to this media but nothing really stuck. I have tried this type of game three other times, using the Unity Engine. All three previous attempts on this game has failed due to multiple reasons. Lack of skill, no compelling game mechanics and horrible art; have all lead me to stop those projects.

With my completion of this project, I have fulfilled an ultimate goal of mine; to bring my story to life in a proper way. This time it is to pass graduate school of course, which added that kick in my step but added with my skills learned after six years of education; it made this project see the light of day. The lesson learned here is if you have a great idea, keep going for it. Some iterations will fail but that failure will make you learn for the next one.

Through this thesis process, with both shortcomings and succeeded goals, there were key lessons learned, to be applied to future projects and others who plan on creating a game like *Obliti*. The most powerful lesson to be learned here is the need for more empathy games regarding depression. Empathy games, as stated in this paper, have a great impact on players, which can lead to changed perspectives on a topic. While *Obliti* falls under the category of an empathy game, with a sub topic of depression, the game only covers a small section of a massive blanket of what empathy games aim to be. *Obliti* discusses depression, in the form of a personal story, but doesn't dive into different types of depression. This is not a bad thing, which is why this is a lesson. Make empathy games only covering 5% of the topic at hand, and do not worry about getting everything into a game. That mindset of cramping huge amounts of facts into a game, will make the player feel overwhelmed in that sense. Creating only a small sliver of the topic, with multiple games from different sources, players will get a general sense of what that topic is. My final thought on this, is this; Don't make it general, make it your own.

Before this project, almost of all my projects were made in a team ranging from two people to fifteen; I have never developed a game myself alone. I am the type of person that believes a few people on a project is the best method; and still think this. However, with my work alone on *Obliti*, I have a new perspective on the solo development. With solo development, you have to be more rounded or hire out contracts to fulfill the gaps your skill set lacks. The

amount of information learned through blueprint system in Unreal, or how to mesh some of the sound effects; were all foreign to me before this project. The lesson presented here is, it's not a bad idea for a developer to try a project alone, away from the usual group. It might not be your best work but you will learn more about our trade than if in a group, where it's easily handed off. I still have my problems with solo development, for example, no devil's advocate on a design choice leads to tunnel vision early on, and only caught during playtesting later down the road. However, this type of experience is eye opening to new skills I had to develop due to the lack of team behind me.

11. Conclusions

The last lesson learned during this process is my ongoing story with my depression and the emotions that come with it. I designed this game to reflect my life, the before and current emotional state that I am currently fighting. Being the fourth attempt on this game, I found peace when making it. I turned it into my coping mechanism for the trauma I went through. Doing this project, I was determined I was going to complete and feel better about the issues I had going in my head. The design process is very demanding, recreating the story that sent me into a deep depression was no easy task for me to do. However, I felt like my story should be brought to the light and played. I learned that keeping it inside of me was going to cut me deeper, so I brought it up to the surface. As of the coping mechanism, it is still here with me; the past and the memories associated with that. Just like the story, it will be never ending. I learned that this game isn't going to fix my problems and make me forget; but it gives me the freedom to say this illness does not control me anymore. To people out there with this illness, I say this; Recreate it, in any fashion and now you control it; instead of it controlling you.

Empathy through a video game application, like *Obliti*, can be obtained through playing in a character's shoes. As demonstrated above, empathy was gained over a period of 30 minutes, showing empathy has short-term effects on player's. Long term was not tested in this study but future work will attempt to assess this.

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Appendix A: Production Schedule

First Semester (J)	Second Semester (Aug - Dec 2017)	Third Semester (Jan - May 2018)
Not started	Started	Complete
3/14 to 3/21	Plan out thesis schedule	Start concept doc for game
3/21 to 3/28	Finish concept doc for game	Unreal 4 tutorials supplied by Dean
3/28 to 4/4	Start collecting sources regarding depression	Tutorials regarding programming
4/4 to 4/11	Keep collecting sources regarding depression	Unreal 4 tutorials supplied by Dean
4/11 to 4/18	Finish collecting sources regarding depression	Start thesis proposal
4/18 to 4/25	Keep working on thesis proposal	Basic paper level designs
4/25 to 5/2	Keep working on thesis proposal	White out level inside unreal engine
5/2 to 5/9	Finish thesis proposal	Unreal 4 tutorials supplied by Dean
5/9 to 5/16	Start Asset creation / modification	Unreal 4 tutorials supplied by Dean
5/16 to 5/23	Keep creating / modifying assets	Unreal 4 tutorials supplied by Dean
5/23 to 5/30	Finish creating / modifying assets	Start revising concept doc as needed
5/30 to 8/29	Revise concept doc and story	Unreal 4 tutorials supplied by Dean
8/29 to 9/5	Begin programming, based on mechanics	Blueprint tutorials for Unreal
9/5 to 9/12	Mechanic programming	Polish on assets
9/12 to 9/19	Blueprint tutorials	Blueprint tutorials
9/19 to 9/26	Top down paper designs of level	Proof of concept with lighting
9/26 to 10/3	Create the house layout in unreal	Finish making the general layout in unreal
10/3 to 10/10	Add details in house level	Add variety of house(different open rooms)
10/10 to 10/17	Create custom first person camera	Finish details in house levels / find sounds
10/17 to 10/24	Put together part one of forest / find music	Fill out form for IRB approval
10/24 to 10/31	Level transition scripts	Interacting with object script
10/31 to 11/7	Ending of the game / find voice actors	Playtest level design of house
11/7 to 11/14	Make level changes according to playtest	Put interactable objects in house levels
11/14 to 11/21	Put together part two of forest	Put together part three of forest
11/21 to 11/28	Put together part four of forest	put in trigger events / level transitions
11/28 to 12/5	voice acting	put line of dialogue with triggers
12/5 to 12/12	Story playthrough playtest	Make adjustments according to playtest
12/12 to 12/19	Polish on story and level	Outline of thesis paper
12/19 to 12/26	Outline of thesis paper	Tweaks to game
1/2 to 1/9	Start writing intro to thesis paper	Bug fixes with level design and programming
1/9 to 1/16	Finish writing intro to thesis paper	Bug fixes with level design and programming
1/16 to 1/23	Collect all playtests and put into thesis paper	Playtest flow of level config
1/23 to 1/30	Make changes noted in playtest	Write body of thesis paper
1/30 to 2/6	Revise parts of thesis paper	Bug fixes with level design and programming
2/6 to 2/13	Playtest story and pacing	Implement changes due to playtest
2/13 to 2/20	Bug fixes with level design and programming	SWPCA Event
2/20 to 2/27	Playtest of sounds and music	Gather information about playtest
2/27 to 3/6	Thesis paper work	Polish level designs
3/6 to 3/13	Thesis paper revisions	Polish programming
3/13 to 3/20	Thesis paper work	GDC
3/20 to 3/27	GDC	Polish Programming
3/27 to 4/3	Thesis paper work	Polish level designs
4/3 to 4/10	Thesis paper revisions	Polish Programming
4/10 to 4/17	PAX East	Polish story
4/17 to 4/24	Last minute revisions to game and paper	Hand in thesis and pray
4/24 to 5/1	Presentations	Sleep
5/1 to 5/8	Sleep	Sleep

Appendix B: Screenplay

1. DAYTIME FOREST

The story starts with you. You are dreaming, a beautiful forest with a clear defined path traveling up a small hill.

MAIN CHARACTER

My greatest fear is being alone

MAIN CHARACTER

I wish my dreams were still like this.

WALK TO

2. TOP OF HILL, OVERLOOKING THE CORRUPTED FOREST

Below in the valley, is a dying and decayed forest, with the path still leading on?

MAIN CHARACTER

These memories haunt my dreams these days.

MAIN CHARACTER

They changed into this twisted darkness...

WALK TO

3. CORRUPT FOREST, START OF OPEN FIELD

The path leads to an open field, which holds a pedestal basked in spotlight.

MAIN CHARACTER

You get used to the darkness...

WALK TO

4. CORRUPT FOREST, OPEN FIELD

As the main character walks toward the pedestal, you notice the picture frame, pill bottle, and gun sitting there.

MAIN CHARACTER

Let's start from the beginning.

FLASH OF LIGHT

5. MAIN CHARACTERS HOUSE, BEDROOM MORNING SCENE

Light fades into a house, with morning light. You start in the bedroom, with many objects to interact with.

MAIN CHARACTER

I wonder where she went.

WALK TO

6. MAIN CHARACTERS HOUSE, BEDROOM MORNING SCENE

The first object encountered is a discarded shirt. There will be other objects, gathering the past of the main character.

MAIN CHARACTER

This was my favorite shirt she wears, smells just like her.

WALK TO

7. MAIN CHARACTERS HOUSE, BEDROOM MORNING SCENE

The second object is a computer, in which the main character can interact with.

MAIN CHARACTER

I need to start working on that paper, haven't even started. I need to stop getting distracted.

WALK TO

8. MAIN CHARACTERS HOUSE, HALLWAY MORNING SCENE

Going through the door, you are presented with a long hallway emptying into a living space. Off this hallway, are three separate rooms. One directly in front of the door you left (Parents room), two further down the hallway to the left (Bathroom) and right (Computer room)

MAIN CHARACTER

Maybe she is making breakfast?

WALK TO

9. MAIN CHARACTERS HOUSE, LIVING ROOM MORNING SCENE

Exiting the hallway, a living room will be to the right and a connected kitchen to the left. Right of the kitchen, will be a patio door with a figure on the deck

MAIN CHARACTER

There she is..

WALK TO

10. MAIN CHARACTERS HOUSE, DECK MORNING SCENE

Approaching this figure will jump cut back to the dark forest.

CUT TO BLACK

11. CORRUPT FOREST, OTHER END OF OPEN FIELD

You fade back into the corrupt forest, with the pedestal behind you, with a path leading north.

MAIN CHARACTER

We would talk hours on that deck, about anything and everyone. With every puff of her cigarette, the words leaving her mouth were so memorizing, I sometimes forgot to talk.

WALK TO

12. CORRUPT FOREST, PATH LEADING TO ROOM

Walking down this dark path, a sharp turn to the left showcases a room that looks ripped from its original housing, the one you previously were in.

MAIN CHARACTER

sigh I have always hated this one.

WALK TO

13. CORRUPT FOREST, ROOM

Through this discarded room, objects litter the ground, each with its own story. A necklace lies on the ground.

MAIN CHARACTER

It was special to her, it was from her grandmother. She never left without it.

WALK TO

14. CORRUPT FOREST, ROOM

A suitcase sits ajar in the corner of the room, items discarded next to it.

MAIN CHARACTER

I always hated the idea of suitcases.

WALK TO

15. CORRUPT FOREST, ROOM

There will be a note on a small table, labeled sorry.

MAIN CHARACTER

I'm sorry. Yeah, me too.

WALK TO

16. CORRUPT FOREST, START OF SECOND OPEN FIELD

The path progresses as another clearing will house another pedestal, this time with a picture frame. Interacting with the picture frame, will flash the screen with light.

MAIN CHARACTER

I wonder if dad is up.

FLASH TO WHITE

17. MAIN CHARACTERS HOUSE, BEDROOM AFTERNOON SCENE

The same house will be shown but with different aspects changed, with afternoon lighting. An ash tray will be on the night stand.

MAIN CHARACTER

I always told her to not smoke in the house but it's just what she did

WALK TO

18. MAIN CHARACTERS HOUSE, HALLWAY AFTERNOON SCENE

Leaving the room, you notice the door in front of you is now open. The room that is open is the parent's room, where the narrator goes into detail of his great relationship with his parents

MAIN CHARACTER

Ahh my parents room, never in here much.

WALK TO

19. MAIN CHARACTERS HOUSE, PARENTS BEDROOM AFTERNOON SCENE

You will find the picture frame where there are silhouettes of the family, where the main character goes into detail of the family life.

MAIN CHARACTER

My dad is always around, like a brother to me. I couldn't be happier with my family but they can be overbearing. Expecting a lot from me. Being the only child, I get a lot of attention and sometimes I don't want that. But they mean well. I just don't want to disappoint them.

WALK TO

20. MAIN CHARACTERS HOUSE, HALLWAY TO LIVING ROOM SCENE

Again, as the main character walks toward the living room and looks at the deck, the figure is still there. Walking to the figure will flash the main character back to the corrupt forest.

FLASH TO LIGHT

21. CORRUPT FOREST, SECOND OPEN FIELD POINTING NORTH

The path will be extending north, beckoning to be followed.

MAIN CHARACTER

We always talked about where we would be in 10 years, the ideas would flow out. Every second would be pure bliss.

WALK TO

22. CORRUPT FOREST, HOUSE IN A SMALL PATCH OF DAY TIME FOREST

As the main character walks through the corrupt forest, you come up to a clearing with non-corrupt forest and a house. You can't enter the house but will expose the main character's future plans that never came true.

MAIN CHARACTER

This was our planned house in Canada, with seven different lawnmowers for each day, each painted a different color. It was stupid, thinking of it now. It was something though. It was what we were going to do. Gave purpose of our future together.

WALK TO

23. CORRUPT FOREST, THIRD OPEN FIELD

With the corruption still continuing, we enter the new loop. A clearing with a pedestal, which houses a pill bottle. Interacting with the pill bottle will cut the scene to the next.

MAIN CHARACTER

God...I hate taking these.

FLASH TO WHITE

24. MAIN CHARACTERS HOUSE, BEDROOM DUSK SCENE

Enter the house again, with dusk type of lighting. The room has different interactable objects, for example, a journal.

MAIN CHARACTER

I always kept a journal, write my personal notes there. She would write in the margins sometimes, and we would talk there.

WALK TO

25. MAIN CHARACTERS HOUSE, BEDROOM DUSK SCENE

Makeup bag will be sitting on a chair.

MAIN CHARACTER

She always left the house with makeup on, was just her thing.

WALK TO

26. MAIN CHARACTERS HOUSE, HALLWAY TO BATHROOM DUSK SCENE

This time the door to the bathroom, down the hall to the left, will be open.

MAIN CHARACTER

I need to take my pills.

WALK TO

27. MAIN CHARACTERS HOUSE, BATHROOM DUSK SCENE

There the character notices the pill bottle and the story behind that.

MAIN CHARACTER

Take one pill daily, the side effects will leave. That's what I have to keep saying. I can't believe I'm taking pills... It helps but it makes me feel weaker. Taken away from the reality I live in. But I need them, I couldn't handle it...

WALK TO

28. MAIN CHARACTERS HOUSE, HALLWAY TO LIVING ROOM DUSK SCENE

Going down the hallway, the same process repeats. Finding the figure standing on the deck, once interacting with her, the scene cuts back to the forest

MAIN CHARACTER

I had to take them because you caused them.

FLASH TO WHITE

29. CORRUPT FOREST, NORTH OF THIRD OPEN FIELD

Back in the forest, following a path, comes to a clearing, which holds the same house that was seen before in the last dream. Entering the house, you find objects pertaining to her

cheating on you with another man. As you go upstairs, you see two figures talking. One is her with another man, as you get closer; the door slams shut

MAIN CHARACTER

It's hard to mention what happened next. It's hard to talk about. This house we planned our future, it's tainted now with what you did. I am always afraid to enter the house but I have to, I have to understand why.

WALK TO

30. CORRUPT FOREST, CORRUPT HOUSE

Entering the house, you find objects pertaining to her cheating on you with another man. As you go upstairs, you see two figures talking. One is her with another man, as you get closer; the door slams shut

MAIN CHARACTER

I always wondered what she did on the weekends. I was always happy to be with her, I just wanted it to be real. I wanted to be happy. I guess it wasn't it.

WALK TO

31. CORRUPT FOREST, CORRUPT HOUSE TO LAST CLEARING

Leaving the house, and continuing on the path; shows a clearing. The normal pedestal is there, but this time holding the gun. Interacting with the gun will cause a jump to the next scene.

MAIN CHARACTER

It's funny how just one pull of

one simple trigger could make this
go away.

FLASH TO WHITE

32. MAIN CHARACTERS HOUSE, BEDROOM NIGHT SCENE

As these scenes progress, the main bedroom you spawn in
becomes more cluttered.

MAIN CHARACTER

I shouldn't do this... how would
this end?

WALK TO

33. MAIN CHARACTERS HOUSE, HALLWAY TO COMPUTER ROOM NIGHT SCENE

The new room that is open, is the computer room. Found within
is the gun, where the main character talks about how he could
never do it, would impact his family negatively.

MAIN CHARACTER

It's my grandfather's gun, he
showed it to me one summer. So
much power in a tiny thing. I have
always wanted to do it. To get rid
of all this darkness, and
memories. But I can't. I have to
do it for my family. My mother
would blame herself, and my
cousin; she is too young for me to
leave. She needs me in her life.
So that's why every time I pick it
up, I end up putting it down. I am
doing it for them. But never for
me.

WALK TO

34. MAIN CHARACTER HOUSE, HALLWAY TO LIVING ROOM NIGHT SCENE

Once you touch the normal figure, it will transport the character to the corrupt forest but will include every scene from before.

MAIN CHARACTER

She always was talking and engaging during dinner, but not tonight...

FLASH TO WHITE

35. CORRUPT FOREST, FINAL SCENE

All scenes are mashed together, as the main character walks toward the end of the path.

MAIN CHARACTER

I miss her but I don't know if she misses me. Maybe it was stupid to believe I had a future with her but I was naïve. This is what my life is now; darkness. Every day I get closer to the brink of existing and not existing, the constant contemplation. I don't know what to do. This is my world right now and my greatest fear is being alone, and here I am. But here is my life and that is what scares me.

FADE TO BLACK