

Speaker 1: Maybe it's fair to say, seniors are not typically known for knowing how to use the newest technology, but check out these seniors using virtual reality.

Speaker 2: And you can see, it's not just for them to see far away places they've never seen. Will Rioux tells us it's also to keep them safe.

Will Rioux: Seniors at an assisted living home in Evans are taking a play from the younger generation's playbook. Caregivers at the facility got to witness firsthand how technology is helping their residents stay mentally [00:00:30] and physically tough during the pandemic.

Speaker 4: It's just as pretty today as it was 20 years ago.

Kellie Pugh: It's a way for the residents to be able to reconnect with their life.

Will Rioux: Seniors at Marshall Pines Assisted Living are seeing a different view. This one, virtual reality.

Kellie Pugh: The residents that we have are diagnosed with Alzheimer's or some other type of dementia, so they have a lot of memory impairment.

Will Rioux: Executive director Kellie Pugh says it's more than just the latest [00:01:00] technology.

Speaker 4: Oh, look at those fish.

Will Rioux: It's a tool that helps many stay active.

Kellie Pugh: We have a gentleman who was in the Marines that used to work on fighter jets, and so, that's something he enjoys doing.

Will Rioux: A new study says, although there are no cures for dementia, VR teleports individuals to a low stimulus world, meaning this can improve mental health too, which is crucial, because that same study found that almost half of assistant living residents experienced depression. Pugh says in her care facility-

Kellie Pugh: I think that it will continue to allow [00:01:30] us to be able to provide a wonderful quality of life for the residents that we serve.

Will Rioux: With the pandemic causing nursing home visitations to be cut off, VR may offer a much needed feeling of connection.

Kellie Pugh: It allows them to stay connected with the world. Even though they're protected from it, they're still able to be a part of it through this virtual reality. We have another resident who enjoys fishing, so we're able to find a program where he can actually fish. [00:02:00] I've swam with the manatees earlier this morning.

Will Rioux: Marshall Pines says that even after the pandemic is over, they will continue to use virtual reality as long as it's available to them to help keep their residents healthy. Reporting in Augusta, Will Rioux, on your side.

Speaker 1: We know connection is important, so it's great they have another opportunity to do just that.

Speaker 2: Exactly, and a way to get out in a sense, instead of just staying in the nursing center. So it's almost like they get to see new things, so that's pretty neat.

Speaker 1: Yeah, getting out and staying safe [00:02:30] while doing it.

Speaker 2: There you go.