



# Health Behavior Change Group Counseling Agent

Dina Utami, Timothy Bickmore



## Background

Group counseling has many advantages over one-on-one counseling in changing health behavior:

- Peers can provide support
- Peers can provide reinforcement
- Peers can share stories and tips

Unfortunately, effective group counseling requires a qualified facilitator that might not be available to many individuals.

### Project Goal:

We are exploring the development of an animated conversational agent that functions in the role of a group facilitator for health behavior change counseling.



## Relational Agents

Relational Agents are computer agents designed to form long-term, social-emotional relationships with their users.



## Audience Response System

Audience Response Systems (ARS) allows a number of people to give responses to a topic or answer a question posed by a computer.

A basic ARS consists of:

- Polling software
- Response keypads
- Response receiver.



## Design

1. The agent is projected as a life-sized person in the room, programmed with the locations, names and backgrounds of the group members.
2. The agent uses synthetic speech and synchronized animation.
3. The group members use RF input devices to interact with the agent.

