

## **Enhancing Financial Planning Among Economically Diverse Populations Using Age-progression Technology**

Tamara Sims, Ph.D.<sup>1</sup>

Jeremy Bailenson, Ph.D.<sup>2</sup>

Laura Carstensen, Ph.D.<sup>1,3</sup>

1. Stanford Center on Longevity; 2. Department of Communications, Stanford University; 3. Department of Psychology, Stanford University

Lower income, young adults are especially unprepared to enjoy financial security in old age (i.e., demonstrating low levels of financial literacy and long-term savings). Previous research found that younger adults interacting with an age-progressed avatar of themselves reported feeling more connected to their future selves than those interacting with an age-matched avatar. As a result, these participants reported wanting to allocate a greater proportion of their current income to a retirement fund (Hershfield, et al., 2011). This research, however, was limited to hypothetical behavior in a relatively affluent area. We sought to replicate and extend this work among economically diverse community college students learning about financial literacy. Ninety-seven participants were recruited from a “transitioning to college” course that taught financial literacy. Participants were randomly assigned to view either an age-progressed avatar or a current-aged avatar multiple times throughout the course. Compared to those viewing the current-aged avatar, at the end of the course, participants viewing the age-progressed avatar allocated significantly more money to long-term savings in hypothetical scenarios, scored higher on a financial literacy quiz, and indicated greater interest in taking future workshops about long-term financial planning. Furthermore, feeling negatively towards the age-progressed avatar increased the likelihood that students opted for an additional subset of trade-offs such as taking more time to learn the correct answer on the financial literacy quiz. Taken together, these findings demonstrate promising potential for practical and scalable integration of age-progression technology among diverse populations to enhance planning for a financially secure future into old age.