Practicing good hand-hygiene is a critically important part of providing healthcare—in hospitals, in medical offices, or at home. But as Bruce Graham of Solutions-East Toronto’s Health Collaborative explains, for Personal Support Workers (PSWs), who provide personalized care to clients in their own homes, practicing appropriate hand-hygiene is not always straightforward. PSWs can’t assume, for example, that there will always be soap at the sink. For Graham, that meant that these healthcare workers needed a different kind of training, one based in their real workplace contexts. To create that workplace-specific training, Solutions turned to George Brown’s Game Design program.

The link between hand-hygiene and gaming may not be obvious, but as Graham explains, “Educational games are great training tools because they engage all different kinds of learners....We had to design for accessibility.”

According to Mohan, though the Hand-Hygiene game is relatively simple to play, making it simple was itself the greatest design challenge.

“Game design is all about the audience,” he asserts. And for this project the student design team had to keep in mind that some members of this audience may never have played a computer game before. “We had to design for accessibility,” he says.

Graham reports that trainees’ reaction to the game has been positive, and he proudly adds that the student-designed game has been recognized as a “best practice” by Accreditation Canada, a not-for-profit, independent organization accredited by the International Society for Quality in Health Care.