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May 8, 2012

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Mobile App Helps Service Members Adjust to Life After Combat

Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.—The Department of Defense today announced the release of a mobile application to help service members adjust to life at home after returning from combat deployments.

Positive Activity Jackpot, developed by the National Center for Telehealth and Technology, uses augmented reality with a smart phone's GPS to help find nearby activities and diversions for someone used to the high tempo of combat life.

The center, known as T2, used a behavioral therapy called pleasant event scheduling as the basis for design of the application. The therapy encourages a daily schedule of enjoyable activities to improve moods and overcome depression.

“After returning from a combat deployment, service members who are used to a more structured daily schedule may have difficulty adjusting to life at home,” said Dr. Amanda Edwards Stewart, psychologist who led the development of Positive Activity Jackpot. “This can lead to difficulties with relationships, depression and other problems. “

The application, available for Android systems, has an extensive list of pre-programmed activities. Users select their activities and friends to accompany them from the phone's contacts. Users can also let the application randomly choose an activity and friends by “pulling the lever” from the application's slot-machine screen.

While pleasant event scheduling is commonly used in behavior therapy, Stewart said the app can be used by anyone, but should not be used as a substitute for professional treatment.

Information about Positive Activity Jackpot and a clinician's guide is at <http://www.t2health.org/apps/positiveactivityjackpot>.

The National Center for Telehealth and Technology, located at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA, serves as the primary Department of Defense office for cutting-edge approaches in applying technology to psychological health. Information about T2 is at <http://www.t2health.org>.

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