

## Case Study: Sitter and Barfoot Veterans Care Center & LifeLoop



[leadingage.org/cast](https://leadingage.org/cast)

### CATEGORIES

- ◆ Staff efficiencies
- ◆ Quality of life/satisfaction with care

**Organization Name:**  
Sitter and Barfoot Veterans  
Care Center

**Main Contributor:**  
Valerie Dodson, Memory Care  
Programming Director

**Organization Type:**  
Long-term care, veterans care  
center, memory care, skilled  
nursing facility

**Organization Description:**  
The Sitter & Barfoot Veterans  
Care Center (SBVCC) is located  
on the campus of the Richmond  
VA Medical Center in Richmond,  
VA, and is operated by the  
Virginia Department of Veterans  
Services. Named for two Medal  
of Honor recipients—Colonel  
Van Barfoot and Colonel Carl  
Sitter—this care center provides  
the gold standard in quality care  
for Virginia's veterans. This  
single-level facility features 200  
single-occupancy rooms in four  
nursing units: two 60-bed  
skilled nursing care units, one  
40-bed skilled nursing care unit,  
and one 40-bed secure  
Alzheimer's/dementia unit with  
enclosed courtyards.

### Project Description

SBVCC aimed to address one of its primary challenges: the unpredictability of memory care and the need to adapt or pivot programming in real time. SBVCC implemented LifeLoop's iN2L engagement technology to enhance resident engagement and streamline staff efficiency. They focused on providing personalized engagement versus only entertainment to improve veterans' quality of life through meaningful activities that catered to their cognitive, emotional, and social needs.

### System Type

Large iN2L touchscreen TV (55") and portable iN2L touchscreen TV (23"). The installed iN2L software provides over 6,700 pieces of clinically backed engagement content.

### Describe System Embodiment

The large 55" system was placed in common areas to facilitate group activities, and the smaller, portable unit was used in more intimate settings, for small group activities or one-on-one engagement. LifeLoop's iN2L engagement systems offer over 6,700 pieces of engagement content that is backed by clinical research; it can be accessed quickly and easily by staff, providing an endless stream of activities suited to different resident needs, preferences, and abilities. The systems also enabled staff to share photos and videos sent by family members, creating deeper connections among residents, staff, and families.

### Business Model

Private insurers, Medicare, Medicaid, VA per diem facility credit.

### Implementation Approach

SBVCC placed the iN2L systems strategically within its memory care unit to accommodate both large and small group activities. The implementation was designed to prioritize ease of use for staff and ensure minimal disruption to daily operations, while improving resident engagement. Staff received thorough training on how to use the platform effectively, including seamlessly switching between activities and using the solution to engage residents with personalized content. About 40 certified nursing assistants (CNAs) received hands-on training to interact with and navigate the system. Within that group, 12 "super users" were identified as champions with advanced knowledge of the iN2L systems who could assist other staff with onboarding and training.

## Advantages to the Approach

Trainings were interactive, but also intentionally brief to promote easy incorporation into staff's daily schedules during onboarding. This eased training, breaking it down into parts to be less daunting or burdensome on busy schedules.

The implementation of LifeLoop's iN2L technology enhanced staff efficiency and flexibility. Through the iN2L engagement systems, LifeLoop provides calendar and activity recommendations to help structure monthly activities that staff could easily adapt to resident preferences, which helped reduce time staff spent planning activities. LifeLoop provides regular updates to the content library, which keeps activities fresh and relevant. The system allows staff instant access to a vast content library, which they could leverage to quickly switch activities if residents were not engaging—a particularly useful feature, given the unpredictable nature of memory care.

Family engagement and satisfaction have improved as the systems helped facilitate deeper connections and eased separation anxiety for residents.

## Outcomes

LifeLoop's iN2L engagement systems have enriched resident engagement by enabling highly personalized and meaningful activities that go beyond traditional entertainment. The intuitive design and extensive variety of content drove resident engagement to increase by 75%, with activities catering to residents' cognitive, social, emotional, and physical needs. SBVCC used the engagement content an average of 405 hours each month across an 11-month period. The top content areas used were audio (e.g., music, therapeutic music, karaoke), video (e.g., animal webcams, travel), and games (e.g., aquarium, word games, bingo, Family Feud).

LifeLoop's engagement solution allows staff to tailor experiences to the individual, leading to different types of breakthroughs and acknowledgement of residents' unique histories. For example, while playing a word game with a group of residents, a nonverbal resident suddenly provided the right answer; it was the first time anyone had heard him say a word. He has now continued to participate in the word games in the community and continues to verbalize responses. Upon further investigation, staff learned from his wife that they used to frequent a diner every week to play a game similar to Wheel of Fortune. Playing this game triggered his history of playing word games, resulting in engagement the community had never seen before from this resident.

Residents who are not living with dementia have also enjoyed the iN2L engagement experience, with popular experiences including taking virtual walking or aerial tours, especially to locations where they once served. This depth of engagement enhances individualization and resident satisfaction across the community. Overall, resident quality of life improved, with some residents displaying increased verbal communication and engagement with their surroundings, as well as decreased restlessness and agitation.

Staff reported an impressive 100% increase in job satisfaction as the technology significantly simplified daily workloads, allowing them to focus on meaningful interactions with residents and improving overall efficiency. Staff reported significant time savings in daily operations, as they no longer spent time searching for or preparing activities. Staff could quickly pivot when an activity didn't capture residents' interest or when needs or preferences changed. For example, during a Veterans Day livestream event, residents lost interest partway through, so the staff used military-themed iN2L content to switch seamlessly between each military branch song, re-engaging the residents in a meaningful way as they stood to represent their branch. A Veterans Day slideshow was then displayed, sharing photos provided by families who were not able to attend the event. This adaptability allowed staff to maintain engagement levels effectively, enhancing both quality and responsiveness without impacting an important resident celebration and planned event.

Family engagement is a crucial key performance indicator for memory care communities and is essential to SBVCC's goals. The community charted a 75% improvement in family communication after implementation, facilitated by LifeLoop's integrated photo and video sharing capabilities that piqued resident interest and generated more engaged conversations. One example involved a wife who was unsure how to connect with her husband, who was living with dementia. Using the technology, they revisited places from their time living in Germany, and the husband started talking about their memories there and they connected with each other over that for a long time. This helped spark meaningful conversation and created a more positive visit experience.

To help residents cope with family members' departures or absence, families create short, reassuring videos that comfort residents and reduce their anxiety when they feel alone. These are available through iN2L and played for the residents. iN2L also allows sharing of family moments like photos and videos of new grandchildren that are shared with the community (with permission), which fosters a sense of community and makes residents feel good to share parts of their lives and things that are happening outside of the community.

## Challenges and Pitfalls to Avoid

---

One of the key challenges was managing the unpredictability of memory care, where activities that work one day might not succeed the next. Ensuring that staff were fully trained and comfortable using the systems, including understanding how to use it to quickly adjust activities, was critically important. While the technology itself was intuitive, it required staff to adjust to a new way of managing activities and resident engagement.

## Lessons Learned

---

A primary lesson learned was the importance of flexibility in programming. The ability to quickly switch between activities to suit the moment helped keep residents engaged and reduced boredom and frustration. Training staff through hands-on learning, rather than presentations, ensured they recognized the value of the solution and became comfortable with it. Additionally, gathering regular feedback from staff allowed for ongoing improvements in how the solution was used, ensuring that it remained a tool for enriching resident care rather than adding complexity to daily routines.

## Advice to Share with Others

---

Thorough staff training is essential to ensure that technology is used to its full potential and that staff see the value of it firsthand. Experiencing the benefits will transform team members into advocates, which ultimately drives both staff and resident adoption. For higher-acuity community settings like SBVCC, identifying a solution that enables this level of flexibility and ease of use is critical to achieve both group and individualized engagement. Lastly, involving families in the process through shared media can strengthen relationships between residents, staff, and families.