

LifeSherpa Helps Best Buddies Advance New Model for Independent Living

CHALLENGE

Create an inclusive, supportive residential experience where people with and without IDD can live independently and thrive

SOLUTION

Residential support delivered on residents' smartphones by the LifeSherpa digital support platform

RESULTS

Virtual "scaffolding" effectively provides how-to help and life skill resources, advances self-reliance, and gives Best Buddies the ability to take on more residents

"LifeSherpa makes me more effective. There's no way I could provide the high level of personalized support that I do without it."

—Julia Moluf, Resident Manager, Best Buddies



The Best Buddies Living program

[Best Buddies launched the Living program](#) in 2019 to elevate their mission of meeting the need for inclusion. The program is the first of its kind. It combines true authentic inclusion in a residential living environment that fosters independence, life-changing relationships, and professional growth.

The program matches people with and without IDD and provides a supportive residential living experience, which includes weekly shared meals, fitness classes, cultural events, and social activities.

Flagship Residence Covers New Ground

Starting from ground zero, without any precedent, Best Buddies Resident Manager, Julia Moluf, established the program's first Living residence in Washington, D.C. The residence is in an apartment building with space for a mix of six residents.

"There's a great need for housing opportunities. And there's **real value for people with disabilities and typicals to have friendships**—and to learn and grow together," says Julia Moluf.

The DC Living program currently has four residents. Two are individuals with IDD who are employed and living independently with support from Best Buddies. The two other residents are neurotypicals who are seeking a sense of community.

Interactive Support Structure

One of the first residents was having trouble with his morning routine. To address the problem, Julia Moluf created a morning checklist and notification in LifeSherpa. Now, the resident uses LifeSherpa five times a week to get up and get to work on time.

“Right from the start, I wanted to provide a scaffolding to support independent living activities like taking the metro, doing laundry, budgeting, getting along with roommates,” notes Julia Moluf. **“LifeSherpa is a great tool for that and it’s customizable to the individual.”**

“I might assign a resident an activity to go grocery shopping, for example. Step 1 is to clean out the frig. Step 2 is ... initially, I can show a resident how to do an activity and document every step in LifeSherpa – with pictures we take together and my audio narrative – for a resident to access anytime on his/her mobile device.”

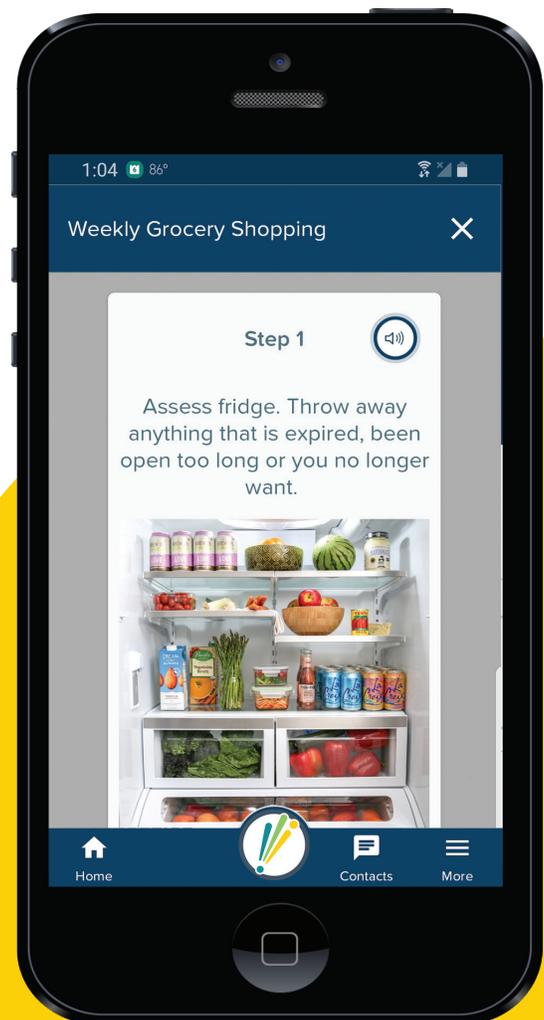
“Along with Activities and Reminders, I use LifeSherpa’s audio and visual features a lot. They personalize the instructions, support self-management, and give me autonomy. So I’m not standing over the residents and they don’t feel like I’m their mom.”

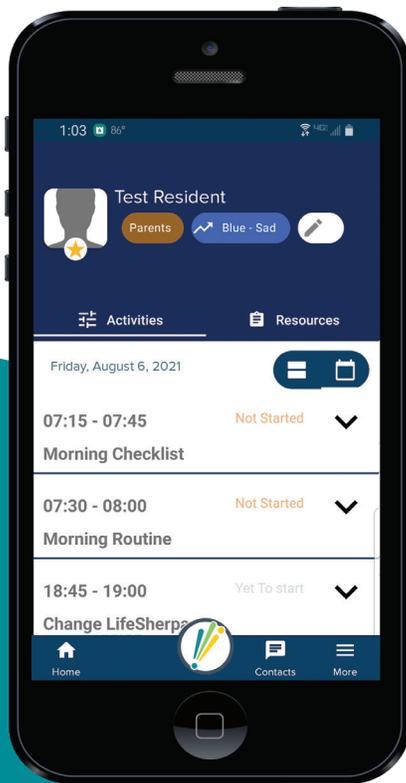
All-in-one Toolkit

Vital to Julia’s effectiveness is having all the tools in one place to support residents as they work toward achieving their goals. **“I couldn’t do what I do and preserve my relationship with residents through texts, Google calendars, printed worksheets, and different mediums,”** explains Julia Moluf.

LifeSherpa centralizes and provides training materials, audio/visual/video aids, reminders, reinforcements, life skills’ resources, and private communications on an individual’s smart phone or tablet. Screen sharing, the ability to add a timer or photo to an Activity or Resource, and send notifications are some of Julia Moluf’s favorite features.

“Using LifeSherpa simplifies my life as a Resident Manager and helps me be more effective. It makes me think explicitly, write-out detailed instructions, and pull apart what each person needs to be successful (does this resident need 5 steps or 15?)”





Essential Part of Program

With LifeSherpa, Julia is creating her own playbook for establishing and supporting an inclusive, independent Living experience that focuses on employment, friendship, and personal goals.

“It takes some work in the beginning to learn the platform and create instructional content and resources. But it’s so worth it in the time and effort it saves every day. After the setup, there is no recreating the wheel. You can choose a pre-defined template, easily make tweaks and customize it to meet individual needs,” says Julia Moluf.

“There’s no way I could provide the high level of personalized support that I do without LifeSherpa. LifeSherpa makes me a better manager. And it gives Best Buddies Living the ability to take on more residents, while maintaining the affordability of the program.”

To see how LifeSherpa can help your organization, request a demo [here](#).

About LifeSherpa

LifeSherpa is the digital support platform that makes life and work easier for everyone—manager or staff, neurodiverse or neurotypical. The company was founded by Doug Meeker, digital media and technology veteran and father of a son with autism. LifeSherpa grew out of Doug’s passion to help his son Scott, and others, meet life’s challenges.

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