

Atlantic kitchen party, gently

Atlantic Canada (NB, NS, PE, NL) · Kitchen table week



For recreation therapists and activity aides in Canadian long-term care and personal care homes. Print what you need. Leave the rest.

Large type. Short steps. Dementia-safe language. Canadian spelling. One click PDF. No login required for this preview.

Pictures for this week

Use these on a screen or print one page for the program table. They are calm on purpose.



Peggy's Cove lighthouse, Nova Scotia. Wikimedia Commons, Taxiarchos228, CC BY-SA 3.0. A calm landmark. No wreck stories.



Tea and biscuit still life, created for BetterCare.

Atlantic kitchen party, gently

Good morning. You have got this. This pack is calm, kind and simple to lead.

Think kitchen table, not stage. Low sound. Warm tea. Room to join in or just watch. Every activity is an invite. Never a test.

Staff briefing

Welcome to our Atlantic week. Our goal is comfort and connection.

Here is how we work this week:

- Keep voices soft. Keep music soft. One song at a time.
- Offer choices. Would you like to listen or tap along. Tea or juice. Near the music or by the window.
- Let people watch. Watching counts as joining.
- No forced dancing. A hand sway or a toe tap is plenty.
- Offer to pause or stop often. Are we good to keep going. We can stop any time.
- Use names gently. Sit at eye level if you can.
- Watch for tired signs. Closed eyes. Turned away. Quiet hands. Offer a blanket or a rest.
- Keep groups small. Six to eight is ideal. Ten at most.
- Aim for scents light and safe. Vanilla. Apple. Fresh bread. Check allergies first. No strong sprays.

What to prep on Monday:

- Small speaker with volume limit. Have two or three fiddle tunes ready. Low volume only.
- Tea, decaf coffee, apple juice. Plain biscuits. Oatcakes if you have them.
- Soft throws. Extra hearing aids batteries. Lap cloths.
- Photo cards: lighthouse, fishing wharf in calm sun, church hall, kitchen table.
- Simple rhythm tools: wooden spoons, shakers, soft hand drums.

Canadian spelling note for our printouts: flavour, favourite, centre, neighbour.

Seven-day gentle calendar (Mon-Sun) with 2-3 options each day

Pick one or two per time block. Mornings are best for groups. Afternoons are best for small chats and music. Evenings are for quiet.

Monday: Welcome table

- 10:30 am: Hello circle with tea. Share favourite breakfast smells. Toast. Porridge. Apple.
- 2:00 pm: One song kitchen listen. Play one slow fiddle tune. Ask if folks want one more or a rest.
- 6:30 pm: Porch light chat. Look at lighthouse photo card. Talk about calm light at night.

Tuesday: New Brunswick kitchen

- 10:30 am: Biscuit tasting. Plain, oat, molasses. Small pieces. Water nearby.
- 2:00 pm: Wooden spoon rhythm. Tap softly on lap or table. Or just hold a spoon and listen.
- Evening option: One to one room visits. Bring tea and a short story card.

Wednesday: Nova Scotia harbour calm

- 10:30 am: Calm harbour pictures. Blue water on a sunny day. Gulls. Wharf boards.

- 2:00 pm: Gentle sing or hum. One familiar chorus. Low and slow. Stop when the group tires.
- Evening option: Quiet puzzle table. Large piece coastal scene. No rush.

Thursday: Prince Edward Island tea day

- 10:30 am: Tea and biscuit social. See full plan below.
- 2:00 pm: Garden memory table. Seed packets to touch. Red soil photo. Fresh mint to smell.
- Evening option: Soft music and hand lotion. One song. Warm cloth.

Friday: Newfoundland and Labrador song and story

- 10:30 am: Kitchen party group script. Twenty minutes. Low volume. See script below.
- 2:00 pm: Work memory chat. Mending nets. Packing fish in the plant. Baking bread. Keep it calm and proud.
- Evening option: Favourite hymn hum. One verse only. Or listen.

Saturday: Church social Saturday

- 10:30 am: Church social mock up. Fold napkins. Set a pretty table. Greet at the door.
- 2:00 pm: Natal Day card craft. Simple summer cards with stickers and bright paper. See notes for Nova Scotia.
- Evening option: Family visit corner. Photo albums. Quiet music off or very low.

Sunday: Rest and light

- 10:30 am: Sunday calm. Short reading or blessing of choice. One soft tune after.
- 2:00 pm: Window watch with tea. Clouds. Snow or rain. Birds.
- Evening option: Bedside thank you round. Tell each person one kind thing you noticed this week.

Group script: Kitchen party (low volume, 20 min)

For six to eight people. Chairs in a half circle. Aide seated, not standing over folks.

You will need: speaker, one fiddle tune ready, wooden spoons, shakers, tea.

Minute 0 to 3. Welcome.

Say: Good morning everyone. Welcome to our little kitchen party. No need to perform. You can listen, tap, hum, or just sit with us. We will play one song at a time. We can stop any time. Would you like some tea before we start.

Hand out tea. Let folks settle. Offer blankets.

Minute 3 to 8. First song.

Say: Here is our first tune. It is a slow fiddle tune. See how it feels. You can tap your spoon softly or just listen.

Play one tune. Keep volume low. Smile. Hum softly. Do not sing over folks.

When it ends, say: Thank you for listening with me. Would you like another, or shall we chat a bit. It is fine to rest.

Minute 8 to 13. Choice time.

If the group wants more, play one more short tune. If not, move to chat.

Say: What does a kitchen party remind you of. Warm bread. Good neighbours. Music from the next room. There is no right answer. You can share or just listen.

Offer prompts, not quiz questions. Say: Some folks loved the fiddle. Some loved the biscuits. What sounds nice to you today.

Minute 13 to 18. Gentle rhythm.

Say: If you like, pick up a spoon or shaker. We will keep it soft together. No rush. If you prefer, just watch. That is joining too.

Tap a slow steady beat for one minute. Then stop. Rest hands.

Minute 18 to 20. Close.

Say: Thank you for being here. You made this table warm. We are done with music for now. More tea. Would you like to stay for a chat or head for a rest.

Note on dancing: If someone sways or stands, clear space and stay close. Do not pull folks up. Say: Feel free to sway in your chair. That is lovely.

If sound feels too much: Turn it off right away. Say: We will stop. Quiet is good too. Offer water and a calm minute.

Three room-bound one-to-one cards (4 steps max)

Use for bedside or chair visits. Ten minutes each. Knock. Smile. Ask to come in.

Card 1: Lighthouse calm

1. Show lighthouse photo. Say: Here is a lighthouse on a calm day. I like the steady light. What do you notice first.
2. Play thirty seconds of soft fiddle or wave sounds at very low volume. Offer to turn off.
3. Offer a warm cloth for hands and a sip of tea or juice.
4. Close kindly. Say: Thank you for this quiet time with me. Rest well.

Card 2: Biscuit and tea memory

1. Offer choice. Say: Would you like tea or apple juice today. Plain biscuit or oatcake.
2. Hold, smell, taste together. Say: This smells like fresh baking. Take your time.
3. Chat softly. Say: Did your kitchen have a favourite baking smell. Bread. Apple. Molasses.
4. Close kindly. Say: It was nice to share tea with you. I will tidy up now.

Card 3: Soft hands music

1. Sit beside, not over. Say: I brought one short tune. Would you like to hear it.
2. Play one slow tune, low volume. Offer a shaker to hold or just listen.
3. Rest hands together if welcome. Say: We can stop any time. Just tell me.
4. Close kindly. Say: Thank you for listening with me. I will lower the light for rest.

Tea and biscuit social

Time: thirty minutes. Group of six. Tables small and steady.

Goal: Warm chat. No mess. No fuss.

Set up:

- Decaf tea, decaf coffee, apple juice, water. Small cups with handles.
- Plate of small plain biscuits. Cut in half for easy hold. Note allergies and diets.

- Napkins. Lap cloths. Bin close by.
- One lighthouse photo and one kitchen table photo in the centre.

How to lead:

1. Welcome each person by name. Say: Glad you are here. Would you like tea or juice. Where would you like to sit.
2. Serve slowly. One cup at a time. Check heat. Say: This is warm, not hot. Take your time.
3. Offer one chat starter. Say: What makes a good cup of tea for you. Quiet. Company. A sweet biscuit.
4. Pause often. Let silence sit. Refill only if asked. Watch for fullness or tired hands.
5. Close softly. Say: Thank you for tea with me today. We will do this again Thursday.

Tips from a therapist:

- Keep sugar and milk in easy reach. Offer, do not assume.
- Keep scents plain. No lemon polish or strong cleaners just before.
- If someone does not eat, offer smell or hold. Being at the table still counts.
- Play no music, or one very soft tune at the start, then off for talk.

Provincial flavour notes (NB, NS, PE, NL: kitchen party, lighthouse as calm landmark, fishery as work memory without graphic danger, Natal Day, tea, fiddle at low volume, church socials)

Use what fits your residents. Many folks moved between provinces. Let them lead.

New Brunswick (NB)

- Kitchen party style is warm and plain. Fiddle at low volume. Spoons softly.
- Talk breakfast: toast, porridge, molasses on biscuits.
- Acadian table memory: family supper, fresh bread, pea soup smell. Keep chat light.
- Church socials: folding chairs, tea urn, friendly hellos at the door.
- Choice prompt: Would you like a molasses biscuit story or a fiddle tune first.

Nova Scotia (NS)

- Lighthouse as calm landmark. Peggy's Cove in sun. Steady light. Safe shore walk memory. No storm talk.
- Natal Day is the first Monday in August. It marks the founding of Halifax and Dartmouth. Keep it bright. Parade photos. Summer picnic. Birthday cake craft.
- Fishery as work memory: mending nets on the wharf. Painting buoys bright colours. Packing in the plant. Keep it proud and safe. No talk of wrecks, drowning, or cold danger.
- Fiddle at low volume. One Cape Breton style slow air. Offer to stop.
- Choice prompt: Lighthouse photo or harbour photo today.

Prince Edward Island (PE)

- Tea first. Small biscuit plates. Red soil garden photos. Potato blossom pictures.
- Church socials with preserves and quilts. Talk colour and craft, not contests.
- Ceilidh memory, kept small. Music in the kitchen. Neighbours dropping in.
- Choice prompt: Garden smells or tea tastes today. Mint or apple.

Newfoundland and Labrador (NL)

- Kitchen party is home. Accordion and fiddle, but keep it low and short. One song at a time.
- Jiggs dinner memory in small bites: talk potato, carrot, turnip smells. Serve what diet allows. Smell only is fine.
- Fishery as work memory: drying flakes in sun. Mending twine. Sharing bread on lunch break. Keep seas calm in stories. No scare talk.
- Church socials and concerts: recitations, short songs, tea after.
- Choice prompt: Would you like to listen to the song or share a lunch break memory.

For all four: If a resident starts a hard sea story, thank them gently and shift to calm. Say: That sounds like hard work. Thank you for sharing. Would you like some tea now. Shall we look at this sunny wharf photo together.

Dementia-safe notes

We keep brains calm and hearts included.

- Offer choices, not memory tests. Say what colour do you like, not do you remember this place.
- One step at a time. Short sentences. Pause between each one.
- One sound at a time. Voice or music. Not both loud together.
- Faces bright. Light on your face. Smile with eyes.
- No war, crime, or scary tales. No ghost ships. No storm wrecks. No drowning stories. Keep sea talk sunny and safe.
- No jump scares. No sudden loud music. No flashing lights. Warn before sound. Here comes a soft tune now.
- Keep props safe. No sharp tools. No hot cups left alone. No small parts that can be swallowed.
- Honour no. No means no. A turned head means later or never. Thank them and come back soon.
- End well. Say what is next. Rest now. Lunch soon. Your nurse will check in.
- Chart simply. Note what they chose. Note mood. Note tired signs.

What to avoid this week:

- Loud fiddle sets. Long concerts. Forced clapping.
- Quiz games. Name that tune tests. History dates as questions.
- News clips with wrecks or crime. Weather news with flood video.
- Strong fish scents in the room. Use photos and words, not strong odours.

Indoor weather backup (nor'easter / ice)

Atlantic weather can turn fast. When wind rises or ice coats the walk, we stay in and stay cosy.

Use this plan when groups cannot travel to the program room:

- Hallway trolley: tea in sealed cups, biscuits in closed tubs, blankets, photo cards, speaker.
- Room to room mini visits. Five to ten minutes each. One song or one story.

- Lounge anchor: set one small lounge with lights on bright. Soft music off or very low. Puzzle and throws ready. Staff take turns sitting there.

Sample backup hour:

1. Start with window watch from inside. Say: The snow is coming down out there. We are warm in here. Would you like tea while we watch.
2. Offer lighthouse calm card. Steady light feels safe when wind blows.
3. Play one soft tune. Then turn off for quiet chat.
4. Close with hand warmers. Warm cloth. Thank you round.

Safety notes:

- Keep floors dry. Wipe wheels and shoes at doors.
- Keep lights bright in halls. Move cords off floor.
- Check windows shut. Check heat steady. Offer extra layers.
- Postpone group moves if ice is on ramps. Bring the party to them.
- Call maintenance for drafts or leaks. Do not fix cords or heaters yourself.

Comfort line to use: We are inside and snug. No need to go out. The kitchen party came to you.

Print list

Print on white or cream paper. Large font, 16 point or more. One idea per page where noted.

For the week:

- [] Seven day calendar, one page. Post in lounge and at nursing desk.
- [] Kitchen party script, two pages max. Three copies. One for leader, one for helper, one spare.
- [] One to one cards, large print. Cut into three cards. Laminate if you can.
- [] Tea and biscuit social sign, with time and place. Note decaf and diet options.
- [] Photo cards x 4: lighthouse in sun, calm wharf, church hall table, kitchen table with tea. Label on back in plain words.
- [] Natal Day summer cards craft sample. One made up to show.
- [] Dementia safe reminders, one page for staff room.
- [] Weather backup checklist, one page for cart.

Extras if budget allows:

- [] Oatcake and biscuit labels with ingredients in large print.
- [] Fiddle tune list with titles and length. Mark slow ones with a star.
- [] Thank you notes for volunteers and family helpers.

You are ready. Monday morning, start with tea and a smile. Keep it gentle. The Atlantic way is to make room for everyone at the table.

How to use this PDF

Print the cover in colour if you can. Print the rest in black and white. Leave room cards at the bedside. You do not need to run every program.