

Canada Day, gently

Canada · Week of 1 July



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.



Maple leaves. Wikimedia Commons, Mabit1, CC BY-SA 4.0.

Canada Day, Gently

Local stories, soft music, and red and white comfort. No loud bangs. No invented ceremony.

Staff briefing

Hello friend. Thank you for helping us celebrate Canada Day with calm pride.

Canada Day is 1 July. It celebrates our country. Note for all staff: 4 July is United States Independence Day. It is not our building default. Our decorations, music, and menu stay Canadian on 1 July. If residents mention 4 July from TV, smile and say: Yes, that is our neighbours to the south. Our party here is on 1 July.

Culture and respect:

- Share local community stories only. Our town, our home, our neighbours, our land we live on.
- Do not invent Indigenous ceremony, smudging, drumming, or land words you do not know. Never perform a ceremony you were not taught to lead.
- If our home has an approved land acknowledgement, read it exactly as written. If not, use this simple line: We gather here in our Canadian home with thanks to all who care for this land.
- Invite, do not assume, identity. Say: If you have a family tradition you would like to share, we would love to hear it.

Tone:

- Gentle pride. No loud fireworks, no air horns, no poppers.
- Red and white are welcome. Maple leaves, flags on sticks, paper chains.
- Music soft. Folk, fiddle slow, Anne Murray, Gordon Lightfoot low.

Safety:

- Keep flag sticks blunt and short. No sharp poles.
- Battery candles only.
- Check diets before maple treats. Small tastes. Sugar free options ready.
- Hydration station with water, diluted juice, and cups with lids.

Seven-day gentle calendar

Keep groups to 20 to 30 minutes. Offer shade and rest. Room visits daily.

Monday: Welcome Canada Week

- Morning circle: Pass a soft maple leaf. Say your name and one Canadian place you love. A lake, a town, our home.
- Afternoon: Sort red and white items. Napkins, leaves, flowers.
- Room visits: Deliver small flag. Say: Canada Day is coming on 1 July.

Tuesday: Our Town Stories

- Morning: Share local stories. Prompt: Tell me about a favourite shop, rink, garden, or neighbour here.
- Write one line per person on a large poster: Our Community Memories.
- Afternoon: Look at town photos or postcards. No quiz. Just enjoy.

Wednesday: Music and Maple

- Morning: Soft sing along. O Canada first verse only, seated, slow. Then You Are My Sunshine.
- Afternoon: Smell and taste, tiny portions if approved. Maple cookie crumb, vanilla, strawberry.
- Room visits: Play one song one to one. Hum along.

Thursday: Craft and Calm

- Morning: Make red and white paper chains. Large loops. Staff handle stapler.
- Afternoon: Colour large maple leaf sheets. Thick markers.
- Evening: Window watch. Name red cars, white clouds, green trees.

Friday: Canada Day Eve

- Morning: Set party tables together. Flags in jars, white cloths.
- Afternoon: Practise party flow. Show Bathroom, water, rest chairs.
- Tell families: Party is quiet, 30 minutes, no fireworks. All welcome.

Saturday or 1 July: Gentle Party

- Hold party on 1 July wherever it falls. If weekend, hold small party on 1 July and family tea on nearest Saturday. See Group script.
- Menu: small sandwiches, cut strawberries, vanilla ice cup or sherbet if allowed, water and diluted juice.
- After: Rest hour. No other loud group.

Sunday: Thank You Close

- Morning circle: Read three lines from Our Community Memories poster.
- Afternoon: Deliver thank you notes to kitchen and housekeeping from residents.
- Evening: Soft music. Fold flags gently for next year.

Group script

Use for 1 July party. Keep to 25 to 30 minutes. Greet each person by name.

Welcome, 3 minutes: > Welcome to our Canada Day party. Happy Canada Day. We are glad you are here. My name is [your name]. Come sit where you are comfy. Water is right here. Point to water, washrooms, rest chairs.

> We will sing a little, share stories, and enjoy a snack. Stay as long as you like. Quiet room is open next door if you need a break.

Land words and song, 4 minutes: Read slowly. Do not add extra ceremony words.

> We gather here in our Canadian home with thanks to all who care for this land. We are thankful for our neighbours and our staff team.

Pause.

> We will now sing O Canada, first verse, seated and slow. Join in or listen. Both are lovely. Sing slowly or play one soft verse. Low volume. Remove hats only if residents wish. No correction.

Community stories, 10 minutes: Hold up Our Community Memories poster.

> This week you shared lovely town stories. I will read three. Listen for yours.

Read three short lines.

> Thank you. Our town sounds kind. If you want to share one line now, please do. Or just smile and enjoy your snack. Both are fine.

Tips:

- Thank each speaker. Do not correct details. If memory drifts, follow feeling.
- If someone shares Indigenous heritage or family tradition, listen with respect. Do not ask them to perform or explain ceremony. Say: Thank you for trusting us with that memory.
- If someone mentions 4 July, say warmly: Yes, our neighbours celebrate on the 4th. Our home celebrates Canada on the 1st. We are glad to be together today.

Snack and close, 8 minutes: > Time for a small treat. Sandwiches, berries cut small, and a cool sip. Tell us if you need help. No rush.

Visit tables. Offer wipes. Clear clutter.

Closing:

> Thank you for celebrating gently with us. Happy Canada Day to you. Rest well this afternoon. We appreciate each one of you.

Wave small flags softly. No waving near faces. Collect sticks after to keep safe.

Three room-bound cards

Large print. Bring the party to the room so no one is left out.

Card 1: Party in Your Room > Hello [Name]. Happy Canada Day. > Step 1. Wash hands with me. > Step 2. Pick water or juice. > Step 3. Try a small sandwich and berries. > Step 4. Wave this small flag with me. Hip hip hooray, softly. > Thank you for celebrating with us.

Staff note: Stay for first sips and bites. Check swallowing. Leave flag only if safe. No sticks for those with hand confusion. Use paper leaf instead.

Card 2: Hometown Memory Visit > Hello [Name]. Tell me about home. > Step 1. Look at these town photos with me. > Step 2. Point to one you like. > Step 3. Tell me one small memory. A shop? A rink? A garden? > Step 4. I will write it on our poster with your first name if you like. > Lovely story. Thank you.

Staff note: Write exactly their words. Ask permission before sharing. No probing on hard topics.

Card 3: Soft Music and Rest > Hello [Name]. Music time, nice and low. > Step 1. Sip water with me. > Step 2. Hold this soft red cloth. > Step 3. Listen to one song with me. > Step 4. Rest. I will stay a bit. > Peaceful Canada Day to you.

Staff note: Keep volume at conversation level. Stop if tired. Offer blanket. Ten minutes is plenty.

Dementia-safe notes

- One step at a time. Show, then do together. Smile and wait.
- Offer choices. Say: Strawberries or ice cup? Water or juice? Red cloth or white cloth?

- Never quiz. Do not ask: What year is Canada? Do you remember the words to O Canada? Invite listening instead.
- Respect cultural safety. Do not invent Indigenous ceremony, prayers, or teachings. Do not dress staff in regalia or sacred items. Red and white party clothes are enough.
- Keep noise low. No fireworks sounds. No air horns. Warn before singing starts: We will sing softly now.
- Watch heat. July rooms get warm. Offer water often. Seat away from sunny windows. Tell nurse about flushed cheeks or fatigue.
- Keep flags safe. Short blunt sticks only. Collect after group. Paper flags for memory care tables.
- End with orientation: You are at [home name]. It is Canada Day, 1 July. Supper is soon. You are safe here.
- French tip: Bonne fete du Canada. Say it slowly with a smile. Have a few French song cards ready if residents request them.

Print list

Print the week before 1 July.

For party room:

- ☐ 20 small paper flags, blunt sticks, plus 10 paper maple leaves for memory care tables
- ☐ Red and white tablecloths, paper chains made in group
- ☐ 1 poster: Our Community Memories, large markers
- ☐ 1 sign: Happy Canada Day, Quiet Party, All Welcome
- ☐ 1 sign: Washrooms This Way with arrow, plus Water Here sign
- ☐ Words to O Canada first verse, 20 point, 15 copies

For tasting, with dietary approval:

- ☐ Small sandwiches cut in quarters, cut strawberries, ice cups, diluted juice
- ☐ Sugar free and texture modified options labelled
- ☐ Hand wipes, bibs on request, trash bin nearby

For rooms:

- ☐ 20 copies each of Room Card 1, 2, 3
- ☐ 10 spare flags or leaves, 10 town photo cards

For staff:

- ☐ 4 copies of this briefing
- ☐ Approved land acknowledgement card, if home has one, read as written
- ☐ Diet list, hydration checklist, quiet room location map

After: Save flags flat. Recycle chains unless keepsake. File poster photo with consent. Note which songs and stories brought smiles for next July.

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.