



Activity & Recreation

PC P.E.A.R.L.S.™

The Alzheimer Society of Canada has identified the following 7 key elements of person-centred care:

- 1 Person and Family Engagement
- 2 Care
- 3 Processes
- 4 Environment
- 5 Activity & Recreation
- 6 Leadership
- 7 Staffing

There is an information sheet on each of these elements to help long-term care homes begin and sustain a “culture change” to provide a person-centred approach to care.

Engage each resident in stimulating and meaningful activities, tailoring recreational plans to the person’s interests, preferences and abilities.

Ensure continuous assessment, review and revision of these plans as the person’s abilities and interests change. A resident’s participation and engagement in group or one-on-one activities can be an important way to support independence, a sense of accomplishment, and a sense of self.

Key principles and some innovative strategies from Canadian long-term care homes

Core principle	Strategies
Make meaningful activities and experiences possible for each resident. Encourage and support residents to participate in a wide range of interests and activities that are personally meaningful, stimulating and enjoyable, and respect their interests, preferences and abilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide a “Breakfast Club” for groups of approximately 7 residents in a special room on each floor once a week, with residents rotating in and out of the club on a 6 to 8 week cycle. This program provides an enjoyable and stimulating social, nutritional and sensory experience for residents who may struggle in other programs. Recreational staff prepare the room for the breakfast to make it as attractive and home-like as possible with flowers, china dishes, fine utensils and soft background music. They serve breakfast to each resident and dine with them, engaging the group in family-type conversation about upcoming outings, their family and current events. Residents participate to the best of their ability in food preparation, setting the table and after breakfast clean-up.• Offer intergenerational programs in which children from two classrooms at the neighbouring elementary school visit weekly to engage in joint activities with residents. The children’s energy and enthusiasm make the day enjoyable and fun for the residents. There are small group activities in which one or two students and a resident work on school assignments involving reading, writing, or working on crafts. Students interview residents, asking a series of questions to create a keepsake memory book. Large group activities include residents and students listening to a teacher reading a story, or participating in seasonal events like Halloween trick or treating, or an end of the school year pizza party.



Activity and Recreation

“I do what the residents want to do. For those residents with dementia who have a hard time articulating what they want, I give them choices of things to do, which I know they liked based on past experiences with them.

– Recreation coordinator

Core principle	Strategies
<p>Make meaningful activities and experiences possible for each resident <i>continued</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage residents who have difficulty sitting still for extended periods of time through the “Wandering Artist” program. The art therapist uses a cart with a table easel, canvas, brushes and acrylic paints on it. She follows residents and invites them to paint on the canvas, even if only for a few minutes, and then travels to the next resident and a collective artwork is constructed. • Ask each neighbourhood¹ to be responsible for its own recreational pursuits, in addition to the activities that are offered more widely across the home and in large groups. These smaller resident groupings allow for more flexibility, spontaneity and variety in activity planning. Tailoring activities to individual interests and preferences as residents and staff in the neighbourhood learn from and about each other. This intimate, neighbourhood-driven approach also means that recreational activities happen throughout the week, including after 5 pm on weekdays and on weekends.
<p>Offer customized recreational plans to achieve specific goals and outcomes as determined by the resident. These plans should reflect each resident’s unique and evolving preferences and abilities over time, engaging the person in experiences, opportunities, and/or programs that stimulate them and help them remain engaged. Individualized plans are designed to give residents experiences that encourage them to express themselves, connect with others, feel a sense of freedom and purpose, and have fun.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an extensive resident recreation/activity assessment tool that matches residents’ interests, needs and capabilities with appropriate and effective recreational programs and activities. The tool is incorporated into the initial intake process and used to develop individualized recreational plans. • Complete an initial assessment of each resident’s recreational activity interests and needs 6 to 8 weeks after admission, as part of the overall care plan development. Through discussions with the resident and family, and observing the resident, a customized recreational plan is developed to meet those needs and interests in a way that keeps the resident happy, active and engaged. Review and evaluate, on an ongoing basis, the resident’s participation in the individual activities within the care plan, and provide recommendations and action planning, where appropriate.

¹ A neighbourhood is a small and autonomous living space within a home. It is staffed by a permanent team who is able to get to know the residents and their families, thus meeting their unique needs.



Activity and Recreation

“We have a greenhouse and a full-time master gardener, whose focus is to build relationships with residents by engaging them in his passion for plants and flowers. We also have flower boxes and garden spots available to each resident. They can plant what they want in their own flower box and put their name on it. Often this is an activity that family members participate in as well.”

– CEO

Core principle

Evaluate, review and revise each resident’s recreational plan as the resident’s interests, needs and abilities change. Observe and assess the resident’s participation in each aspect of their recreation plan, exploring options to increase their involvement as needed. Recognize that preferences change and what was once meaningful may no longer be so. Lack of initiative is often assumed to be part of the disease; however it can result from activities not being personally meaningful. Over time residents may need more encouragement and support to undertake an activity, which they may not be able to start on their own.

Strategies

- Use a therapeutic recreation services annual review tool to assess and provide direction regarding the type of encouragement, cueing or prompting that is helpful in order for the resident to participate in programs and activities. It also evaluates the success or progress of the program in providing benefits and accomplishing specific intervention goals for the resident, and recommends follow-up steps, if required.
- Use a tool to track resident engagement levels per day over a 1-month period to assess changes and help match programming to residents’ abilities. This assessment triggers a program meeting discussion that includes trouble-shooting solutions. A resident’s level of engagement will be assessed for all programs in which she participates and the recreational plan and activity mix adjusted as her participation levels and abilities change.