

Dementia Active

Activity Risk Assessments

Activities: seated playing card bingo, arts and crafts with no sharps, seated exercise, singalong and dance, hot drinks, and a three-course meal with hot food.

Risk rating key: Low = controlled with normal supervision. Medium = extra care/supervision needed. High = activity should not continue until risk is reduced.

General risk assessment for all session activities

| Hazard | Who may be harmed | Risk | Control measures |
|--|---|------------|---|
| Slips, trips and falls | Participants, staff, volunteers, visitors | Medium | Keep walkways clear, remove loose cables and bags, clean spills immediately, ensure good lighting, use stable chairs, and check flooring before the session. |
| Confusion, distress or disorientation | Participants | Medium | Provide a calm welcome, clear signage, familiar staff or volunteers, simple explanations, the option to opt out, and access to a quiet space. |
| Overcrowding or poor room layout | Participants, staff | Medium | Arrange tables and chairs with enough space for mobility aids and wheelchairs. Keep exits and routes clear. |
| Medical episode, fatigue or dizziness | Participants | Medium | Staff should be aware of known care needs where appropriate. Encourage rest, keep water available, and maintain first aid and emergency contact arrangements. |
| Manual handling when supporting participants | Staff, volunteers, participants | Medium | Staff and volunteers must not lift participants unless trained and authorised. Encourage safe movement and use mobility aids. |
| Infection control | Everyone | Low/Medium | Provide hand hygiene, clean shared items, ask people not to attend if unwell, and follow venue infection-control procedures. |
| Fire or emergency evacuation | Everyone | Medium | Staff must know evacuation procedures, keep exits clear, maintain an attendance list, and consider individual support needs. |

1. Seated playing card bingo risk assessment

| Hazard | Who may be harmed | Risk | Control measures |
|--|--|------------|---|
| Small cards, counters or markers could be placed in mouth | Participants, especially those who may mouth objects | Medium | Use larger cards or counters where possible. Avoid very small items. Staff monitor throughout and remove items if unsafe. |
| Frustration, confusion or distress if rules are not understood | Participants | Medium | Keep instructions simple, repeat calmly, give one-to-one support, and focus on participation rather than winning. |
| Leaning or overreaching across tables | Participants | Low/Medium | Keep cards and counters within easy reach. Staff assist rather than participants stretching. |
| Poor posture or discomfort from sitting | Participants | Low | Use supportive chairs, allow breaks, and encourage participants to change position if needed. |
| Disputes or upset over winning or losing | Participants | Low/Medium | Keep the tone light and inclusive. Offer encouragement and avoid pressure or over-competition. |

Additional controls: Use large-print cards where possible. Check tables are stable. Keep drinks away from cards if spillage could cause slips. Residual risk: Low. Supervision: normal session supervision, with additional support for anyone confused or distressed.

2. Arts and crafts with no sharps risk assessment

| Hazard | Who may be harmed | Risk | Control measures |
|---|---------------------|------------|---|
| Glue, paint, pens or craft materials causing irritation | Participants, staff | Low/Medium | Use non-toxic, washable materials. Check for known allergies. Avoid aerosols and strong-smelling products. |
| Participants putting materials in mouth | Participants | Medium | Avoid small craft pieces where possible. Supervise closely and remove unsafe items immediately. |
| Spillages from paint, water or glue | Everyone | Medium | Use table coverings, keep liquids limited, clean spills immediately, and keep floors dry. |
| Mess causing distress or embarrassment | Participants | Low/Medium | Offer aprons, wipes and reassurance. Avoid rushing. Make the activity failure-free and supportive. |
| Repetitive hand movement or fatigue | Participants | Low | Offer short tasks, breaks and alternatives. Staff assist where needed. |
| Unsafe use of equipment | Participants | Low/Medium | No sharps. Use safe items such as glue sticks, chunky pens, pre-cut shapes and blunt-ended tools only if appropriate. |

Additional controls: Prepare materials in advance. Pre-cut shapes before the session. Keep craft materials organised and only give out what is needed. Residual risk: Low. Supervision: close supervision, especially where participants may eat or misuse materials.

3. Seated exercise risk assessment

| Hazard | Who may be harmed | Risk | Control measures |
|---|-------------------|-------------|---|
| Dizziness, breathlessness or fatigue | Participants | Medium | Exercises must be gentle and optional. Encourage participants to stop if uncomfortable. Allow rest and water breaks. |
| Falls when standing or transferring | Participants | Medium/High | Keep activity seated unless individually assessed. Use stable chairs without wheels. Staff should discourage unsafe standing. |
| Overstretching or pain | Participants | Medium | Use slow, gentle movements. Avoid forced stretching. Remind participants to work within comfort. |
| Chairs tipping or sliding | Participants | Medium | Use sturdy chairs on level flooring. Avoid chairs with wheels. Check chair spacing before starting. |
| Collision with nearby furniture or other people | Participants | Low/Medium | Space chairs apart. Remove obstacles. Keep movements controlled and seated. |
| Participants copying movements beyond their ability | Participants | Medium | Demonstrator gives low-impact options. Staff observe and adapt movements for individuals. |

Additional controls: Begin with a gentle warm-up and end with a calm cool-down. Ask participants to remain seated. Avoid fast, jerky or competitive movements. Residual risk: Low/Medium. Supervision: active supervision throughout.

4. Singalong and dance risk assessment

| Hazard | Who may be harmed | Risk | Control measures |
|---|---------------------|-------------|--|
| Trips or falls during dancing | Participants | Medium/High | Encourage seated dancing or supported movement. Keep floor clear. Avoid fast movements. Staff monitor anyone who stands. |
| Overexertion, breathlessness or dizziness | Participants | Medium | Keep pace gentle. Offer seated options. Encourage rests and hydration. Stop if a participant appears unwell. |
| Noise levels causing distress or sensory overload | Participants | Medium | Keep volume moderate. Check participants comfort. Offer a quiet space. Reduce volume immediately if anyone becomes distressed. |
| Emotional distress triggered by music or memories | Participants | Medium | Staff observe mood changes. Offer reassurance, distraction or quiet support. Participation must be optional. |
| Collisions between participants, furniture or mobility aids | Participants, staff | Medium | Maintain clear space. Keep wheelchairs and walking aids positioned safely. Avoid overcrowding. |
| Infection risk from shared microphones or song sheets | Everyone | Low/Medium | Avoid sharing microphones where possible. Clean shared items and encourage hand hygiene. |

Additional controls: Use familiar music where possible. Keep dancing gentle and dementia-friendly. Staff should support participants who may become overly excited, confused or unsteady. Residual risk: Low/Medium. Supervision: active supervision, especially if anyone stands to dance.

5. Hot drinks risk assessment

| Hazard | Who may be harmed | Risk | Control measures |
|--------------------------------------|---|-------------|--|
| Scalds or burns from hot drinks | Participants, staff, volunteers, visitors | Medium/High | Serve drinks at a safe drinking temperature where possible. Use cups with secure handles or lidded beakers if appropriate. Staff or volunteers to carry hot drinks for participants who may be unsteady. |
| Spillages causing slips or burns | Everyone | Medium | Place drinks on stable tables away from edges. Clean spills immediately. Keep walkways clear and do not carry trays through crowded areas. |
| Participants forgetting drink is hot | Participants | Medium | Remind participants that drinks are hot. Allow drinks to cool before giving to participants who need support or may drink quickly. |
| Reaching across tables for drinks | Participants | Low/Medium | Place drinks within easy reach. Staff assist with passing drinks rather than participants stretching or leaning. |
| Broken cups or crockery | Everyone | Low/Medium | Use robust cups where possible. Clear breakages immediately and keep participants away from the area until safe. |
| Choking or coughing while drinking | Participants | Medium | Encourage participants to sit upright. Staff monitor anyone known to need support with drinking and follow any individual care guidance. |

Additional controls: Hot drinks should be served calmly and not during busy movement around the room. Staff should monitor participants who may be unaware of heat or who need help holding cups. Residual risk: Low/Medium. Supervision: active supervision while drinks are being served and consumed.

6. Three-course meal with hot food risk assessment

| Hazard | Who may be harmed | Risk | Control measures |
|---|---------------------------------|-------------|--|
| Burns or scalds from hot plates, bowls, gravy, soup or drinks | Participants, staff, volunteers | Medium/High | Allow food to cool to a safe temperature before serving. Warn participants that food or plates may be hot. Staff to serve or carry hot items where needed. |
| Spillages of hot food or liquid | Everyone | Medium | Use stable tables and clear place settings. Serve slowly and avoid overfilled bowls, cups or plates. Clean spills immediately. |
| Choking, coughing or difficulty eating | Participants | Medium/High | Ensure participants sit upright. Encourage slow eating. Staff monitor throughout and follow any known individual eating or swallowing guidance. |
| Cuts from cutlery or crockery breakage | Participants, staff, volunteers | Low/Medium | Use appropriate cutlery and crockery. Remove broken items immediately. Offer adapted cutlery or support where needed. |
| Confusion or distress during meal service | Participants | Medium | Explain each course simply. Keep the mealtime calm and unhurried. Offer reassurance and discreet help. Avoid rushing participants between courses. |
| Trips or collisions during serving and clearing | Everyone | Medium | Keep walkways clear. Staff and volunteers should not rush while carrying food. Clear plates in stages and avoid crowding around tables. |
| Food dropped on floor or table creating slip or hygiene issue | Everyone | Low/Medium | Clean dropped food promptly. Keep table areas tidy between courses. Replace dropped cutlery or crockery as needed. |
| Overeating, fatigue or discomfort during a long meal | Participants | Low/Medium | Allow breaks between courses. Offer smaller portions where appropriate. Monitor for tiredness, distress or discomfort. |

Additional controls: This assessment covers activity safety only. Food hygiene procedures, kitchen controls, temperature recording, dietary requirements and allergen management are covered separately. Residual risk: Low/Medium. Supervision: active supervision throughout serving, eating and clearing away.

Staff and volunteer guidance for all activities

Before the session, staff should check the room layout, exits, chairs, tables, flooring and activity materials. During the session, staff should monitor for signs of tiredness, distress, confusion, pain, overheating, dizziness or unsafe movement. Participants should never be forced to join in, and all activities should be adapted to individual ability. Staff and volunteers should be clear about who is leading the activity, who is observing participants, and who will respond to an incident.

Review

| Review trigger | Action |
|--|--|
| After an accident, incident or near miss | Update controls before running the activity again. |
| If venue, layout, participants or staffing changes | Reassess risk. |

| Review trigger | Action |
|--|--|
| If new equipment or materials are introduced | Check safety before use. |
| At regular intervals | Review at least annually, or sooner if needed. |

Document control: adapt this assessment to the specific venue, staffing level, participant needs, equipment used and any current organisational policies before use.