

WHAT IS A GERIATRIC CARE MANAGER?

Professional geriatric care management is a holistic, client-centered approach to caring for older adults or others facing ongoing health challenges. Working with families, geriatric care manager expertise provides the answers at a time of uncertainty. Their guidance leads families to the actions and decisions that ensure quality care and an optimal quality of life, thus reducing worry, stress and time off of work for family caregivers through:

- Assessment and care plan/service monitoring
- Planning and problem-solving
- Education and advocacy
- Family caregiver coaching

A Geriatric Care Manager is a health and human services specialist who acts as a guide and advocate for families who are caring for older adults or younger persons with disabilities. The Geriatric Care Manager is educated and experienced in any of several fields related to care management, including, but not limited to nursing, gerontology, social work, or psychology, with a special focus on issues related to aging and elder care.

The Geriatric Care Manager assists clients in attaining their maximum functional potential. The individual's goals are kept foremost, while safety and security concerns are also addressed. Geriatric Care Managers are able to address a broad range of issues related to the well-being of their client. They also have extensive knowledge about the costs, quality, and availability of resources in their communities.



For more information, call (269) 982-7746 or email cc@AreaAgencyonAging.org

HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT YOU NEED A GERIATRIC CARE MANAGER?

When caregiving for an aging family member becomes overwhelming, it may be time to contact a geriatric care manager.

YOU MAY NEED A GERIATRIC CARE MANAGER IF:

- The person you are caring for has limited or no outside support.
- Your family has just become involved with helping the individual and needs direction about available services.
- The person you are caring for has multiple medical or psychological issues.
- The person you are caring for is unable to live safely in his/her current environment.
- Your family is either “burned out” or unsure about care solutions.
- Your family has a limited time and/or expertise in dealing with your loved ones’ chronic care needs.
- Your family is at odds regarding care decisions.
- The person you are caring for is not pleased with current care providers and requires advocacy.
- The person you are caring for is confused about his/her own financial and/or legal situation.
- Your family needs education and/or direction in dealing with behaviors associated with dementia.



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**GERIATRIC CARE MANAGERS ARE
ENGAGED TO ASSIST IN A VARIETY OF AREAS, SUCH AS:**

- Housing – helping families evaluate and select appropriate level of housing or residential options
- Home care services – determining types of services that are right for a client and assisting the family to engage and monitor those services
- Medical management – attending doctor appointments, facilitating communication between doctor, client, and family, and if appropriate, monitoring client’s adherence to medical orders and instructions
- Communication – keeping family members and professionals informed as to the well-being and changing needs of the client
- Social activities – providing opportunity for client to engage in social, recreational, or cultural activities that enrich the quality of life
- Legal – referring to or consulting with elder law attorney, providing expert opinion for courts in determining level of care
- Financial– may include reviewing or overseeing bill paying or consulting with accountant or client’s Power of Attorney
- Entitlements – providing information on Federal and state entitlements; connecting families to local programs
- Safety and security – monitoring client at home; recommending technologies to add to security or safety; observing changes and potential risks of exploitation or abuse

Local, cost-effective resources are identified and engaged as needed. A care plan tailored for each individual’s circumstances is prepared after a comprehensive assessment. The plan may be modified, in consultation with client and family, as circumstances change.



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QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN LOOKING FOR A GERIATRIC CARE MANAGER

Professional geriatric care managers have diverse experience, education, and backgrounds. Many are licensed in their state in specific fields (such as nursing or social work).

Geriatric Care Managers do not specialize in all areas. When a Geriatric Care Manager says s/he practices "care management," find out her/his areas of expertise. You will want to hire someone who regularly handles clients with similar needs.

Geriatric Care Managers who primarily work with older adults bring more to their practice than an expertise in geriatrics. They bring knowledge of aging issues that allows them to overcome the myths relating to aging and an experience of working with resources in your local community. They are most aware of real life problems, health and otherwise, that emerge as persons age and the tools that are available to address those issues. Some important for the wise consumer to ask questions include:

1. What are the primary services provided by your agency/business?
2. Is there a fee for the initial consultation and, if so, how much?
3. What are your professional credentials and are you licensed in your profession?
4. How long have you been providing care management services?
5. Are you available for emergencies?
6. Does your company also provide home care services?
7. How do you communicate information?
8. What are your fees? (These should be provided to the consumer/responsible party in writing prior to services starting.)
9. Can you provide me with references?

The answers to your questions will assist you in determining whether that particular Geriatric Care Manager has the qualifications important to you for a successful relationship.

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