

What is a Geriatric Care Manager?
Care Management: A Unique Solution for Seniors and their Families
One Point of Contact for all the Resources You Need

What is a geriatric care manager?

A geriatric care manager (GCM) is a professional who specializes in assisting older adults, disabled individuals, and their families with long-term care arrangements. GCMs have training in gerontology, social work, nursing or a related human services field. A care manager is a resource expert with in-depth knowledge of all the services, benefits, programs and facilities in the community that serve older adults. By hiring a care manager, individuals and families benefit from having a coordinated plan, avoiding costly mistakes, and having a trusted professional for advice and monitoring. Generally, a care manager is also available to you 24 hours/day, seven days/week for emergencies and acts as a liaison between client, family and professionals.

Who can benefit from the services of a care manager?

Almost anyone dealing with major health issues or care concerns will benefit. Some examples of situations where a care manager can help: a loved one has been hospitalized and you are having difficulty getting answers about the situation; a family is concerned about a loved one's ability to live alone; Medicare and insurance issues have everyone confused; a loved one is diagnosed with dementia; you want to remain in your own home and you need some support to do so; or you are considering moving to Assisted Living or hiring help.

Some case examples from a care management practice help to illustrate how this profession works. In one case, Ms. Jones is completing rehabilitation after a fall and her doctor has suggested that she consider moving to Assisted Living. Ms. Jones works with a care manager to assess her needs and explore the option of returning home with help or moving to Assisted Living. The care manager gives objective, professional recommendations and assists her in setting up all needed services. She decides to remain at home for several months, but does begin looking for a new home in Assisted Living. The care manager helps her to choose a place that she feels transition to the new home. In another situation, a client has multiple medical issues and hires the care manager to help him manage the comfortable; is within her budget, and that provides excellent care. She also assists in the moving process and the complex array of doctor's appointments and insurance issues. The care manager advocates for the client and assists in asking questions and getting second opinions on aspects of his medical care, providing him a higher quality of care, reassuring his family, and helping them to avoid costly flights into town and a cycle of crises.

Although these services are paid privately, with the exception of some Long-term Care (LTC) insurance policies, many families find tremendous value in the expertise, professional care and oversight.

This article was written by Shannon Martin, Director of Communications, Aging Wisely, LLC.