

RALEIGH GERIATRIC CARE MANAGEMENT



Geriatric Care Management

What is a Geriatric Care Manager?

Geriatric Care Managers provide a variety of services for seniors and caregivers. A Geriatric Care Manager generally provides a home assessment and then creates a senior care plan recommendation based on the interview. Of course, you are not obligated to implement any portion of the care plan, but at least you will have the necessary tools to understand many of the home dynamics that are often over-looked due to being emotionally close to the senior or living too far away. We also find that in many cases, seniors will be more forthcoming with a Care Manager regarding life issues than they will be with family members. This may seem odd at first. But consider that most seniors do not wish to burden their already very busy family members. Sometimes circumstances can be embarrassing to talk about with family. On the other hand, the Geriatric Care Manager is a paid professional, and most people are willing to get their money's worth for paid services.

Why use a Geriatric Care Manager?

Your Geriatric Care Manager can:

- Make a professional assessment
- Arrange care services
- Find community resources
- Assist with a residential placement when the time comes
- Be a source of information

How does it work?

Home Geriatric Care Managers generally do the following:

Step 1: Conduct an in-person assessment

Interview questions cover a range of issues relevant to your elder's health and living situation, including everyday activities, nutritional status, safety, memory, depression, finances, insurance, and more. Interviews between a Geriatric Care Manager and the senior can be done with or without family members, but if you have concerns that you think the Geriatric Care Manager should be aware of like memory problems, be sure to talk to the caregiver separately. It is important that the Care Manager have all the information that is necessary to do the best job possible.

Step 2: Make a Care Plan

A Care Plan includes the results of the assessment, recommendations, and referrals for local care options. The Geriatric Care Manager will go into great depth in explaining some of the details of the plan, what led to the recommendations, what you can expect, and prioritize the needs list. Some things may be immediate and mandatory like monitoring medications that are not being taken properly. Other things like personal hygiene issues and diet are important to health and well-being and therefore need to be monitored closely; however, they are seldom emergency issues. Other things such as comfort issues are a bit further down on the list. The last are things that are not important to life or health but would make life a bit more pleasant. From this list, you and the Geriatric Care Manager will have to determine what can or cannot be handled and how that will be done. A Care Plan will also include regular reassessments. As we age, so do our capabilities. Capabilities and functions need to be monitored as time goes on with adjustments made for those changes. A perfect example is memory. A senior may have some moderate memory loss now but nothing that is potentially threatening. Six months later those memory issues may have worsened or be good one day and not the next. In such a case, an assessment should take place to determine the extent of the memory loss, the potential consequences of the loss, and what can be done to compensate for it. Phone call reminders or check lists could be two options.

Step 3: Arrange for services

Even when services are not available directly through the Geriatric Care Manager, your Geriatric Care Manager will arrange for the services through other parties. A Geriatric Care Manager finds out what you can do yourself, what can be done by other family members, matches this to the priority lists and economic abilities, and then helps to arrange for and monitor services. Geriatric Care Managers are uniquely connected in the community. It's not like hiring your sister. Most Geriatric Care Managers have been around for awhile, know the right people, and know how to get things done. In many cases they can save you more than their own fees by making the proper connections and knowing who they are hiring. They know which programs work, know many of the care services and their reputations, and can often help avoid trouble by working with others whose history, strengths, and weaknesses they understand. Even if you are local to your parent, Geriatric Care Managers can take a load of organization off from your shoulders. They coordinate between service providers and are in many ways, like a General Contractor. Service personnel and companies are responsible for responding to them, not you. In many cases, the service personnel are even more responsive and informed with a Geriatric Care Manager than they would be with you. The Geriatric Care Manager knows what is to be done, helps communicate between service companies and individuals, and often catch issues before they become problems. If you are remote from your parent, they are even more beneficial to you. Getting in touch with local service companies and monitoring them is difficult if not impossible from 1000 miles away. The Geriatric Care Manager becomes **you** for the purposes of establishing and monitoring services and needs.

Step 4: Monitor needs

Don't leave the Geriatric Care Manager out of the ongoing process of needs assessment. Your first meeting establishes a baseline and follow up assessments will be compared to that initial assessment to determine what if anything needs to change. Geriatric Care Managers are not in the home on a weekly basis except under severe circumstances so it really isn't all that expensive. But as professionals, they can spot issues before they become problems and get them resolved.

Communicate

Above all else, stay in contact with your Geriatric Care Manager. Not only does it help you understand what is going on, doing so helps to keep the Geriatric Care Manager updated on anything that you see as an issue. By staying in touch, you also let the Geriatric Care Manager know that you are interested and are paying attention to what they do. Like any other situation, a Geriatric Care Manager cannot see everything. You have your own perspective and may see things that they don't. **SPEAK UP!** Don't wait for the Geriatric Care Manager to spot an issue that you already know about. A good Geriatric Care Manager wants you to communicate and will not be offended if you talk with them about issues. Geriatric Care Managers are at their best when they work in partnership with you, your senior parent, and the service providers.

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