



# STAGES of SENIOR CARE

Your Step-by-Step Guide to Making the Best Decisions

by Paul and Lori Hogan

## Chapter 3: What Does a Geriatric Care Manager Do?

A relatively new specialist in the elder care industry is the geriatric care manager, a professional who assists families with problems or concerns they have not been able to handle entirely on their own. These care managers, who usually are licensed nursing or social work professionals specializing in geriatrics, can be especially useful when family caregivers live far away or disagree about care.

Gina lived in Phoenix, and her father, Bill, lived alone in a Los Angeles apartment. She visited him several times a year, and when she noticed he was starting to have some problems managing on his own, Gina called the Area Agency on Aging. The staff helped her set up daily meal deliveries and a home health aide. A few months later, Bill fainted in church and was taken to the hospital. He was there a day before someone was able to track Gina down. The hospital discharge planner wanted Gina to come in person to discuss her father's needs, but she was unable to get away immediately. Her husband suggested hiring a geriatric care manager, someone based in Los Angeles who could keep tabs on Bill. A care manager now visits him once a month and calls Gina with updates and recommendations.

Care managers can evaluate and assess your loved one's needs and coordinate care through community resources. You might also call on them to help lead a family discussion about a sensitive subject. Think of a geriatric care manager as a "professional relative" who is there to help you and your family with identifying needs and finding ways to meet them.

The cost of an initial evaluation varies and may be expensive, but these professionals can offer a useful service. If you decide to look into using a geriatric care manager, the National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers can help you find one near your loved one's community.

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