

The Value of Working with an Aging Life Care Professional®

ALCA is excited to release new findings from research conducted by the Florida Chapter of the Aging Life Care Association. Florida researchers first studied how care recipients valued the services provided by Aging Life Care Professionals. The results from the second phase considered the value of services as viewed by the “responsible party” authorized to pay for Aging Life Care™ services on behalf of an individual.

FINDINGS

97% of Responsible Party respondents felt that engaging an Aging Life Care Manager had a positive overall effect on the client.

99% said that engaging Aging Life Care Manager Services had a positive effect on their own lives.

Responsible Parties cited **keeping them informed** about the client’s status as the most common Care Manager function, followed by **emergency management** and **medical management**. All these services work together to set the Responsible Parties’ minds at ease.

The value of Aging Life Care Professional services is evident. With the increasing aging population and the emphasis on continuity of care, Aging Life Care Professionals are poised to play a larger role in coming years.

“Aging Life Care Professionals” (sometimes called “Aging Life Care Managers™”, “Aging Life Care Specialists™”, “geriatric care managers” or “GCMs”) – have emerged as resources for families – they are able to relieve the caregiver burden, are often engaged by families separated by distance, and understand the complexity of the healthcare system.

Overwhelmingly, the survey indicated that engaging Aging Life Care Professionals had positive effects for the responsible parties and the clients served. Among the most common benefits cited were:

Getting an objective assessment of a client’s needs,

Knowing the client has a medical advocate,

Simply contributing to peace of mind.

While 7 out of 10 adults are expected to need assistance as they age, scholars in the aging field perceive it is unrealistic to continue to rely so heavily on family caregivers because of their declining future numbers, the complexity of the healthcare system, and competing responsibilities for modern families (Bragg, 2015; Redfoot, 2013).

Why and How the Aging Life Care Professional was Chosen

Most respondents reported they engaged the professional because:

- family did not live near the client so that they needed a local contact for care,
- concerned about changes in the client’s status,
- client was experiencing a crisis at the time the professional services were sought,
- seeking a professional assessment to explore options for the client’s care.

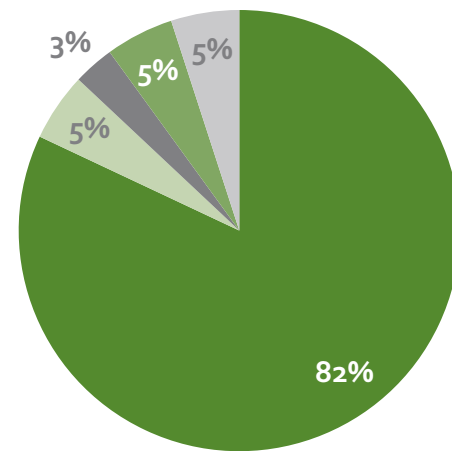
“Other” situations that led to engaging care:

- caregiver had a crisis,
- needed guidance navigating options for dementia/Alzheimer’s care,
- family dissension.

The responsible parties’ perceptions can be valuable in the field of elder care, by showing which professional services are most important to informal caregivers – in this case, often family members who live at a distance from the older adult. Since Aging Life Care Professionals may be experienced in one or more of several fields – including social work, nursing, gerontology or psychology – they can assist with a broad range of services (ALCA, 2016). The ways responsible parties use and value the Aging Life Care Professionals’ services can have a significant impact on the older clients and their families, as well as on service providers.

An unexpected finding was the extent to which Aging Life Care Professionals work outside the client’s home — in an assisted living facility or nursing homes.

According to our survey responses, many families depend on Aging Life Care Professionals even after the client has left home for a facility. In fact, almost half the respondents (47%) said the clients with whom they are associated do not live at home.



Survey Respondents

- Family Members
- Trust Officer
- Attorney
- Professional Guardian
- Other

Most Common Services Performed by Aging Life Care Professionals

Assessing, monitoring and updating responsible party on client’s needs

Managing crises, safety concerns or conflicts in the client’s life

Advocating and coordinating for the client’s medical concerns

Providing support and services that preserve the client’s independence

Offering activities that enhance the client’s social support and quality of life

Providing impaired memory support and services



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Services Most Valuable to Responsible Parties
Providing me peace of mind
Assessing client’s needs
Preventing/managing crises
Advocating for medical needs with providers
Preserving client’s independence
Navigating/recommending community resources
Managing residential transition
Mediating/resolving conflicts
Providing memory care/support

Services Most Valuable to the Clients
Monitoring/advocating for medical needs
Providing peace of mind by being on call
Coordinating/monitoring service providers
Providing counseling and emotional support
Enhancing social and quality-of-life activities
Making/recommending home safety changes
Providing memory care/support
Coordinating government assistance, insurance or other benefits