

Why Aging Life Care™ Management is the Next Big Career Opportunity

Jullie Gray, DSW, MSW, LICSW, CMC & Lisa Mayfield, MA, LMHC, CMC, GMHS



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A S S O C I A T I O N

The experts in aging well.

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One of the most exciting career trends of the next decade isn't found in the tech sector. It can't be outsourced overseas, automated, or replaced by artificial intelligence. It offers limitless opportunities for advancement and personal fulfillment. This dynamic profession—Aging Life Care Management—has an abundance to offer:

- **Job Security:** Demographic trends ensure lifelong job security.
- **Impact:** Make a meaningful difference in people's lives as an advocate and positive force for change.
- **Intellectual Challenge:** Engage in intellectually stimulating and rewarding work.
- **Flexibility:** Enjoy flexible hours and diverse practice settings (medical, legal, community-based programs, etc.).
- **Career Advancement:** Progress up the career ladder as you gain experience.
- **Collaboration:** Work with a wide range of professionals, including those in healthcare, legal, and financial services.
- **Entrepreneurial Opportunities:** Build your own private practice if you have an entrepreneurial spirit.

Whether starting your career or seeking a new path, Aging Life Care Management (also known as care management and geriatric care management) might be the perfect fit.

Why Choose Aging Life Care™ Management?

The surge in America's aging population, combined with fragmented health and long-term care systems, is generating some of the most formidable healthcare challenges we face today. By 2034, older adults will outnumber children, marking a dramatic demographic shift that will drive substantial growth in the care management profession.

Families overwhelmed by the complexities of navigating confusing systems increasingly turn to Aging Life Care Managers for guidance and invaluable support to make informed decisions, coordinate care, and advocate for the best possible outcomes for their loved ones. The profession allows you the opportunity to make a profound impact on the lives of others.

The Role of an Aging Life Care Manager®

Aging Life Care Managers assist families in navigating the transitions of aging and support individuals with disabilities in accessing services. The work crosses various sectors, including non-profits, government

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services, and for-profit organizations. Some professionals are generalists, while others specialize in different areas, such as working with older adults, individuals with cognitive or physical disabilities, mental illness, substance use disorders, or those facing economic challenges.

Aging Life Care Managers evaluate, plan, and coordinate client care, tailoring services to optimize health status and quality of life. Their holistic, client-centered approach includes:

- Assessing biopsychosocial issues
- Developing care plans
- Coordinating and monitoring care
- Consulting on aging and disability issues
- Managing crises and safety concerns
- Providing information and referral services
- Advocating for clients and families
- Educating clients and others on various topics
- Managing family conflict
- Offering coaching and supportive counseling
- Collaborating with other professionals

Qualities of an Effective Aging Life Care Manager®

Successful Aging Life Care Managers possess:

- A can-do attitude, confidence, patience, and curiosity
- Strong listening, problem-solving, and relationship-building skills
- An independent work ethic, effective communication, and a collaborative presence
- Analytical abilities and creativity in problem-solving
- Organizational skills, flexibility, and timely task completion

Through their work, Aging Life Care Managers become experts in the costs, quality, and availability of community resources.

Pathways into the Profession

Practitioners typically start in diverse health and human service fields related to care management, such as social work, nursing, counseling, gerontology, and occupational or physical therapy. Those with non-health or human service degrees can enter the field through work experience or certificate programs in care management, gerontology, or guardianship services, to name a few. Professionals with sufficient supervised experience are encouraged to take a certification exam in care management to demonstrate their expertise.

Compensation and Career Growth

Aging Life Care / care managers benefit from diverse compensation models, including hourly wages, salaries, and bonuses. According to ZipRecruiter, national annual salaries for care managers range from \$51,000 to \$146,000, with an average annual compensation of \$92,190 or \$44 per hour, reflecting the potential for lucrative earnings in this profession. The significant variation in salaries indicates ample opportunities for advancement based on skill level, location, and experience.

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Trends and Opportunities

Current trends highlight the growing need for Aging Life Care Management:

- The field of aging is experiencing a significant provider shortage, creating a prime opportunity for those seeking a fulfilling, well-compensated career.
- Older adult households are wealthier, allowing them to pay for services, while lower-income clients often qualify for Medicaid waiver programs.
- The growing diversity of the older population requires a similarly diverse and culturally competent workforce capable of addressing the unique needs of various communities.
- Changing marriage and family patterns will limit the availability of adult children to assist older parents and disabled relatives. This shift creates significant opportunities for professionals to fill critical gaps, ensuring that vulnerable populations receive the support and care they need.
- Many baby boomers aging solo will seek trusted advisors for planning and service coordination.
- The rising number of Americans with Alzheimer’s disease will drive demand for guidance about how to support the best quality of life and access care when needed
- The ongoing challenges in our healthcare system—such as physician shortages, lengthy hold times for scheduling appointments, significant wait times for consultations, lack of continuity with providers, and limited support from hospital discharge planners—underscore the critical value of an Aging Life Care Manager.

Next Steps to a Rewarding Career

If you’re drawn to this career path, connecting with peers in the field is invaluable. The Aging Life Care Association (ALCA) stands as a pillar of support, offering mentorship, comprehensive clinical and business training, and a platform for professionals at every stage of their journey.

ALCA is committed to members upholding the highest professional standards and ethics, providing access to ongoing education, publications, and a robust network of industry experts.

Membership with ALCA opens doors to collaboration, brainstorming sessions, and tackling complex cases with peers, fostering continuous growth and learning. Additionally, ALCA’s *Find an Aging Life Care Expert* search feature is a powerful resource for those venturing into private practice, offering quality referrals and expanding professional reach within the community.

If you are ready to explore a career as an Aging Life Care Manager, connect with ALCA today!

AGING LIFE CARE ASSOCIATION®

The experts in aging well.®

The Aging Life Care Association (ALCA) is a national non-profit organization with a membership of professional experts in the field of aging and disability. ALCA promotes excellence through a code of ethics and standards of practice; and provides its members with continuing education, business mentorship, and interdisciplinary networking among a community of like-minded colleagues.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS:



Jullie Gray, DSW, MSW, LICSW, CMC

Jullie Gray holds a doctorate in social work and is licensed as a clinical social worker. She combines over 30 years of leadership and clinical experience in diverse health, human service, and university settings with her passion for working with older adults and their families.

She is a Fellow of the Leadership Academy of the Aging Life Care Association, an award-winning Aging Life Care Manager, a past president of the National Academy of Certified Care Managers, and a past president of the Aging Life Care Association.



Lisa Mayfield, MA, LMHC, GMHS, CMC

Trained and licensed as a Mental Health Counselor and Geriatric Mental Health Specialist, Lisa Mayfield brings over two decades of experience in mental health and vast expertise working with clients and families affected by Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. She is also a trained mediator and has worked for many years supporting families in conflict.

Lisa founded Aging Wisdom, a care management and consulting practice serving the Seattle Metro area. She is an active Rotarian, an award-winning Aging Life Care Manager, and a past president of the Aging Life Care Association. She holds the distinction of Fellow of the Leadership Academy of the Aging Life Care Association and is a Care Manager Certified through the National Academy Certified Care Managers.