

WORKPLACE ISSUES: Z-CH 25

Case Studies

1. As a nursing student, Angie learned the proper handling of patients in her fundamentals course. During clinical rotation, Angie is assigned a patient with left-sided weakness related to a stroke and dementia. She reviews her notes on positioning, transferring, and handling a patient with musculoskeletal weakness. When entering the patient's room, Angie finds the patient halfway out of bed. She rushes to assist the patient to sit and immediately afterwards feels a sharp pain in her back. Subsequently, Angie has a herniated lumbar disk and is unable to continue nursing school.
 - a) How should Angie have approached moving this patient?
 - She should have called for someone else to assist or at least positioned her body correctly to help the patient out. Based off what happened it seems as though she bent over instead of bending her knees.
 - b) What did Angie do correctly in this situation?
 - She went over her notes and helped the patient.
 - c) Explain why back problems are the number-one cause of nurse injuries and describe the subsequent effects on nursing care.
 - Back problems can occur in quite a few different ways. For example, if you don't lift the patient's bed high enough you can develop back problems. We usually don't think about the way our posture can affect our backs over time. The major effect on nursing care would be that the nurse is not able to perform their duties as well as they used to.
 - d) Describe how the "safe patient handling" legislation might have prevented the injury.
 - If the safe patient handling legislation was in place, the student nurse would have known the correct way to handle the situation. In general, we want to minimize manual lifting.

2. Becky graduated from nursing school a year ago and since then, has worked on a neurology unit. Normally a happy and healthy person, Becky recently noticed that she always feels run down and is losing her hair. During the past year, she was told that her assessment skills were lacking because she missed an important finding on a patient while covering for another nurse. Her supervisor seemingly assigns her high-risk admits every time she works. Her co-workers complain that Becky always gets the lightest patient assignments and should take the admissions. Last week, she overheard another nurse saying, "Becky is almost useless. She

spends so much time with her patients she can never help other nurses. “Becky feels physically ill every time she goes to work. She wonders if these “tests” of her nursing skills will ever end.

- a) What type of violence is Becky experiencing?
 - Lateral violence.
 - b) Which of the signs of bullying from Table 25-1 is (are) evidenced in this scenario?
 - Left out of the office culture.
 - Begin doubting yourself.
 - Asked to do difficult tasks.
 - c) What steps can Becky take to minimize bullying in the workplace?
 - Name it. Seek respite. Expose the bully.
 - d) What can Becky do if her supervisor brushes off her concerns?
 - Go to the higher ups or seek different opportunities.
3. Amanda is caring for an 82-year-old patient with a fractured hip and dementia. In the shift report, she learns that the patient becomes agitated and combative at night. During her evening shift assessment, Amanda notes that the patient does not know where she is or why Amanda is in her room. Amanda remembers her hospital training on dealing with agitated patients by using soothing tones when addressing the patient and ensuring a calm environment. During assessment, the patient yells that Amanda is killing her. She begins swinging at Amanda with the telephone, breaking her jaw. Amanda runs out of the room, and her co-worker calls a “Code White.”
- a. What is a Code White, and how would it help in this situation?
 - It alerts staff of a potentially violent situation.
 - b. Identify elements of this case that signal a potentially threatening situation.
 - Amanda is alone with the patient.
 - The patient is agitated.
 - The patient is physically violent.
 - c. What preventive measures does the facility have in place to deal with hostile situations?
 - De-escalation techniques and a code system.
 - d. If Amanda were floated to another floor where this situation occurred, would this change how she should approach the situation? Explain your answer.
 - I don't think it should really change the situation. There is still the same code situation in place and Amanda still has the same training.

4. In reviewing available hospital employment, you identify three potential positions as a staff nurse in orthopedics. Because orthopedics is where you would like to work, you evaluate each of the positions:
- Position 1: A regional medical center, with a nurse to patient ratio of 5:1. Total patient care is expected of all nurses, and there is only one nursing assistant assigned to each unit. The hospital recently purchased safe handling equipment for every unit.
 - Position 2: An urban hospital with a nurse to patient ratio of 9:1. There is one nursing assistant assigned to every nurse. The hospital has new patient handling equipment, although it is shared between two units.
 - Position 3: a local hospital with a nurse to patient ratio 7:1. There is one nursing assistant for every nine patients. The hospital is moving toward Magnet status and uses a shared governance model.
- a) Explore each position in relation to your safety as a nurse. What are the benefits and detriments of each position?
- A: Benefits: Good nurse to patient ratio. Safe handling equipment for all units. Detriments: Only one nursing assistant in each unit.
 - B: Benefits: One nursing assistant for every nurse. Detriments: Shared handling equipment. 9:1 ratio.
 - C: Benefits: Okay ratio for nurses to patients and nursing assistants. Magnet status. Detriments: N/A
- b) Which position provides the safest working environment? Explain your response?
- I believe position 3 is the safest work environment. There are good ratios and having a magnet status shows that the nurses enjoy the work environment.
- c) What additional questions should be asked in relation to staffing?
- How many nurses work at a time.
 - How trained the nurses are.
 - What are the demographics.
- d) The hospital in position 3 is described as working towards Magnet status. What impact might this have on your decision to accept or turn down an employment offer?
- It would make me want to work there because there is an expected quality of care where the nurses are satisfied.