

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?
 - a. Angie should have approached moving this patient but using her legs and not her back.
 - b) What did Angie do correctly in this situation?
 - a. Angie was correct by reviewing her notes on how to properly position and transfer a patient. She did a good job at quickly recognizing that the patient needed assistance when the patient was halfway out of bed.
 - c) Explain why back problems are the number-one cause of nurse injuries and describe the subsequent effects on nursing care.
 - a. Back problems are the number-one cause of nurse injuries because often nurses do not have the bed at an appropriate height and are using their backs and not legs to move patients. The subsequent effect on nursing is that back-related injuries reduce the already short supply of nurses, and when there are fewer nurses, the risk for back-related and other musculoskeletal injuries increases.
 - d) Describe how the "safe patient handling" legislation might have prevented the injury.
 - a. The safe patient handling legislation might have prevented the injury as it is a program that would be a current solution to an old-age problem.

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?
 - a. Becky is experiencing lateral violence.
 - b) Which of the signs of bullying from Table 25-1 is (are) evidenced in this scenario?
 - a. Signs of bullying from Table 25-1 that are evidenced in this scenario is "it may seem like your work is frequently monitored, to the point where you begin to doubt yourself and have difficulty with your regular tasks", this goes along with the scenario as Becky is beginning to wonder if the "tests" of her nursing skills will ever end and she feels ill every time she has to go into work.
 - c) What steps can Becky take to minimize bullying in the workplace?
 - a. Steps that Becky can take to minimize bullying in the workplace would be to name it. Say that she is being bullied. Self-talk will help validate the experience while saying it. Next step is to seek respite. Take time off and during that time off check your mental health, check your physical health, look at your options, and gather data. Last step, expose the bully. For your mental and physical health, address the situation at hand.
 - d) What can Becky do if her supervisor brushes off her concerns?
 - a. If Becky's supervisor brushes off her concerns, she should remain calm and move up the chain of people. Bullying is not something to be taken lightly. She needs to go to the next person that will take her concerns seriously, even if that means going to HR or the director of the unit.

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?
 - i. A Code White alerts all staff of a potentially violent situation and it would help in this situation because by alerting a code white it ensures that resources are available to help deescalate the situation.
 - b. Identify elements of this case that signal a potentially threatening situation.
 - i. Elements of this case that signal a potentially threatening situation would be that the patient is unaware of where she is or why the nurse is in her room. With the patient being confused it could be a threatening situation for the nurse to be in the room alone.
 - c. What preventive measures does the facility have in place to deal with hostile situations?
 - i. Preventive measures the facility has in place to deal with hostile situations would be to make sure you are familiar with the policies that are in place, consider taking a crisis intervention course and make sure to never try to handle a potentially violent person on your own.
 - 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. Whether Amanda is floated to another floor or not, she should approach the situation the same as she would on her home floor. No matter where she is in the facility, the policies do not change and she should continue to follow them.

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. With position one it is the lowest ratio of patients which would be helpful with workload but there is only one NA per unit, so if you were to need help there is a good chance, they may not be able to help as they could be busy with all the others on the floor. However, the new equipment could be helpful on the unit. For position two, the ratio is bigger but there is a NA for each nurse which will help greatly with the workload. The equipment is shared between units though. For position three, the ratio is an average ratio and the NA's ratio is around the same and is doable depending on needs of patients and nurses.
- b) Which position provides the safest working environment? Explain your response?
- a. The position that provides the safest working environment would be position three. Position three has the best average nurse to patient ratio and moving toward Magnet status and the uses of a shared governance model would be the best for the nursing position.
- c) What additional questions should be asked in relation to staffing?
- a. Some additional that should be asked in relation to staffing would be how many nurses they staff per shift, how many patients do you have on average, what resources are available to you, what other help is offered to you, are others willing to pick up extra shifts to help
- 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?
- a. This would impact my decision to accept the employment offer because it helps to serve as a recruitment and marketing tool. It would provide a professional work environment and high-quality nursing as well.