

**Unit 6: Workplace Issues**  
**Z-Chapter 25**  
**ONLINE CONTENT (1 H)**

**Unit Objectives:**

- Determine your risk for encountering a workplace issue that can affect your health or well-being. (1,7)\*
- Understand ergonomics and ways to protect yourself from workplace injuries. (5,7)\*
- Analyze workplace bullying and harassment. (3,5)\*
- Recognize the risk for violence at work and how to reduce your risk. (2,5,7)\*
- Create a personal plan to handle workplace problems such as staffing shortages and being assigned to an unfamiliar workplace. (3,7)\*

\*Course Objectives

**Case Studies**

Due March 11, 2024 @ 0800 in the Z-CH # 25 dropbox

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?  
Using proper body mechanics and calling for help to assist in repositioning the patient or using an assistive device.
  - b) What did Angie do correctly in this situation?  
She acted immediately for the safety of the patient, recognizing that the patient needed to be repositioned or else they could have fallen out of the bed and been injured.
  - c) Explain why back problems are the number-one cause of nurse injuries and describe the subsequent effects on nursing care.  
Back problems are the number one cause of nurse injuries because of direct patient care such as turning, toileting, and providing activities of daily living such as lifting, repositioning, transferring. Plus, the arrangement of the patients room and placement of furniture, monitors, and equipment can require the nurse to reach and stretch in dangerous positions. All of these increase the risk of injury, and when an injury occurs it lowers the already short supply of nurses which then in return increases the risk as nurses have less help.
  - d) Describe how the "safe patient handling" legislation might have prevented the injury

Safe patient handling legislation includes assessing the patient to determine mobility needs, hands on training to use lifts during transfers, not repositioning or transferring a patient without help. In this case, following the rule of not repositioning without help would have prevented the injury.

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, violence directed to an individual by another individual who is considered a colleague or equal in terms of jobscope.

- b) Which of the signs of bullying from Table 25-1 is (are) evidenced in this scenario?

"You might be asked to do difficult or seemingly pointless tasks and be ridiculed or criticized when you can't get them done."

- c) What steps can Becky take to minimize bullying in the workplace?

Name it, state that you are being bullied. Seek respite, take time away to check your mental health, check your physical health, research state and federal legal options, gather data regarding the impact on the unit, and start a job search for a new position. Expose the bully or bullies to the employer.

- d) What can Becky do if her supervisor brushes off her concerns?

This is a zero tolerance policy, go above the supervisors head, or leave the position.

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?

Code white is any potentially violent situation. It would be helpful in this situation because she would not be alone with the patient, she would have help to avoid injury.

b. Identify elements of this case that signal a potentially threatening situation. Report of patient being combative and agitated at night, assessment of the patient being very confused, not knowing who the nurse is or even where she is, confusion very quickly can turn to violence. Also assessing in the beginning that she stated the nurse was killing her, therefore she believed she was in a lot of danger and needed to protect herself in any way possible.

- c. What preventive measures does the facility have in place to deal with hostile situations?

The code is announced over the announcement system so that a trained group of individuals can confront the situation. There is also specialized training such as crisis intervention to become familiar with signs of escalation and strategies to deescalate.

- d. If Amanda were floated to another floor where this situation occurred, would this change how she should approach the situation? Explain your answer.

This would not change how the situation is handled, as it is the same across all units for the most part. If the unit has the means to handle the situation.

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?

Position one has great safe handling equipment, and they have a decent ratio, but they only have one aide per floor. Position two has a very high ratio, but there is one aide assigned to every nurse and they have the needed safe but it is shared between two floors. Position three has a ratio that is middle of the road, still high, average assistant ratio.

b) Which position provides the safest working environment? Explain your response?

Position three would be the best bet, although the ratio is a little high, they have assistance from the aide and the hospital is magnet status meaning they have achieved high level of care.

c) What additional questions should be asked in relation to staffing?

Is there employees that can come in to help in times of need? Is it okay to work in teams to achieve patient care?

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?

Magnet status means that there is higher nurse satisfaction and higher levels of care available for patients.

*In order to receive full credit (1 H class time) for this assignment, it must be completed in its entirety by the due date/time assigned. Any assignments not completed in its entirety by the assigned due date and time will result in missed class time.*