

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?

Angie should have stayed with the patient and called for some assistance. If possible, to avoid lifting she could have used equipment available on the unit to lift and transfer the patient. If equipment was not readily available, she should have asked a coworker to assist her in moving the patient back into bed.

b) What did Angie do correctly in this situation?

Angie reviewed her notes on positioning, transferring, and handling a patient with musculoskeletal weakness prior to walking into the room and assisting 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 are the number one cause of nurse injuries because often nurses have to provide direct patient care including turning, toileting, lifting, repositioning and transferring. In addition, rooms are often set up in ways that require nurses to reach and stretch in unnatural positions. Back related injuries reduce the already short supply of nurses, and this in turn increases the risk for more back related injuries.

d) Describe how the "safe patient handling" legislation might have prevented the injury.

Safe patient handling legislation allows newly hired nurses to be trained to assess each patient and determine any mobility needs per shift or daily. It would give nurses the

chance to learn to use transferring equipment, to provide safer transfers. If this legislation was in place, the nurse would have been more confident on how to handle the situation when entering the room.

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?

Becky is experiencing lateral violence.

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

- You may be asked to do new tasks or tasks outside your typical duties without training or help, even if requested.
- It may seem like your work is being frequently monitored, to the point where you begin to doubt yourself and have difficulty with your regular tasks.
- You may be asked to do difficult 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?

Becky can first name it. This is a type of self-talk that will help Becky validate her experience. She can say who is bullying her, and that they are a bully. Next, she can seek respite. It is good to take some time from work to bully proof yourself. During this time, it is important to check your mental health, physical health, research state and federal legal options, gather data regarding the economic impact the bully had on your unit and finally start a job search for a new position. Lastly, she should expose the bully. She should consider giving her employer the opportunity to address the situation.

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

If her supervisor brushes off her concerns, Becky should look into new jobs and opportunities that would benefit her mental and physical health.

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?

A code white is called in any situation to alert staff of a potentially violent situation. This would have helped the situation by quickly providing resources to help deescalate the situation so that no nurse or any other staff member would be alone with the individual.

b. Identify elements of this case that signal a potentially threatening situation.

Some elements that showed a potentially threatening situation were that the patient had dementia and was told during report that they become agitated and combative at night. Also, that the patient was unaware of where they were or why the nurse was in their room.

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

Calling security or calling a code white should help quickly deescalate the situation and prevent any further injuries from occurring.

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

Amanda may have been less comfortable in a unit that she was unfamiliar with, however if this situation occurred while she was floated, it would still be important for her to quickly get other staff and call a code white to ensure that other staff members were safe and that no one was alone in this 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?

With position 1, there is a nurse ratio of 1:5 which is much safer than the other 2 positions. With this position, the likely hood of receiving help from a PCT is very low, however the unit is equipped with all the safe handling equipment for the nurses. Position 2 is a higher ratio with less equipment available on the unit. However the nurse does have an assistant if needed. Lastly, The nurse ratio is high however, the environment is clearly well maintained and the workers must work well together to ensure patient safety if they are receiving magnet status.

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

I believe that the first position provides the safest working environment because there is a smaller ratio of patients to 1 nurse and the nurse is provided with the equipment needed on her unit to safely care for her 5 patients. There is also an assistant available on the unit if the nurse needed help at any time.

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

How is acuity of patients determined with assignments being made. If short staffing requires higher patient load, what are our resources? It is common for the ratio to increase due to short staff. What other options/ resources are available when ratios go up, to make sure we can provide safe 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?

Usually, hospitals that receive magnet status are known to have better patient outcomes and be good places to work for most nurses. It would attract nurses because it is desirable to work for a hospital that is seen to collaborate well as nurses to achieve positive patient outcomes. However, in the current nursing shortage, it is common for hospitals to seek this status specifically to attract nurses. It is important to make sure that the magnet status is well deserved and maybe consider job shadowing prior to make sure that it is an attractive position.

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.