

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

**Emily Litz**

**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?**
    - a. A way that Angie should've approached this patient differently is by helping the patient back into bed in a lying position, calling for help, and repositioning the patient back into bed to prevent a fall. There shouldn't have been an occurrence of Angie assisting the patient into a "sitting position" because the patient has a left-sided weakness, transferring the entirety of the patient should've been done with two people and or a stand-lift machine.
  - b) **What did Angie do correctly in this situation?**
    - a. Some things that Angie did correctly were checking the chart about how the patient transferred before interacting with the patient, and then appropriately determining that the patient needed immediate to help prevent a fall from occurring.
  - 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 a huge nursing injury for many reasons. A few reasons include the amount of walking, lifting/turning/transferring

patients (more improperly), long hours standing, and low staffing, forcing healthcare staff into unsafe work environments. The effects of back problems on nursing care allot to nursing workplace debilitation in safely caring for themselves and their patients.

**d) Describe how the “safe patient handling” legislation might have prevented the injury.**

- a. A way that the safe patient handling legislation could help prevent injury is by allowing different members of the healthcare team to assess patient mobility levels and learn to teach different equipment uses. There are also standards to be re-evaluated to be sure that staff members understand and are refreshed in their knowledge of maintaining proper body mechanics during patient transfers.

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. Lateral violence

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

- a. Having your work frequently monitored to where you begin to doubt yourself with having trouble with your regular tasks and being asked to do difficult tasks, whilst being ridiculed when they’re not done promptly.

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

- a. Name it, seek respite, and expose the bully. Name it to validate your experience, seek respite by taking time off work, and check in on your mental state alongside federal legal obligations. Then, expose the bully by giving your workplace the chance to address issues with the bully.

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

- a. Becky can climb the chain of command by going to the charge nurse or HR services. HR can help reinforce the zero-tolerance policy about bullying.
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. Code white is an alert that helps let others know that any person became loud or abusive, made threats, or acted in a threatening way. The way it would help this situation is by alerting others of an active threat so that appropriate safety measures can be implemented.
  - b. **Identify elements of this case that signal a potentially threatening situation.**
    - i. Some elements that signal a threatening situation are the agitated and confused patient that can’t be soothed. Then, the patient starts swinging at Amanda with a phone and breaks her jaw, this is now considered battery.
  - c. **What preventive measures does the facility have in place to deal with hostile situations?**
    - i. Staff are trained in de-escalation of hostile situations. When code white is called, it is announced over the hospital’s system. This helps alert others when a healthcare team member doesn’t feel safe. It is important to become familiar with facility policies regarding code white and de-escalating tactics, alongside signs of escalating violence.
  - 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. If she were to be floated to another floor, her approach of calling a code white would not change, but if the patient is knowingly violent, she should take another person in the room with her to prevent injury and to have a witness. Amanda can also learn self-defense in conjunction with de-escalation tactics to prevent further injury to herself.
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. Some benefits of position 1 is that there is a safe nursing-to-patient ratio, however, there is the detriment that all the patient care is reliant on the nurses to complete. However, there is only one NA for each unit. This to me would be a safety issue because the NA would be equally responsible for caring for all of the patients on the unit. This could lead to prolonged time for care and faster burnout. It also says that new equipment was bought, but not that it was implemented on the units for use. Some benefits of position 2 are that there are more aids for nurses and there is new equipment on the units. Some detriments are that the equipment is being shared with other units and there is a higher patient ratio for the nurses. Some benefits of position 3 is that there is a lower patient ratio than position 2 and they have a shared governance model, where different team members can accept responsibility of their skills. Some detriments can include the model that they follow because in an efficient model, different parts of the team accept and carry out skills and tasks. However, when this model is implemented and parts of the team do not accept responsibility or accountability for carrying out their skills, patient care can be delayed and or neglected.

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

- a. I believe the 3<sup>rd</sup> position provides the safest working environment because there is a good nurse to patient ratio of 1:7 an aid to patient ratio of 1:9 which is also a good ratio. I believe this to be the best working environment because a hospital moving towards magnet status has components within their staffing and facility to allow them to reach that status. Magnet hospitals are known to provide excellent patient care and safe working environments for their employees.

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

- a. Some additional questions that should be asked are about employment longevity, management longevity and maintenance, employee satisfaction, staffing ratios, and the utilization of employee benefits.
- 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 prompt my decision to accept the employment offer because I know, especially at a magnet hospital, that not only will my patients receive quality care, but that myself as an employee will also be taken care of.

*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.*