

**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? She should have called for help and lowered the patient to the floor as opposed to helping them back into the bed.
  - b) What did Angie do correctly in this situation? She rushed to assist the patient preventing a fall.
  - c) Explain why back problems are the number-one cause of nurse injuries and describe the subsequent effects on nursing care. They don't always use proper body mechanics and don't use teams to assist with moving/lifting/repositioning because not enough staffing to help. They also have to work around multiple tables, chairs, poles, equipment which can affect the proper mechanics.
  - d) Describe how the "safe patient handling" legislation might have prevented the injury. She may have been briefed on the limitations of the patient and had appropriate assistance devices in the room. She could have "warmed up" and stretched prior to her shift starting.

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? She is experiencing lateral violence from her coworkers and hazing from her supervisor.
  - b) Which of the signs of bullying from Table 25-1 is (are) evidenced in this scenario? Becky could be asked to do new tasks or outside of typical duties without proper training or help, she also might be asked to difficult tasks and then criticized about her performance.
  - c) What steps can Becky take to minimize bullying in the workplace? She can “name it” (helps to validate the experience via self-talk), “seek respite” by taking time off to check mental health, check physical health, research legal options (state and federal), gather data about economic impact on the unit, and start a job search for a new position, and “expose the bully” by telling someone (your employer)
  - d) What can Becky do if her supervisor brushes off her concerns? Follow the steps above name it, seek respite, and expose again.
  
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 a code that alerts staff and signifies a potentially violent situation. In this situation, it would help bring more staff to the area to help deescalate the situation and the person or people would be alone during this situation.
  - b. Identify elements of this case that signal a potentially threatening situation. Elements include confusion of the patient of where they are and why the nurse is

there, history of agitation and combative at night, the yelling and swinging of the arms and telephone.

- c. What preventive measures does the facility have in place to deal with hostile situations? Codes and alerts are in place, shift report and hospital training.
  - d. If Amanda were floated to another floor where this situation occurred, would this change how she should approach the situation? Explain your answer. In a way the situation may be similar since there is a hospital wide code/alert and training for these types of patients. However, she may be floating from a floor that does not usually have these types of patients and may not be as familiar or comfortable. Also, she may not feel that she would get the support that she would on her home unit.
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? 1 has fewer patients per nurse, but total care is provided by the nurse and shared AP. The good is that every unit has safe handling equipment. Increased risk for injuries because you're by yourself. 2 has the highest ratio of nurse to patient so it's busy and increases risk for errors but there is an AP for every nurse. New but limited equipment. Increased risk for errors but have help with the movements so better for the decreased risk of injury. 3 is a tough but doable ratio especially with the ratio for AP. The nurse will most likely have plenty of help and with the status they have high standards and goals to meet for the safety and comfort of the patient
  - b) Which position provides the safest working environment? Explain your response? The safest working environment is 3 because the ratios are not terrible, and if the place is trying to get magnet status, they are constantly

trying to improve the system, and making the patients, staff, and family happy, safe, and comfortable.

- c) What additional questions should be asked in relation to staffing? What are the duties and expectations of the AP, is there mandating or floating. How long is the training and what all does it encompass. What are some of the safety plans and policies in place.
- 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? In these types of facilities, they have good, relationship between providers and nurses, better patient outcomes, and nursing autonomy.

*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.*