

**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 while also calling for help to get the patient back in bed.
  - b) What did Angie do correctly in this situation?
    - Angie had reviewed her notes on positioning, transferring, and handling patients with musculoskeletal weakness. She cared about the patient's safety to try and have them sit.
  - c) Explain why back problems are the number-one cause of nurse injuries and describe the subsequent effects on nursing care.
    - Back injuries are the #1 cause of nurse injuries due to turning, toileting, and providing ADLs. Also happens due to improper lifting, repositioning, and transfers. The effect this has on nursing care causes a short supply of nurses. In return when there is a shortage on staff this increases the risk of more injuries.
  - d) Describe how the "safe patient handling" legislation might have prevented the injury.
    - The safe patient handling legislation may have helped by ensuring the nurse isn't moving, lifting, or turning dependent patients without the right

equipment or help from another staff member. The program also mentions the importance of warming up and stretching.

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?
    - Being asked to do new tasks or tasks outside your typical duties without training or help even when you request.
    - Work is being frequently monitored, begin to doubt yourself and have difficulty with your regular tasks.
    - Asked to do difficult or 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. Speaking up and saying she has a bully can validate
    - Seek respite. Take time away from work and the bully. This helps your mental, physical, and emotional health.
    - Expose the bully. Consider allowing your employer to address the situation.
  - d) What can Becky do if her supervisor brushes off her concerns?
    - If the supervisor brushes off her concerns I suggest going up the chain of command. You should feel safe at work and concerns should be validated and investigated.

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 used to alert all staff of a potentially violent situation. This ensures resources are available to help de-escalate the situation.
  - b. Identify elements of this case that signal a potentially threatening situation.
    - It is nighttime, the patient has dementia, the patient is unaware of where they are, and Amanda is a foreign person to the patient and is in her space.
  - c. What preventive measures does the facility have in place to deal with hostile situations?
    - Teaching employees how to recognize signs of escalating behavior, taught to protect themselves. Allowing anyone to activate the “code white”, if the employee is feeling unsafe this can be called and will announce overhead and security and trained volunteers will show up.
  - 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 believe that if this situation were to happen again now knowing about code white. Instead of trying to de-escalate the situation on her own she could immediately call this code and step away before things escalate any further. She did the right thing in calmly addressing the patient but once the patient started to yell she should have backed away and asked for help.
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 1: benefits are the 5:1 ratio and safe handling equipment for each unit. Detriments are the fact that total patient care is expected of all the nurses which can make the nurse's job very hard because she has 5 people to care for.
    - Position 2: Benefits are nursing assistant assigned to every nurse, has patient handling equipment. Detriments are 9:1 ratio, the handling equipment is shared between two units.
    - Position 3: benefits are one nursing assistant for every 9 patients, magnet status, and shared governance. Detriments 7:1 ratio.
  - b) Which position provides the safest working environment? Explain your response?
    - The safest working environment would be position 1. This position offers the nurse the least number of patients which in return would be more manageable compared to 7 or 9. Although the nurse is responsible for all patient care which could be a bit of a challenge to juggle with making sure all medications are passed, assessments are done, and charting there is still a nursing assistant that could assist if things were too complicated. The position also offers safe handling equipment.
  - c) What additional questions should be asked in relation to staffing?
    - Additional questions: Are there policies in place for high census or high patient load situations? Are there any PRN RNs that could assist?
  - 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?
    - This makes a huge impact due to the nurses having autonomy, providing a low nurse-patient ratio, and providing collaborative relationships with physicians.

*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.*