

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

Lindsey Steele

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

Review chapter 25 and place your answers to the following questions in the Z-Chapter 25 dropbox by 0800 on 3/10/2025.

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 could have utilized a wide base of support and bent at the knees rather than the waist. Angie could have called for help to reposition the patient safely.
 - b) **What did Angie do correctly in this situation?** Angie reviewed her notes prior to positioning the patient with musculoskeletal weakness, and this showed she is aware of the importance of proper body mechanics. She also noticed the patient was halfway out of bed and rushed to help them.
 - 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 injuries because nurses frequently lift/transfer patients and constantly bend or lift in awkward positions. Many nurses do not follow the proper body mechanics or do not raise the bed to proper working height.
 - d) **Describe how the "safe patient handling" legislation might have prevented the injury.** The legislation may mandate the use of transfer

devices or slide sheets to help move patients and reduce the risk of harm on nurses. A gait belt could be used to assist the patient to a safe position.

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, which is bullying in the workplace. Beck is experiencing repeated, unwanted, and harmful comments that are aimed to harm, offend, or cause distress.
- b) **Which of the signs of bullying from Table 25-1 is (are) evidenced in this scenario?** Becky is left out of office culture such as chitchat. Becky may feel like her work is frequently monitored due to her one assessment error, and she may doubt herself and her skills. Becky may notice a pattern in her work assignments as well.
- c) **What steps can Becky take to minimize bullying in the workplace?** Becky can keep a detailed record of all of the rude comments, patient assignments, and any hint of bullying she feels is in her workplace. She can explain to her staff and supervisor her feelings, and be assertive on addressing the rude behavior. She can talk to her nursing supervisor about her workload, how the staff makes her feel, and the documentation of all the bullying she kept track of.
- d) **What can Becky do if her supervisor brushes off her concerns?** Becky can go up the chain of command and express her concerns. If needed, Becky can also request a private formal meeting to address the bullying and workplace issues. She can present the documentation of bullying at the meeting also.

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 implemented when there is any violence or aggression from a patient. This code can alert security to help neutralize the situation or ensure nurse safety. This reduces risk of further injury to both Amanda and other staff members.
 - b. **Identify elements of this case that signal a potentially threatening situation.** The patient is diagnosed with dementia and may not be aware of the direct harm or violence they are causing. The confusion and impaired judgement make them more prone to violent outbreaks, which is a threatening situation. Another element is that it is on night shift, which means there may be less staff around to help Amanda while caring for the agitated patient.
 - c. **What preventive measures does the facility have in place to deal with hostile situations?** The facility has codes in place to alert the hospital of any emergencies, in this case it is a code white. This ensures a rapid response team quickly arrives at the situation. The hospital also provided training on dealing with agitated patients so Amanda can be prepared.
 - d. **If Amanda were floated to another floor where this situation occurred, would this change how she should approach the situation? Explain your answer.** If Amanda is floated to a different floor, the patient may not have dementia, but be aggressive for different reasons. The floor may have different protocols or procedures for dealing with violent patients. Amanda should communicate with the charge nurse or staff to identify high-risk patients. She should also familiarize herself with the units protocols for emergencies.

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 few benefits for working at the regional medical center are the lower nurse to patient ratios, this is a safer workload compared to the others. This minimizes the risk of patient errors, neglect, or burnout. The safe handling equipment is another safety feature. A detriment is the limited nursing assistant support, which means the workload for nurses is more. In the Urban Hospital, there is one nursing assistant per nurse so tasks can be done more easily and there is more teamwork. A detriment is the high 9-1 nurse patient ratio, which poses the risk for errors and exhaustion. The equipment shared between the two units limits their access and increases the risk for harm. The local hospital is moving towards magnet status, which is a benefit, and the shared governance model means they most likely have safety protocols in place. A detriment is the high 7-1 ratio and one nursing assistant per nine patients.
- b) Which position provides the safest working environment? Explain your response?** The regional medical center is the safest working environment due to the balance of nurse-to-patient ratios and safe patient handling equipment in every unit. This unit minimizes injury risk, reduces burnout, and promotes quality care.
- c) What additional questions should be asked in relation to staffing?** Are the nurse-to-patient ratios standard as 5-1, 7-1, 9-1, or do they shift based on patient acuity in the workplace? I would also ask if more high-risk/critical care patients are assigned to nurses, and their ratio decreases due to the high demand for one patient. What is the turnover rate for nurses on the unit?
- 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 Magnet status may take time to achieve, it is important to consider how soon or when the changes will be implemented. Studies do

show that Magnet hospitals have better patient and staff satisfaction and higher job retention rates.

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.