

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

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 should have moved this patient using proper body mechanics and safe patient handling techniques. She should have used some sort of assistive device including a slide sheet to reduce the strain on her back while providing safe transfer of the patient. She could have easily got assistance by calling to help with the patient transfer. Angie also should have used her legs to lift the patient and not her back. Angie could have also communicated with the patient asking them if they could help in any way.
 - b) What did Angie do correctly in this situation?
 - Angie quickly identified that the patient was in an unsafe position, so she quickly rushed to the patient. She attempted to help the patient sit up which prevented further injury to the patient.
 - c) Explain why back problems are the number one cause of nurse injuries and describe the subsequent effects on nursing care.
 - Nurses are often lifting and moving patients in weird positions or under difficult circumstances overtime this can lead to injuries. Some nurses do not know the proper body mechanics to move a patient

which leads to injuries. Patient weight and mobility can significantly increase the risk of injury for nurses. Those who are heavier require more nurses to help to prevent any injuries. A nurse with a back injury may experience pain and reduced mobility which may make it difficult to continue to work effectively which can also lead to decreased quality of care. Injury to nurses can also lead to a decrease in their ability to respond quickly to a patient need.

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

- Mandatory use of assistive devices, staff training for proper body mechanics and safe patient handling techniques.

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 workplace bullying in the form of verbal abuse.

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

- In this scenario signs of bullying that is evidenced is that she is being asked to do hard tasks and tasks that are outside of her typical duties, while given all the high risk admits.

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

- Becky should first document any bullying behavior including the people involved. She could also calmly and professionally express how she feels. Reach out to a trusted co-worker to discuss her experiences. Maybe try setting boundaries with her coworkers. Lastly, Becky should take care of her mental and physical health.

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

- If Becky's supervisor brushes off her concerns, she can go address her concerns to for example the manager or HR. If the bullying continues and

the supervisor does nothing about it, she should file a formal complaint with HR. Becky can even request a private meeting with the supervisor to discuss her concerns in a professional manner.

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 when a patient or visitor has violent or aggressive behavior. The code white would help by quickly intervening and de-escalating the situation. By doing so this would prevent further injury to Amanda and others around.
 - b. Identify elements of this case that signal a potentially threatening situation.
 - Patients report stated above mentions that the patient becomes agitated and combative at night which is a red flag for potential aggressive behavior. The patient also has dementia which can lead to confusion, frustration and aggression, they may not understand which can lead to them reacting aggressively. Verbal aggression can escalate very fast to physical aggression.
 - c. What preventive measures does the facility have in place to deal with hostile situations?
 - Some preventive measures that the facility has in place include training in de-escalation techniques, modifying the environment to reduce agitation including minimizing noise or dimming lights, use of side rails, bed alarms to prevent patients from harming themselves or others, behavior support such as psychiatric nurses or specialized teams who can handle patients with dementia or severe agitation

carefully, the Code White system to ensure the appropriate staff helps out.

- d. If Amanda were floated to another floor where this situation occurred, would this change how she should approach the situation? Explain your answer.
- Yes, she should ask for a detailed shift report such as any potential risks, history of agitation, confusion, or combativeness. Amanda should still use the de-escalation techniques. Amanda must be familiar with the facilities protocols especially if she is in an unfamiliar unit. If Amanda is unfamiliar with managing situations on new floors she should request additional support from co-workers or the supervisor.
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?
- Nurse-to-patient ratio of 5:1 is low, which can lead to better patient care and less burnout for the nurses. While the low nurse-to-patient ratio is beneficial being expected to provide total patient care could lead to pressure. The high patient care responsibility can still be physically draining for nurses since there's only one nursing assistant, this means nurses might have to take on additional roles.
 - Nurse-to-patient ratio of 9:1, having more patients might allow for a nursing assistant to allow nurses to delegate certain tasks to reduce the strain on the nurse. This high of a nurse-to-patient ratio increases the workload and can lead to a higher risk of burnout and exhaustion

which can affect safety and good patient quality of care. The higher the patient ratio means nurses have less time for each patient which could increase the chance of missing important assessment findings or safety concerns.

- Nurse-to-patient ratio of 7:1, Shared governance model is positive for safety because it encourages collaboration and shared decision making. Nurses are more likely to have a say in their working conditions. Magnet status focuses on high quality care and a commitment to improving the working environment for nurses. 7:1 is better than 9:1 but there are still challenges in the amount of workload. Not having the patient care assistants increases physical demand on the nurses which could lead to fatigue and increased risk for injury.

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

- The patient to nurse ration of 5:1 provides the safest working environment for many reasons including manageable workloads, giving more time to spend with each patient reducing the chance of mistakes caused by being overwhelmed or feeling rushed. Since there is safe handling equipment this reduces physical strain on nurses when moving patients.

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

- How does the hospital adjust staffing levels according to patient acuity or census to prevent nurse burnout.
- How many nursing assistants are on the floor?
- How is overtime handled?

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 is a great opportunity to accept the employment offer due to the benefits of Magnet Status including nurses have a voice in decision-making, greater opportunities for professional growth, implementing evidence-based practices and these hospitals have a higher job satisfaction rate. Sometimes hospitals in transition to Magnet status can have some problems but until it is all implementation everyone must work together until its finalized.

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.