

**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?**
    - a. She should have been close to the patient to offer help, or should something happen, however the mobility status of this patient is unknown.
  - b) **What did Angie do correctly in this situation?**
    - a. She had the patient sit back down on the bed so she could help them.
  - c) **Explain why back problems are the number one cause of nurse injuries and describe the subsequent effects on nursing care.**
    - a. Proper body mechanics are not utilized to prevent strain and injury, and stretching should be done before each shift to help reduce injury. The effects are that nurses may have to change careers, take off many sick days due to pain.
  - d) **Describe how the "safe patient handling" legislation might have prevented the injury.**
    - a. Safe patient handling legislation may have prevented the injury because the facility would have to train the nurse to assess each patient to determine mobility needs per shift or daily. Hands on

training by SPHM Champions would give you a chance to learn to use the equipment to provide safe 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. You may be asked to do difficult or seemingly pointless tasks and be ridiculed or criticized when you can't get them done.
    - b. It may seem like your work is frequently monitored to the point where you begin to doubt yourself and have difficulty with your regular tasks.
    - c. Coworkers might become quiet or leave the room when you walk in, or they might simply ignore you.
  - c) **What steps can Becky take to minimize bullying in the workplace?**
    - a. Ask everyone to stop. Ask the other nurses to stop talking about her, ask the supervisor to switch it up.
  - d) **What can Becky do if her supervisor brushes off her concerns?**
    - a. Go the next step up in the chain of command.
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. Alerts all staff to a potentially violent situation. Ensures that resources were available to help deescalate the situation and that no nurse or any other staff member would be alone with someone who was acting out.
  - b. **Identify elements of this case that signal a potentially threatening situation.**
    - i. Dementia with sundowners. The patient is swinging. Patients thinks the nurse is killing her.
  - c. **What preventive measures does the facility have in place to deal with hostile situations?**
    - i. Codes and procedures should a code be called.
  - 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. Probably not. If the patient situation was the exact same, but the floor was different it would probably be roughly the same if she were familiar with that floor.
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. Position 1: Good: average patient to nurse ratio, new patient handling equipment for each unit. Bad: Only one PCT per unit, total patient care.
    - b. Position 2: Good: One PCT per nurse. Bad: high nurse to patient ratio, patient handling equipment is shared between 2 units.
    - c. Position 3: Good: One PCT per 9 patients, hospital is moving magnet status. Bad: Higher than average nurse to patient ratio.
  - b) **Which position provides the safest working environment? Explain your response?**

- a. Position 1: There is a low patient census of 5:1 with at least one PCT, and new patient handling equipment to be able get the patient up without another PCT.
- c) What additional questions should be asked in relation to staffing?**
  - a. How many patients do you have? What is going on with each of them? What nursing tasks do you need to accomplish? What are your priorities? What tasks would be “nice to do if you're able to have the time”?
  - b. What are your resources? Do you have someone to whom you can delegate tasks? What support do you have from the patients’ families?
  - c. What are the hospitals policies for high census or high patient load situations?
- 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. Yes, it could potentially have an impact on what your decision would be regarding to accept or turn down an employment offer. A magnet hospital is a hospital recognized for their low turnover rates, their visionary leaders, the value they placed on education, and the ability to keep lines of communication open. The low turnover rate could mean that the employees are happy there and are listened to by leadership. The visionary leaders, along with keeping communication open, may be open to listening to new ideas to improve anything at the hospital.

*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.*