

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?
When Angie walked into the patient's room and noticed the patient halfway out of bed, she should have called for some help in assisting the patient back into bed, rather than trying to do it herself. She also could have tried to raise the bed up if she could to prevent herself from bending over so far.
 - b) What did Angie do correctly in this situation?
Angie reviewed her notes of patient handling, which she attempted to apply proper knowledge related to moving a patient. She also prioritized patient safety by recognizing that this patient was at danger for hurting herself and rushed in to try to help.
 - c) Explain why back problems are the number-one cause of nurse injuries and describe the subsequent effects on nursing care.
Back problems are common among nurses due to the frequent lifting, transferring, and repositioning of patients. Often times nurses do not allow their back to have adequate assistance or equipment to prevent these injuries. These injuries can easily lead to chronic pain, missed workdays,

and possibly the inability to work in the nursing field, all of which can have large effects on nursing care.

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

The “safe patient handling” promotes the use of mechanical lifts, training programs, and policies that minimize manual lifting. This would allow Angie to have access to different lifting equipment and could hopefully have prevented this incident from occurring.

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, which is a form of psychosocial violence. This includes things such as verbal abuse, excessive criticism, unfair workload, and social isolation. Her coworkers are making derogatory comments about her and her skills, and her supervisor is assigning her unfair tasks.

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

- Unreasonable work assignments
- Verbal abuse
- Exclusion

- Physical and emotional distress

- c) What steps can Becky take to minimize bullying in the workplace?
Becky should keep a record of specific instances of bullying, including dates, and what was said or done to her. She should allow seek support from her fellow colleagues, mentors, or employee assistance programs. Another thing she could do would be to confront the issue professionally by talking with those who are bullying her and be direct and assertive when doing so.
- d) What can Becky do if her supervisor brushes off her concerns?
If Becky's supervisor brushes off her concerns, she should escalate the issue by taking it to the next level of her bosses such as human resources, so they can hopefully get something done about it.

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 hospital code that is used to indicate a violent or aggressive situation with a patient. In this situation, it would help because it would allow Amanda to have immediate assistance and allows for personnel to come in and work to deescalate the issue to protect the patients and staff.

b. Identify elements of this case that signal a potentially threatening situation.

- The pt has dementia
- History of agitation and combativeness
- Pt does not recognize Amanda
- Physical attack with an object
- Pt showing aggressive behavior

c. What preventive measures does the facility have in place to deal with hostile situations?

- Security presence
- Use of code white teams
- Environmental modifications (adjusting light and noise levels)
- Safe pt handling policies

d. If Amanda were floated to another floor where this situation occurred, would this change how she should approach the situation? Explain your answer.

No, it should not change how she would approach the situation, because the policies that are set in place pertain to the entire hospital, not just one unit.

Therefore, it makes communication clear on what to do on any unit if something like this was to occur.

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 – pt ratio 5:1, recently purchased safe handling equipment
Position 1 Detriments – total nursing care required, only one nursing assistant
Position 2 benefits – One nursing assistant assigned to each nurse
Position 2 Detriments – nursing to patient ratio is 9:1, handling equipment shared between units, so not always available
Position 3 benefits – moving towards magnet status and uses shared governance model
Position 3 detriments – ratio is 7:1, only one nurse assistant for 9 pts
- b) Which position provides the safest working environment? Explain your response?

I would say that position 1 would have the safest working environment because the nurse-to-patient ratios are low compared to the rest of the positions. The big reason I would say though would be that they recently bought brand new safe handling equipment that belongs to their unit only, allowing the nurses to hopefully have full availability to these items.

- c) What additional questions should be asked in relation to staffing?
- How does the hospital determine appropriate staffing levels for each unit?
 - Are staffing levels based on pt acuity rather than number?
 - Are there established polices for safe staffing and are they enforced?
 - How many nurses typically work one shift?

- 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?

If the hospital is working towards Magnet status, it means they are striving to demonstrate excellence in nursing practice by providing high quality patient care. These hospitals tend to have a higher nurse satisfaction rate, as well as better staffing and work environment. It also opens up many doors for career growth and recognition. However, there may be some setbacks as well including, higher expectation and workload, rigorous policies, and ongoing changes during the magnet journey, which should all be considered during the decision to accept or turn down an offer.

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.