

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 asked for help to assist her in moving this patient. Angie also could have used assistive devices to aid in safely moving this patient and prevent injury.
 - b) What did Angie do correctly in this situation?
She reviewed her notes on proper care and handling for a patient with left sided weakness including positioning and transferring.
 - 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 leading cause of injury among nurses for several reasons. One factor is poor body mechanics, such as bending at the waist instead of using the legs. Additionally, providing direct patient care—such as assisting with turning, toileting, and daily activities—often involves tasks like lifting, repositioning, and transferring, all of which are common causes of work-related injuries. The layout of the patient's room can also contribute, as the placement

of furniture, equipment, and monitors may require nurses to reach or stretch awkwardly, further straining their backs. As individuals age, they experience a decline in flexibility and musculoskeletal stability, which increases the likelihood of back injuries. Lastly, the ongoing nursing shortage exacerbates the problem by increasing workloads and stretching resources thin.

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

This could have prevented the injury by utilizing safe patient handling assistive devices and proper body mechanics when moving this patient.

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?

Lateral violence

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

- **She is asked to do new tasks or tasks outside her typical duties without training or help when she requests it**
- **Seems like her work is frequently monitored to the point where she begins to doubt herself and have difficulty with her regular tasks**
- **She’s asked to do difficult or seemingly pointless tasks and is ridiculed or criticized when she can’t get them done**

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

Name it, seek respite, and expose the bully

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

Becky can report it to the nursing director on her unit or follow the chain of command. Becky can also find another job in a local hospital.

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 crisis intervention program. It alerts all staff of a potentially violent situation. This would be helpful in this situation as resources would respond to help deescalate the situation and ensure 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.

- **Patient becomes agitated and combative at night**
- **Patient is confused and does not know where she is at or why Amanda is in her room**
- **Patient yells that Amanda is killing her**
- **Patient swings the telephone and breaks Amanda’s jaw**

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

- **Crisis intervention programs**
- **“Code White” program**

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

This might change how she approaches the situation because now she knows to call a code white before things escalate. Amanda might not have been aware of the “code white” program which could be why she didn’t call one and her co-worker did.

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: lowest nurse to patient ratio, has safe handling equipment for every unit, regional hospital

Position 1 detriments: only one nursing assistant, total patient care is an expectation

Position 2 benefits: nursing assistant is assigned to every nurse, new patient handling equipment

Position 2 detriments: highest nurse to patient ratio, patient handling equipment is shared between two units, urban hospital

Position 3 benefits: nurse to patient ratio is not the lowest but isn't the highest, Magnet Status, shared governance model

Position 3 detriments: one nursing assistant for every nine patients

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

I would say position 3 would be the safest working environment because it almost has the same nurse to patient ratio, and they are moving towards Magnet status which creates a positive and supportive work environment for its nursing staff leading to staff well-being and better job satisfaction. In addition, they utilize the shared governance model which promotes collaboration and shared decision making. Having a strong foundation and positive work environment is crucial for overall well-being.

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

- **How does the unit handle staffing shortages?**
- **Are there float nurses that are available to assist with staffing when census is high?**
- **How does orientation work for new graduate nurses when the census is high, and staffing is low?**
- **Do nurses have a say in staffing decisions?**

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?

Magnet status might impact my decision to accept a nursing position because it is a highly desirable place to work due to the high-quality work environment and collaboration involved in decision making but this might also impact my decision to decline a nursing position with Magnet status because there is an increased workload on nurses to maintain Magnet status with the strict documentation and reporting that is mandated to achieve and maintain this status. It can be very stressful.

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.