

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 bent her knees (not her back), kept a wide stance for balance, and used help or equipment to transfer the patient safely. She also needed to make sure the patient was fully supported before moving.**
 - b) What did Angie do correctly in this situation?
 - **Angie responded quickly to assist the patient. However, she lacked proper body mechanics and did not assess the situation thoroughly before moving the patient.**
 - c) Explain why back problems are the number-one cause of nurse injuries and describe the subsequent effects on nursing care.
 - **Back injuries are common because nurses often lift, move, and reposition patients without using proper body mechanics. These injuries can cause long-term pain, time off work, and**

reduce a nurse's ability to perform physical tasks, affecting patient care and the nursing staff.

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

- **Safe patient handling laws encourage using equipment like lifts and transfer aids, reducing strain on nurses. This would have ensured Angie used the right tools to move the patient safely and avoid injury to her back.**

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, including emotional and psychological abuse from colleagues and her supervisor.**

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

- **Becky is being criticized, isolated, and given unfair tasks, leading to stress and frustration.**

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

- **Becky can document bullying incidents, talk to her supervisor, and seek support from HR or coworkers.**

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

- **Becky can report the issue to HR, file a formal complaint, or seek outside support for help.**

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 an emergency code for violent or aggressive situations. It would help by bringing in security or additional help to manage the patient’s aggression.**
 - b. Identify elements of this case that signal a potentially threatening situation.
 - **The patient’s increasing agitation, confusion, and sudden violent attack with the phone signals a potentially dangerous situation.**

- c. What preventive measures does the facility have in place to deal with hostile situations?
 - **The facility likely has training for staff and Code White protocols to quickly address violent situations and ensure safety.**
 - 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, Amanda should still use de-escalation techniques and call for help, but she should also know the specific protocols for handling aggression on 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?

- **Position 1:**

- **Benefits:** The nurse-to-patient ratio is low (5:1), and safe handling equipment is available.

Detriments: Only one nursing assistant per unit, which might lead to more workload for the nurse.

- **Position 2:**

- **Benefits:** A reasonable nurse-to-patient ratio (9:1) with one nursing assistant per nurse.

Detriments: The patient handling equipment is shared, which may cause delays in access.

- **Position 3:**

- **Benefits:** Nurse-to-patient ratio (7:1) is decent, and the hospital is working towards Magnet status with a shared governance model.

Detriments: One nursing assistant for every nine patients, which may lead to higher workload.

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

- **Position 1 provides the safest environment with the lowest nurse-to-patient ratio (5:1) and new safe handling equipment.**

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

- **You should ask about extra support staff, how often nurses work overtime, and how the hospital handles busy times.**

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 suggests a focus on nurse satisfaction, professional development, and a supportive work environment, which may make position 3 a strong choice for long-term career growth.**

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.