

**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. Angie should have asked another person to assist her with moving the patient or assessed the patient to determine what they are able to do on their own. She also could have asked the patient if they are trying to get out of bed to go to the bathroom or chair and assisted them with ambulation if so. Angie could have put the patient on a bed alarm to alert when they are falling out of bed.
  - b) What did Angie do correctly in this situation?
    - a. Angie assisted the patient to get back in bed. She reviewed her notes on positioning, transferring, and handling a patient with musculoskeletal weakness.
  - c) Explain why back problems are the number-one cause of nurse injuries and describe the subsequent effects on nursing care.
    - a. Nurses are constantly putting strain on their back by lifting, transferring, and repositioning patients and assisting them with activities of daily living.
  - d) Describe how the "safe patient handling" legislation might have prevented the injury.

- a. Assess the patient's dependency needs and abilities before deciding what assistive devices to use. Do not move, lift, or turn a dependent person without the appropriate assistive device or help. Know how to use the assistive device properly. Report any injury that occurs and follow the provider's orders for treatment and recovery.
  
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. Becky is experiencing bullying – laterally and horizontally.
  - b) Which of the signs of bullying from Table 25-1 is (are) evidenced in this scenario?
    - a. Becky is being left out of office culture – like chit chat. Becky is also being asked to complete tasks outside of her job's expectations (the other nurse's expectations to spend less time with patients and more time helping other nurses).
  - c) What steps can Becky take to minimize bullying in the workplace?
    - a. *Name it* – validate your experience by identifying and admitting that you are being bullied
    - b. *Seek respite* – Take time off work to become bully-proof by checking your mental and physical health, research state and federal legal options, gather data about the economic impact the bully has on the unit, start a job search for a new position
    - c. *Expose the bully* – Let your employer know that you are being bullied and who is bullying you so they have a chance to address the behavior
  - d) What can Becky do if her supervisor brushes off her concerns?
    - a. Becky can go to someone higher – who supervises her supervisor. She could also utilize the federal and state legal options she researched on her time off. She could also accept a new position

on a new unit or at a different facility to try to start over with a better work environment.

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. A code white (grey) is used to alert other staff members of a violent individual. Anyone can initiate the code if any person becomes loud, abusive, makes threats, or acted in a physically harmful or threatening manner. Trained volunteers and staff along with the security staff respond to a code white. This would bring more people in to try to help control the situation better.
  - b. Identify elements of this case that signal a potentially threatening situation.
    - i. The patient becomes agitated and combative at night, and Amanda is doing her assessment in the evening. The patient does not know where she is or why Amanda is in her room. The patient becomes loud by yelling that Amanda is killing her and swings at Amanda with a telephone.
  - c. What preventive measures does the facility have in place to deal with hostile situations?
    - i. Once Amanda called a code white, the code should be announced over the hospital’s speakers so that the appropriate personnel can address the situation. Amanda could initiate the code by using the phone and calling the hospital’s announcer or pushed a panic button.
  - 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. Amanda would not change her approach to the situation, she would still call a code white for any reason she feels unsafe or is being threatened. Other floors should also have panic buttons available for her to access as well.

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*: lower nurse to patient ratio, allowing for more complete nursing assessment and interventions. One nursing assistant assigned to each unit could pose a problem of the nurse feeling overwhelmed by assisting the patients with ADL's, transfers, turning, etc with less available help. Safe handling equipment for each unit is good, as it will protect the nurse from back related injuries.
  - b. *Position 2*: high nurse to patient ratio, nurse may feel overwhelmed or strained to complete all nursing assessments and interventions in a timely manner. It is nice that there is one nursing assistant per nurse, but worrying that the new patient handling equipment is shared between two units as this may cause some availability issues.
  - c. *Position 3*: Higher nurse to patient ratio, but may be more tolerable. It is a plus that there is one nursing assistant per nine patients. This will allow the nurse to better prioritize nursing assessments and interventions and allow the nurse to better time manage. Magnet status is a plus because it means that there is a high level of care provided for the patients, low nurse turnover, and high job satisfaction. Shared governance is a plus because the nurses have a voice in making change in the hospital and helping to make decisions for the facility.
- b) Which position provides the safest working environment? Explain your response?
- a. Position 1 has the safest working environment. This is because there is one nursing assistant available per unit, so they are there to assist with lifts, transfers, and turning as needed. The safe handling equipment is what makes this position the safest as the equipment will help protect the nurses from back injury.

- c) What additional questions should be asked in relation to staffing?
  - a. Is there mandatory overtime? How is mandatory overtime compensated?
  - b. How well is each floor staffed? How many nurses per unit?
  - c. Is the staff trained to transfer patients safely?
  - d. Is the nursing assistant trained in using the patient handling equipment?
- 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. I would be more likely to accept this position. Magnet status means that there is high level of patient care. Nursing staff rates high job satisfaction with low turnover. I would want to pick a hospital with low turnover because it is an indicator of job satisfaction. The more satisfied I am within a job, the better my mental and physical health will be. I would also stay at that position longer and feel more confident in my nursing skills.

*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.*