

## WORKPLACE ISSUES: Z-CH 25

### Case Studies

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. Determine how oriented the patient was, instructed the patient what her goal was and asked how much the patient could assist her. She also should have called for another nurse to come in and help her.
  - b) What did Angie do correctly in this situation?
    - a. She went to assist the patient right away to prevent any injuries to the patient.
  - c) Explain why back problems the number-one cause of nurse injuries is and describe the subsequent effects on nursing care.
    - a. Because nurses are involved in multiple repetitive tasks, move heavy weight patients, or do not have proper equipment around them at the time
    - b. Subsequent effects on nursing care is having an injury preventing any efficient patient care or leading to not being able to work at all.
  - d) Describe how the "safe patient handling" legislation might have prevented the injury.
    - a. This legislation might have prevented injury if she used proper assistive devices, called for another nurse, or used proper body mechanics when moving the 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?
  - a. Horizontal violence
- b) Which of the signs of bullying from Table 25-1 is (are) evidenced in this scenario?
  - a.
- c) What steps can Becky take to minimize bullying in the workplace?
  - a. Confront the individuals bullying her and talk it out, and if that doesn't work, she can talk with her nursing supervisor
  - b. Name It: she needs to state that she is being bullied
  - c. Seek Respite: check on herself → mental and physical health, look at her legal options, seek different job opportunities when the situation is being addressed
  - d. Expose Her Bully: let someone know who it is
- d) What can Becky do if her supervisor brushes off her concerns?
  - a. Walk up the chain of command or follow her Seek Respite step to help fix the situation

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. This code is indicative of a violent/combatative patient. This would help the situation by ensuring proper personnel such as security who are trained to deal with combative/violent patients
  - b. Identify elements of this case that signal a potentially threatening situation.
    - i. The patient swung the phone at Amanda and broke her jaw, the patient yells Amanda is killing her
  - c. What preventive measures does the facility have in place to deal with hostile situations?
    - i. Crisis Intervention Programs and calling Code Whites/Violets
  - 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. I believe it would. Due to her last experience, I feel she would have a better understanding of entails of an escalating situation and calling the code sooner before any patient injury or employee injury occurs

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:** the patient ratio is lower than the other positions, but there is only one assistant on each *unit*. The hospital has new handling equipment for *each* unit resulting in easier access for safety
    - b. **Position 2:** the patient ratio is really high for one nurse, but there is an assistant assigned to *every* nurse. They have gotten new handling equipment, but it is shared between 2 *units* leading to less access and eventually more injury
    - c. **Position 3:** patient ratio is a little higher than the first position, but there is an assistant for *every 9* patients. This hospital is actively moving toward a Magnet status
  - b) Which position provides the safest working environment? Explain your response?
    - a. In my opinion, the safest work environment would be **position 3**. This is because of the hospital claiming Magnet status. This means they will be achieving autonomy and more importantly lower nurse-patient ratios.
  - c) What additional questions should be asked in relation to staffing?
    - a. How often will there be float nurses on the floor and how many of them? How many days a week would I be scheduled? How many nurses in general will be on the floor?

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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. With this position, I might turn down position 2 because of how high their nurse-patient ratio is and how available their handling equipment is. I would not feel as safe in this hospital as I would in the other 2.