

## **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?
    - Angie should have assessed the patient's dependency needs and abilities when deciding what assistive devices to use. Never move, lift, or turn a dependent person without an appropriate assistive device or help.
  - b) What did Angie do correctly in this situation?
    - Angie noticed the patient was halfway out of bed and rushed straight in to assist her.
  - 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 number 1 cause of nurse injuries due to the need for repetitive tasks, heavy lifting and moving done manually, any transferring, repositioning, and reaching activities, sudden position changes, and patient rooms not being set up ergonomically. This can later affect your ability to perform nursing care and potentially affect your career.
  - d) Describe how the "safe patient handling" legislation might have prevented the injury.
    - The "safe patient handling" legislation may have prevented this injury by teaching Angie the policies for handling patients, and by purchasing necessary equipment designed to help the health care professionals safely lift and move patients.

03/09/2020

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?
    - Horizontal Violence
  - b) Which of the signs of bullying from Table 25-1 is (are) evidenced in this scenario?
    - Feeling physically ill every time she goes to work
    - Always feels run down and is losing hair. Days off are spent exhausted.
    - Becky attempts the obviously impossible tasks, but that work is never good enough
  - c) What steps can Becky take to minimize bullying in the workplace?
    - Name it- verify to yourself "I am being bullied". This self-talk will assist you in validating your experience. Next you should seek respite by checking your mental health, checking your physical health, research state and federal legal options, gather data that supports the economical impact the bully has on the unit, and start a job search so you have options as you address your current situation. Lastly after seeking respite, Becky should address the situation with her employer and expose the bully.
  - d) What can Becky do if her supervisor brushes off her concerns?
    - If the supervisor brushes off Becky's concerns, she should turn in her resignation and transition to a new job to improve her health.

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 called if a person becomes combative in a hospital setting. This code helps by calling trained personnel to come and de-escalate the situation.
  - b. Identify elements of this case that signal a potentially threatening situation.
    - Pacing, using foul language, raising one's fist, and using threats are often signs of escalating violence.
  - c. What preventive measures does the facility have in place to deal with hostile situations?
    - It is important to know your facilities policy when dealing with violence in the workplace. Preventative measures include taking a crisis intervention course which teaches you the signs of escalating violence and how to de-escalate anger.
  - 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, the interventions would not change. Amanda would still recognize the signs of escalating violence, and if unable to de-escalate the persons anger call a Code White.

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 would be the nurse to patient ratio being 5:1, and new safe handling equipment. A detriment would be the nurse is required to provide total patient care with only 1 assistant for delegation.
  - Position 2: benefits include new patient handling equipment, and each nurse has a nursing assistant to help them with patient care. A detriment of this position is a nurse to patient ratio of 9:1, this is way too much.
  - Position 3: benefits of this position are there is a nursing assistant for every 9 patients and as a nurse you are only assigned 7. This hospital is also utilizing new techniques/models
- b) Which position provides the safest working environment? Explain your response?
- I believe the first position has the safest working environment. It has a realistic nurse to patient ratio, and though you have to provide total patient care there is one nursing assistant available for help. This position also has safe patient handling equipment available for every unit.

03/09/2020

- c) What additional questions should be asked in relation to staffing?
- Is there any other way to deliver care? For example, working as a team to take care of patients can be a more efficient way to function.
  - What are your hospital's policies for high-census or high-patient load situations?
  - Considering how sick your patients are, is there anyone who might be discharged to lighten the load?

- 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?

- This would possibly push me more towards accepting the position. Magnet hospitals have thought to have a lower mortality risk, provide better care for pressure ulcers, have better work environments, and a more highly educated nursing workforce.