



UNSAFE ASSIGNMENT

SPEAK UP SCRIPT

For Nurses who Advocate for Safety

1

START HUMAN

Go to your charge nurse (or whoever is assigning patients). Start the convo calmly and directly.

"Hey, I'm really worried about this assignment. I need help."

2

NAME THE RISK

Say one objective reason it's unsafe.

"I've got two Pit patients. I can't safely be in both rooms." "I'm concerned I'll miss a change."

You're not complaining. You're naming risk.

3

ASK FOR SUPPORT

"I need support to make this assignment, safe."

"I need help making this safer."

"I can't safely manage this as it's assigned."

4

ASK FOR ESCALATION

Most people won't escalate unless you ask.

"Can you take this up the chain for me?"

"Can you call the manager and let them know this isn't safe?"

If it doesn't happen:

"If you're not able to escalate this, I will follow the chain of command."

You're not asking permission. You're activating the safety net.

5

PROTECT YOURSELF

If nothing changes, state your objection.

- File a safety/variance report
- Use Assignment Despite Objection (ADO) if available
- Send a email to leadership
- Document objectively and professionally.

This creates a paper trail: you identified risk, spoke up, and escalated.

REMEMBER WHY

Nurses have been trained to absorb risk, stay quiet, and make unsafe assignments work, until something goes wrong and the responsibility lands on us. That culture has to change.

We are the ones at the bedside, seeing changes in real time and catching what staffing grids and policies miss. Silence doesn't protect patients. Silence doesn't protect nurses. It protects the status quo. Speaking up isn't insubordination, it's intervention.

And when we name risk early, we prevent harm.

This is the work.

This is RIOT BIRTH.