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|  | **Root Cause Analysis - Defining the Problem** |
| Continuous Improvement Toolkit |

**Root Cause Analysis** is the rigorous and systematic search for the underlying or “root” cause of problems or solutions. The purpose of the analysis step is to identify and confirm the root causes of the problem. Look for root causes after you have found the “assignable causes” and you are delving into the reasons they are happening.

The problem definition should define the goal of the process improvement process. It should define the *current* and *ideal* states of the process. It should show the gaps between the states of the problem.

**5W1H Approach to Defining the Problem**

* Who does the problem affect?
* What happens when the problem occurs?
* When does the issue occur?
* Where is the issue occurring?
* Why is the problem and why is it important that we fix it?
* How often does it happen? How many are impacted? How much is it costing?

The Problem Statement **Should Not**…

* Address more than one problem
* Assign a cause
* Assign blame
* Offer a solution

**Steps for creating Fishbone Diagram**

1. Identify problem and place on the right side of a large drawing surface (fish head).
2. Based on data collected, experience of team, observations, and VOC, generate a list of main factors that could be potentially causing problems. Limit to around 7.
3. Connect the categories to a central line that connects to the problem.
4. List probable causes for each category and connect them to each factor. Each probably cause connected is a rib.

**Fishbone Diagram Examples to show 5 Why’s**

**![A screenshot of text

Description automatically generated]()**

**A close up of a map

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