

Root Cause Analysis - The 5 Whys Process

Stage B – The 1st Why

In Example 1, another Team may take the problem analysis in a different direction. The response to the 1st Why for them could be: 'Families and their child's teachers do not have enough information about adult agencies, eligibility and services to engage in meaningful planning for post school outcomes.' This statement adds to the discussion the idea that educators need information in order to engage families. This Team may break this statement apart and ask 'Why' questions about families getting information and as well as professionals getting information.

Similarly, a Team might take Example 2 in a different direction. Another possible answer to the 1st Why could be that consideration of youth as future workers does not formally occur until age 14.. Youth have never previously been asked to become aware of their skills or to see themselves as working in the community.

In either of the Examples above, the ensuing discussion could result in a different problem statement. The 'right' problem statement is the one that is 'right' for the Team.

Each problem area a Team identifies leads to multiple root causes that result in goals and a unique set of strategies in the plan to effectively address the problem, make progress, and changes in practice that are sustainable.

Example 1:

Problem Statement

Families start transition planning too late.

1st Why

Question 1: Why... do families start transition planning too late.

Answer: Because they do not understand that it's important to start well before age 17.

Example 2:

Problem Statement

Youth do not know about their own skills or about the world of work.

1st Why

Question 1: Why... don't youth know about their own skills or about the world of work?

Answer: It's part of the information we gather for the transition assessment process, but students don't usually get authentic work experiences.