# Conducting a Root Cause Analysis

## Virtual Meeting Facilitation Guide

## [Date], [Approx. 60-75-Minute Time Slot]

### Objectives:

* Understand the purposes of a root cause analysis
* Model the root cause analysis process

| Time\* | Topic | Activity | Learning Objectives | Resources |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **5 min.** | Welcome and Introductions |  | * Welcome participants and provide time for new participants to introduce themselves. Ask new members to share their name, position/title, organization affiliation, and core job responsibilities/expertise. * Summarize the previous meeting objectives and outcomes. * Introduce key objectives for this meeting (see above). | * Agenda |
| **20 min.** | Conducting a Root Cause Analysis | Presentation | * Using the PowerPoint (PPT) presentation, show an overview of the root cause analysis process. * Allow time for discussion and Q&As. Ask participants to share personal experiences associated with root cause analysis. * What examples can others share about their experiences with root cause analysis? * How was the process similar or different than what we described? * How did the process influence your approach to the problem? | * PPT Presentation |
| **10 min.** |  | Activity 1: Identify Subproblems | * Present the problem statement to Networked Improvement Community (NIC) participants. Using a polling tool (e.g., PollEv.com or Zoom poll) or interactive whiteboard (e.g., Google Jamboard), ask participants to consider root causes of the problem. For example, the facilitator can ask NIC participants to answer in one to three words, “Why are we getting the results observed?” Tools like PollEv or Google Jamboard allow participants to provide open-ended responses, which is ideal for this activity. * Once results are posted, work as a group to identify the most important five or six causes. Treat these causes as “subproblems” that require deeper digging to identify the root cause. | * PPT Presentation * Online Survey Poll (e.g., Zoom polling, PollEv) |
| **30 min.** |  | Activity 2: Unpack Subproblems | * If the NIC is more than 8-10 people, consider creating breakout groups for this activity. Assign each breakout group one or two subproblems to discuss and unpack. * Starting with each subproblem identified in Activity 1, ask “Why does this occur?” until your group reaches a root cause. It typically takes five to seven “whys” before a root cause is identified. * Assign a recorder to list causes underneath the subproblem using a fishbone diagram (see PPT for example). It may be necessary for the notetaker to document new subproblems that emerge during the root cause analysis. These new subproblems can be documented in a “parking lot” and set aside for further discussion in subsequent meetings. If breakout groups are created, assign a reporter to share out when the whole group reconvenes. * If working in small groups, reconvene after 20 minutes and share results. | * Document or Interactive Whiteboard to Record Group Ideas and Thoughts |
| **5-10 min.** | Wrap Up and Next Steps |  | * Summarize key points from the meeting. * After the meeting, a NIC member may need to incorporate the problem statement, subproblems, and root causes from multiple breakout groups into one fishbone diagram. * Note that the process of identifying root causes may extend beyond this initial meeting. An in-depth root cause analysis may take weeks or even months. As new subproblems emerge, they can be added to the fishbone diagram and addressed later. * New subproblems that emerge after a theory of improvement is developed can be addressed by reviewing and/or modifying the existing theory, if necessary. (Developing a theory of improvement will be addressed in the next module.) * Once an initial root cause analysis is complete, submit the fishbone diagram to the NIC and ask for their feedback. * After incorporating feedback from the NIC, share the initial fishbone diagram with other end users for their review and feedback. Incorporate end users’ feedback into an updated fishbone diagram. * This process can be repeated with additional end users until a final fishbone diagram captures a comprehensive list of root causes. | * Agenda * Meeting Summary Notes * Fishbone Diagram |

\*Times are estimates only. Time may fluctuate based on the nature of the discussion, group size, and meeting format (e.g., face-to-face vs. virtual).