



Five Whys Root Cause Analysis Tool

DATE COMPLETED:

Five Whys is best suited for simple or moderately complex issues. For best results, use this tool with a role-diverse group who have experience with the issue. Start by defining the problem, then proceed to identifying potential reasons. Complete more than one reason “pathway.” Although it’s acceptable if you don’t reach all five “whys,” continue exploring until you have identified the root cause and found a controllable solution. The final “why” is considered your root cause. If the final answer is beyond your control, revisit and revise the previous response. This tool is designed to address processes within your facility, rather than individuals.

DEFINE THE PROBLEM:

WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?

REASON 1:	REASON 2:	REASON 3:
▼	▼	▼
WHY IS THAT?	WHY IS THAT?	WHY IS THAT?
▼	▼	▼
WHY IS THAT?	WHY IS THAT?	WHY IS THAT?
▼	▼	▼
WHY IS THAT?	WHY IS THAT?	WHY IS THAT?
▼	▼	▼
WHY IS THAT?	WHY IS THAT?	WHY IS THAT?

Use the [PIP](#) document to create a plan to prioritize and address all root causes. We recommend working on the highest priority first, then proceeding down the list one or two at a time to measure effectiveness of the intervention that addresses the cause. You can use this [PDSA](#) worksheet to test interventions.