

After-Action Reports/Improvement Plans can often be a space for confusing or vague suggestive corrective actions and personal recommendations. To improve this, it is encouraged for organizations to perform a Root Cause Analysis for each identified observation/impact. This appendix is meant to offer guidance for Departments when completing their Root Cause Analysis.

Definition

A Root Cause Analysis is a systematic process for identifying “root causes” of problems or events and an approach for responding to them. A Root Cause Analysis attempts to merely address problems that develop, but finding ways to prevent them from occurring in the future.

Example Process

1. Step 1: Define the Problem

Discuss the problem with your team and write a brief, clear problem statement that you all agree on. For example, "Team A isn't meeting its response time targets". Take your statement, and begin to ask "Why?"

2. Step 2: Ask the First "Why?"

Ask your team why the problem is occurring. Asking "why?" sounds simple, but answering it requires thought and intelligent application. Search for answers that are grounded in fact, they must be accounts of things that have actually happened – not guesses at what might have happened. This prevents 5 *Whys* from becoming just a process of deductive reasoning, which can generate a large number of possible causes and, sometimes, create more confusion as you chase down hypothetical problems.

3. Step 3: Ask "Why?" Four More Times

Working sequentially along one of the answers you generated in Step 3, ask four further "whys" in succession. Frame the question each time in response to the answer you've just recorded, and again record your responses to the right.

Note: It is recommended to complete five (5) levels of 'Whys', however this may not be applicable for all corrective actions.

Figure 1: Root Cause Analysis Model on page 2 can be used to assist with Root Cause Analysis for identified areas for improvement.

Figure 1. Root Cause Analysis Model

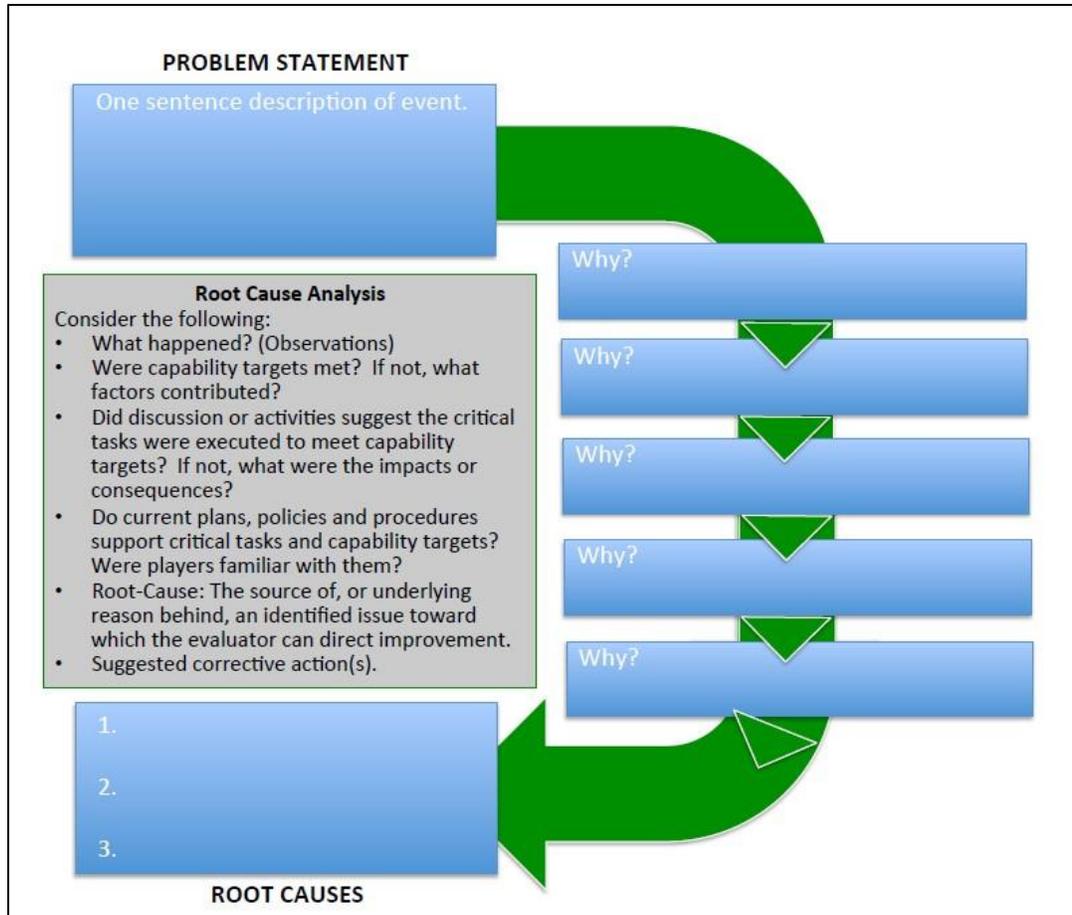


Figure 2. Root Cause Analysis Example

