

# Root cause analysis and fishbone diagram

## PURPOSE

Facilitators can use this exercise to lead participants through a systematic process of identifying the causes or contributing factors of challenges. During the After Action Review discussion, you can engage in a formal RCA or use the framework to have a more casual discussion about challenges and the contributing factors.

## Instructions and facilitation tips

The fishbone diagram is an easy way for a team to visualize the many possible causes for a challenge by sorting them into categories. The challenge should be displayed in the box at the mouth of the fish. Possible contributing factors are listed on the smaller bones under the various categories.

Generic categories follow, or you can adapt the categories to be more specific to your organizations.

An easy way to conduct an RCA for a specific challenge is to engage in the "5 Why's." For each category, continue asking "why," up to five times, to determine why something did or did not happen until the group comes to a potential cause.

### Steps:

1. Identify a specific challenge.
2. Looking across categories, ask participants why the challenge might be happening.
3. For each of the potential cause, continue to ask "why" until the group lands on a potential cause that is concrete and actionable.
4. Every category does not need to have five contributing factors.

Recommended categories and their definitions related to a public health response follow.

1. **Tangible:** material, equipment, methods, facilities, or physical environment are inappropriate for tasks to be accomplished, or other items failed in some way
2. **People:** workforce-related, inadequate staffing levels and inadequate training
3. **Economic or external:** changes to economy, political influences, and things that we have little control over but affect response
4. **Managerial:** organizational structure, communication methods, and roles and responsibilities
5. **Organizational:** systems, policies, and procedures people use to make decisions and do their work
6. **Information and technology:** availability of necessary information, technology platforms, and software

### Adaptations for a virtual meeting

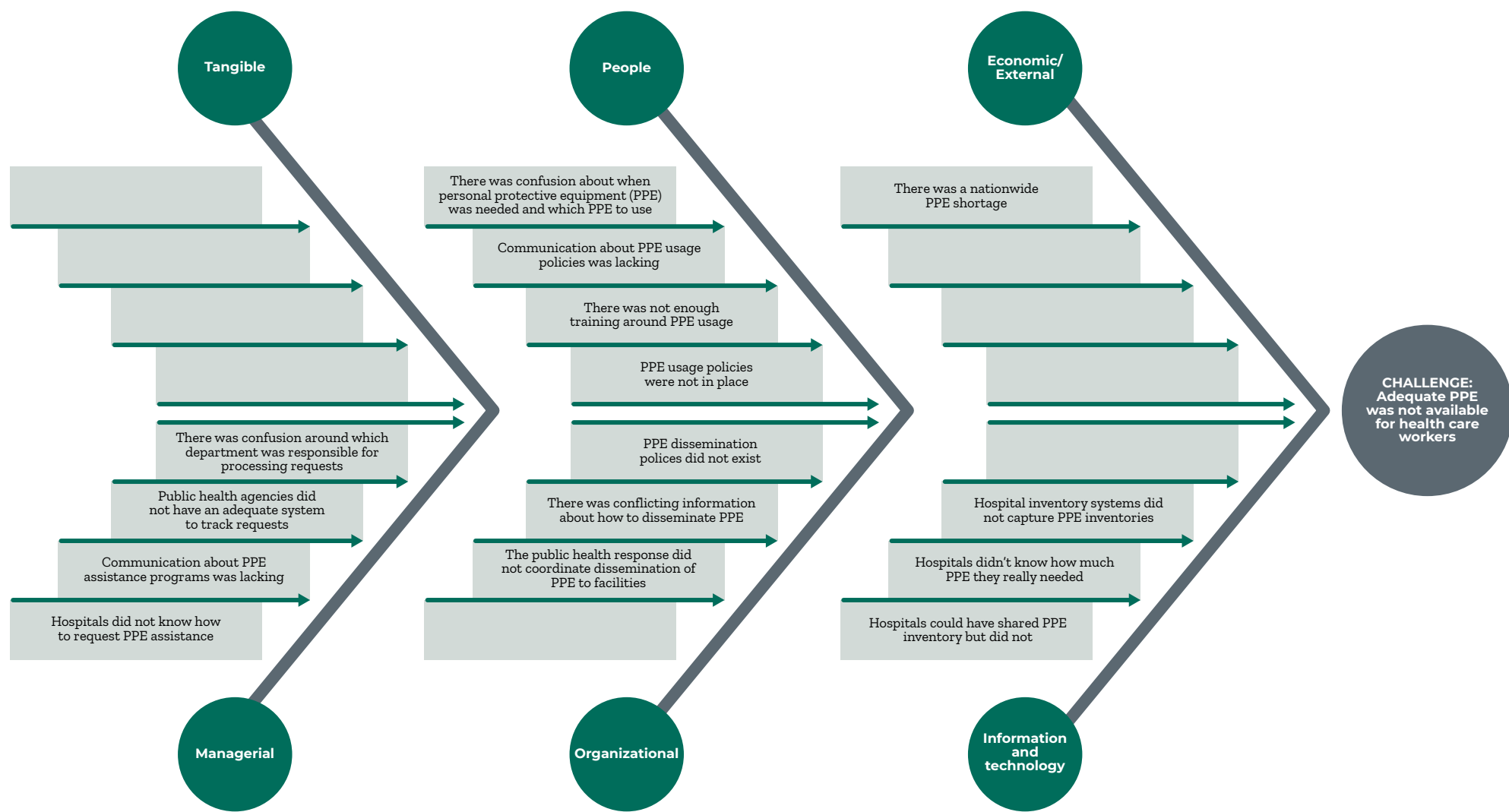
1. Send the worksheet to participants before the meeting so each person can have a reference throughout the discussion and a place to jot down ideas.
2. If your team is using a digital platform that allows sharing content, have a note-taker fill out the worksheet in real time.

## RCA adapted for Excel

	Why	Why	Why	Why	Why	Challenge
<b>Tangible</b>						
<b>People</b>						
<b>Economic/ External</b>						
<b>Managerial</b>						
<b>Organizational</b>						
<b>Information and technology</b>						

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## EXAMPLE OF FISH-BONE DIAGRAM RELATED TO PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE



# Root cause analysis and fishbone diagram

## FISHBONE DIAGRAM TEMPLATE

