

FIVE WHYS

An exercise to understand the true nature of the problem or opportunity that initiates a project.

Why

The five whys exercise simplifies and gives focus to your project when you start, helping you to uncover who is important and why a particular problem should be solved.

When

Experience based codesign (EBCD) approach (inner circle)

Start-up & engage and understand phases

Redesign Model (outer circle)

Initiation, diagnostics and solutions phases

How

1. **Print an A3 copy of the five whys template or draw it on large butchers paper.**
2. **Write your project problem or opportunity in the first box**
Start your statement with "We want to explore why...<your problem statement>."
3. **Ask why that proposition is important**
Start your answer with "Because..." and write it in the conversation bubble. This is a good time to think about who is important in that context.
4. **Refine your scope**
Rewrite that answer as a question beginning with "Why..." in the next box.
5. **Repeat and continue**
Go through this process until you are not able to come up with new answers.
6. **Redefine your project focus**
You should now have a better question that is:
 - defined in scope and user or consumer focused
 - aligned with the original problem or opportunity
 - worded positively, without jargon or 'internal speak'
 - not solution oriented
 - an exciting prospect to solve.

Time

30-90 minutes

Resources

- The original problem or opportunity statement that has initiated your project
- Five whys template A3 printout or large butchers paper
- Marker pens
- Adhesive or pins

Tips

- You may not need to ask why five times, or you may need to ask more. Continue this process until there are no more "Because..." responses.
- Don't go too narrow.
- Don't start writing ideas or solutions in your "Because..." responses.



5 WHYS TEMPLATE



Problem statements

Empty dashed-line box for problem statement 1.

Empty dashed-line box for problem statement 2.

Empty dashed-line box for problem statement 3.

Empty dashed-line box for problem statement 4.

Empty dashed-line box for problem statement 5.

Because

Empty dashed-line box for cause 1.

Empty dashed-line box for cause 2.

Empty dashed-line box for cause 3.

Empty dashed-line box for cause 4.

Empty dashed-line box for cause 5.

5 WHYS TEMPLATE



Starting problem – Why is our clinic not running at capacity?

Problem statements

We want to explore why is our new stroke rehab clinic not running at capacity.

Why does everyone use the services traditionally accessed?

Why don't they know about our services and what we do?

Why don't we tell the community what we do here?

The real problem is that patients aren't coming because they don't know about us. How do we promote our service to the community more effectively?

Because

Everyone is still using the individual allied health services that were traditionally accessed before we opened.

Perhaps they don't know about our services.

We don't tell the community what we do here.

We expect GPs and the community to just know.