

ED PIP: Diagnostic Phase

Tools: Root Cause Problem Solving – 5 Why's

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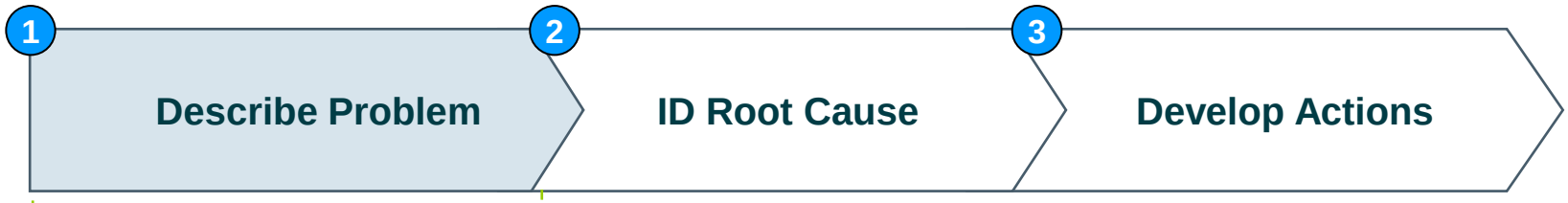
Root Cause Problem Solving: 5 Whys – Overview

Outcome	■ The root cause of a problem with a process is understood
Definition: 'What is it?'	■ 5 Why Analysis serve to disaggregate a problem into component parts so that the cause of a problem is more easily identified
Objectives: 'What is it used for?'	■ 5 Why Analysis • Allows the improvement team to clearly define the problem being addressed • To create alignment in the improvement team around the core problem which needs to be addressed • Prevents a 'fire fighting' or symptom management approach to problem solving which often results in 'work-arounds' to longstanding problems • Directs thinking around broad areas which cause problems
Benefits:	■ '5 Why' analysis is used to identify core problems which, when modified, will significantly impact a process and its' outcomes ■ Enables the team to better understand the issues and prioritize their improvement efforts ■ Generates a large quantity a variable ideas in a short space of time
When to use	■ Whenever a process does not conform to the expected standard or desired outcome ■ Initially in the DIAGNOSTIC phase, but then as required throughout all other phases

Tip for integrating Lean principles into healthcare:

- *Part of successfully implementing Lean in healthcare is adopting common language that may have originated in manufacturing and internalizing how it is used in a healthcare environment*
- *Root Cause Problem Solving in general is the technique of identifying what is causing symptoms to present themselves. Sometimes the Root cause is many steps removed from the actual problem*
- *Using 5 Why analysis is a way to force asking probing questions that help you dig deeper towards the cause of a problem*

Root Cause Problem Solving: 5 Whys - Instructions For Use (1/5)



1. As a general guideline, the team can use the following questions to formulate their initial discussion:
   - *What is the problem?*
   - *Why does the problem need to be fixed?*
   - *Where is it occurring (e.g. which department)?*
   - *Who is involved? (e.g. doctors, nurses, staff)?*
   - *When has this occurred?*
   - *How often does it occur?*
   - *How has the problem been validated?*
   - *Who needs to buy into the solution?*

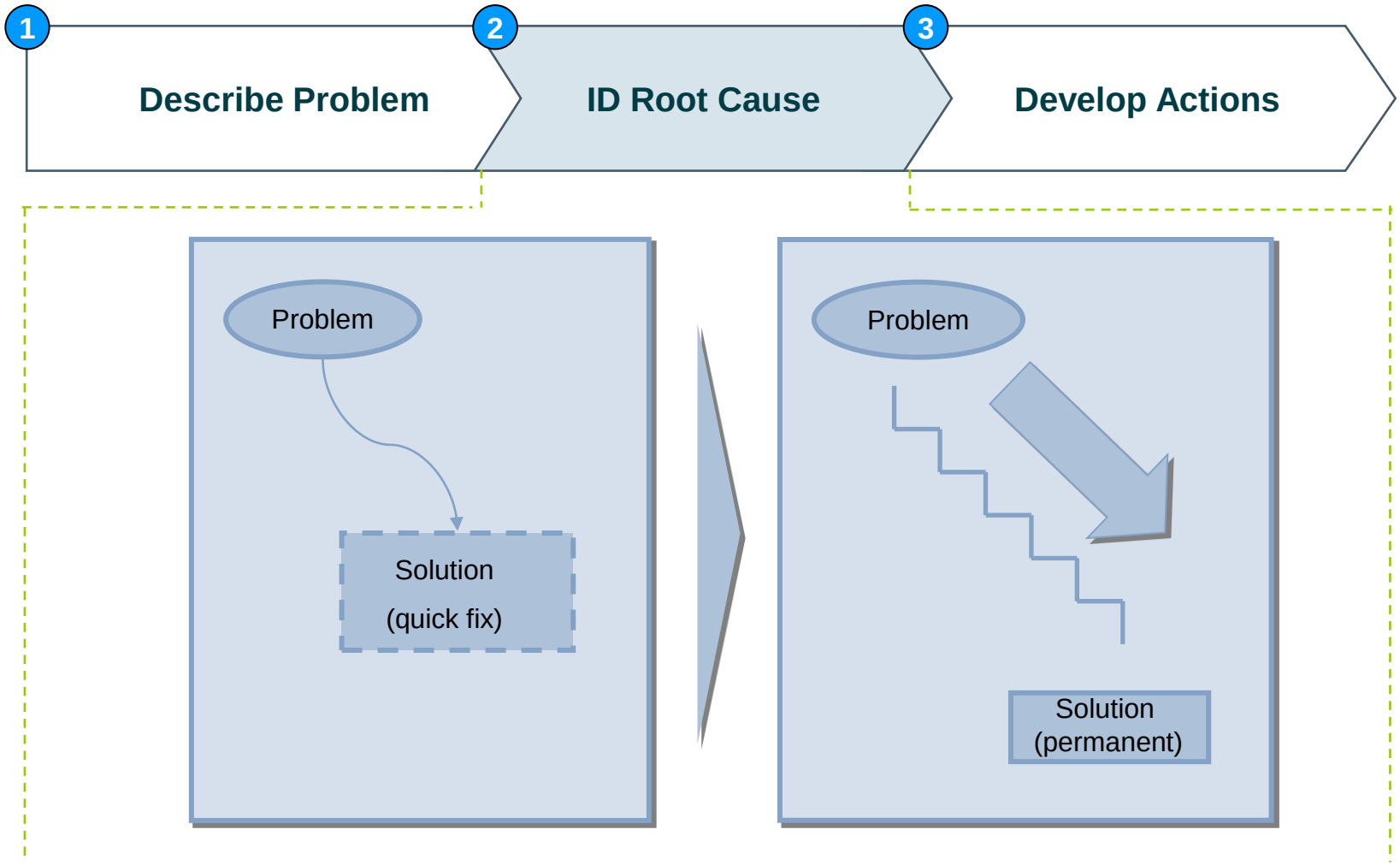
2. The team should make sure they document in writing the description of the problem and scope of the possible solution space (See Template at end of Root Cause Problem Solving Section of Toolkit)

3. The description of the problem should be S.M.A.R.T: Specific, Measurable, Action Oriented, Relevant and Time bound

In the long run, the team will benefit from developing a clear description of the challenge. They should make sure to:

- Identify the problem
- Make sure the problem exists
- Gather the necessary information (facts)

Root Cause Problem Solving: 5 Whys - Instructions For Use (2/5)



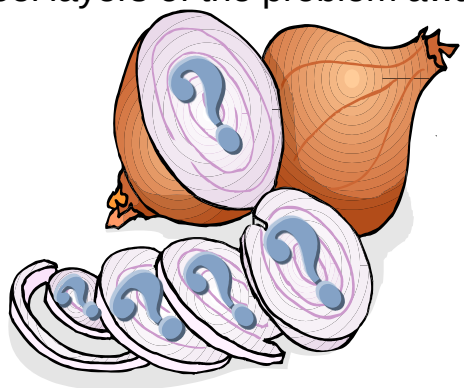
- Rather than jumping to “quick fixes”, root cause problem solving uncovers the true source of the issue to find the long-term solution

Root Cause Problem Solving: 5 Whys - Instructions For Use (3/5)

1. Describe Problem
2. ID Root Cause
3. Develop Actions

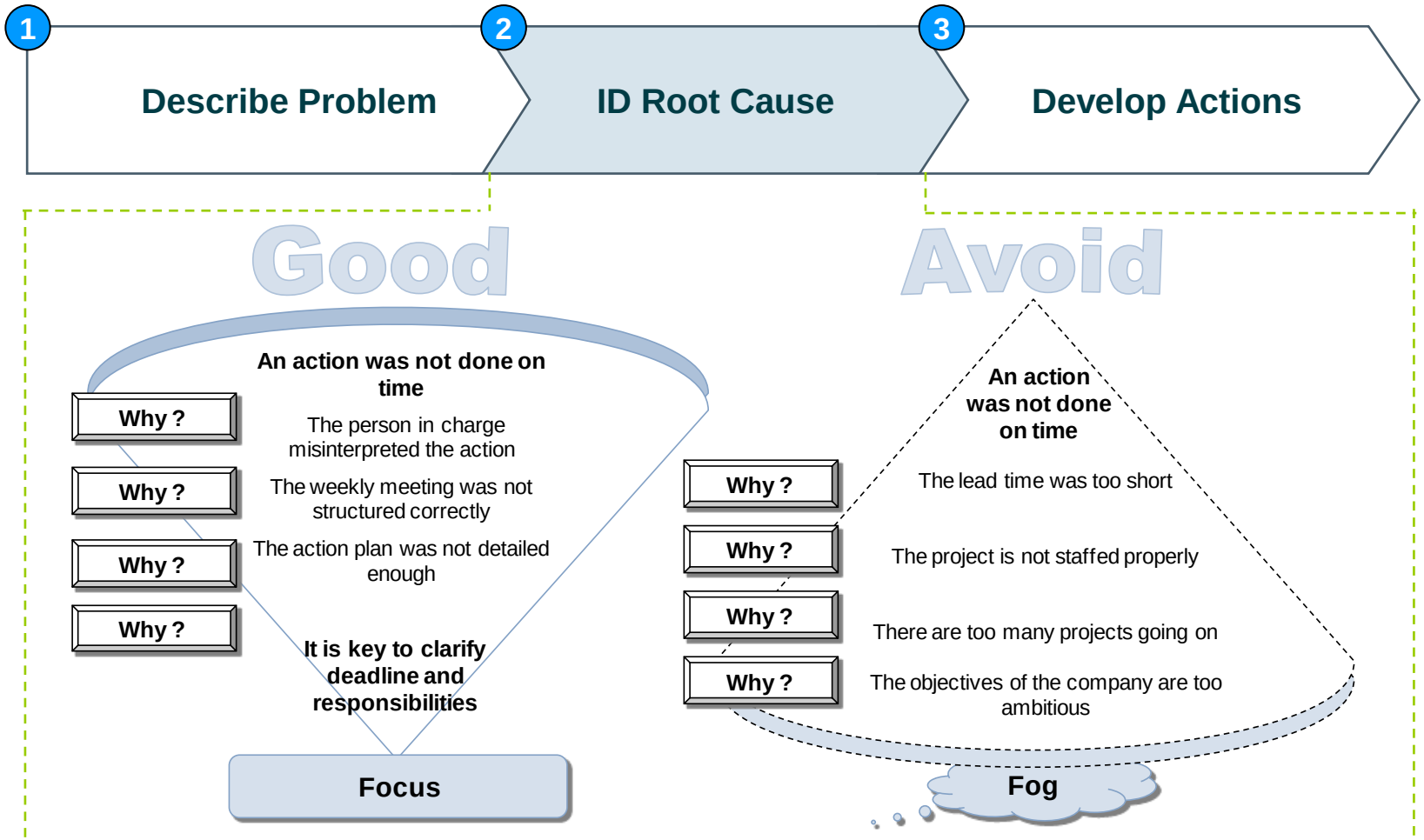
Use the '5 Why's'

Asking the question "Why" helps us peel layers of the problem away



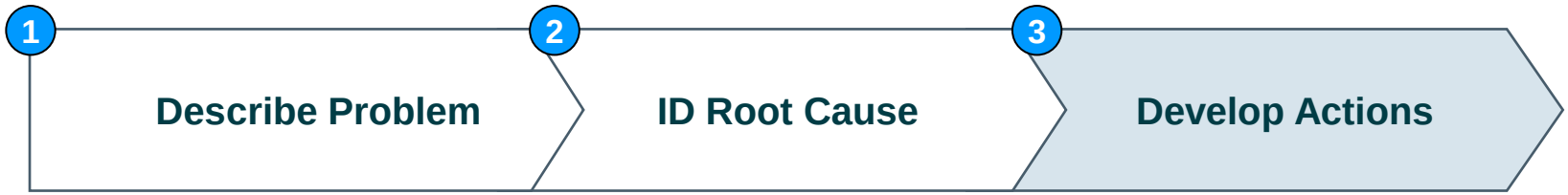
- Consider the use of ground rules for the team. Dialogue should be: Respectful, Non-judgemental, Objective, Open, Honest, Blame-free, Pertinent and Factual
- Hint: The team may not have to ask why five times to identify the root cause. In some cases, teams may have to ask why nine times and in other cases they may only have to ask why three times

Root Cause Problem Solving: 5 Whys - Instructions For Use (4/5)



- A hint for successfully applying the 5 Why's is to remain focused on the true issue along the whole process

Root Cause Problem Solving: 5 Whys - Instructions For Use (5/5)

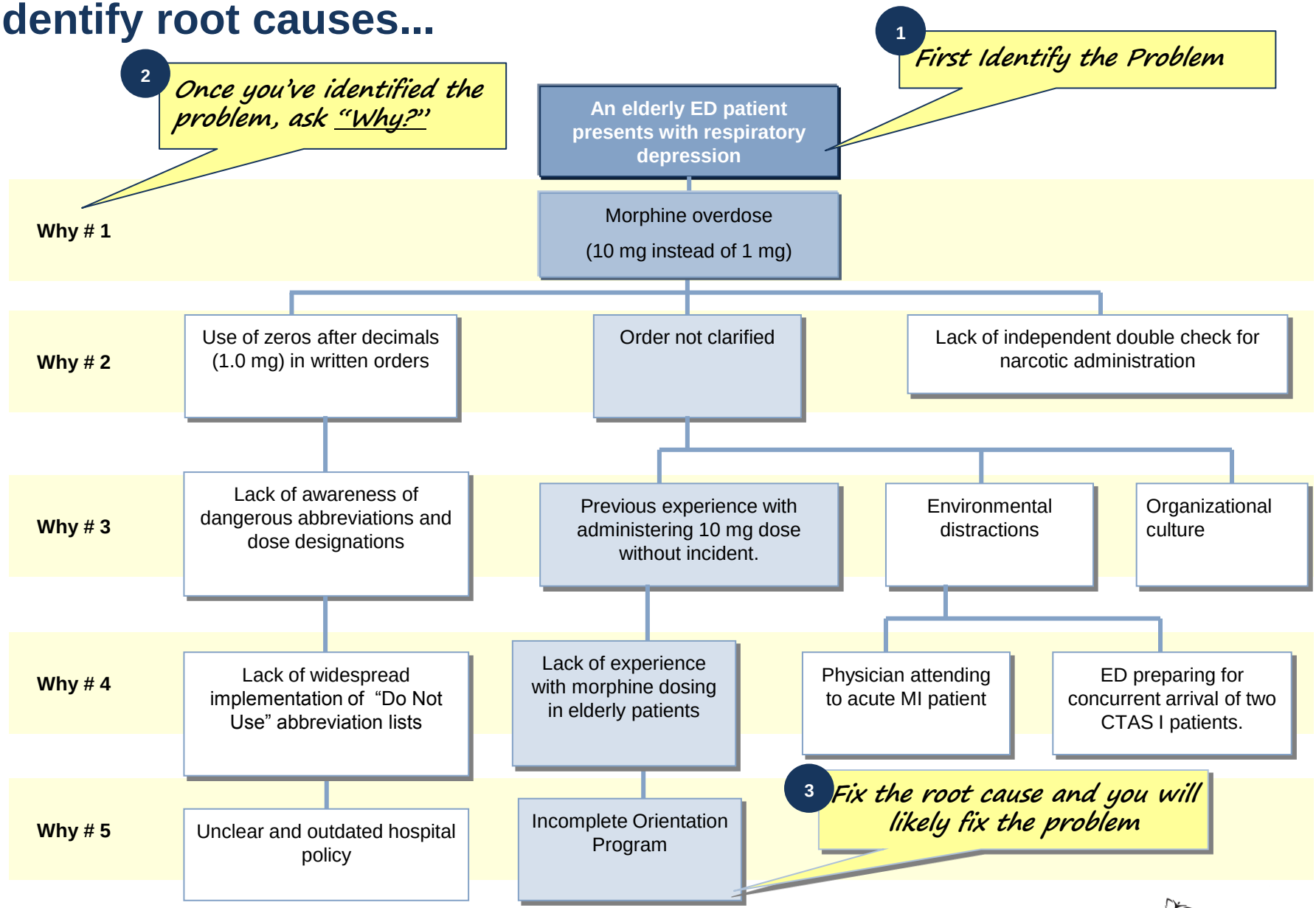


1. The team should allocate time to brainstorm ideas which successfully address the root cause
2. This list of actions should be prioritized
3. An action plan must be formulated
   - The team should determine if support is needed
   - The timing of the action plan should be agreed upon

- When identifying the root cause of a problem the team often needs to develop a follow-up plan to ensure the issue is addressed in a comprehensive manner. Key questions include:
  - What facts do we need to bring to follow-up discussions?
  - What does it mean if we don't make as much progress as desired?

******NOTE: Developing Actions will be covered in more detail in the *'Solution Design'* Phase of the Project**

Let's use an example to help illustrate how asking "why" can identify root causes...



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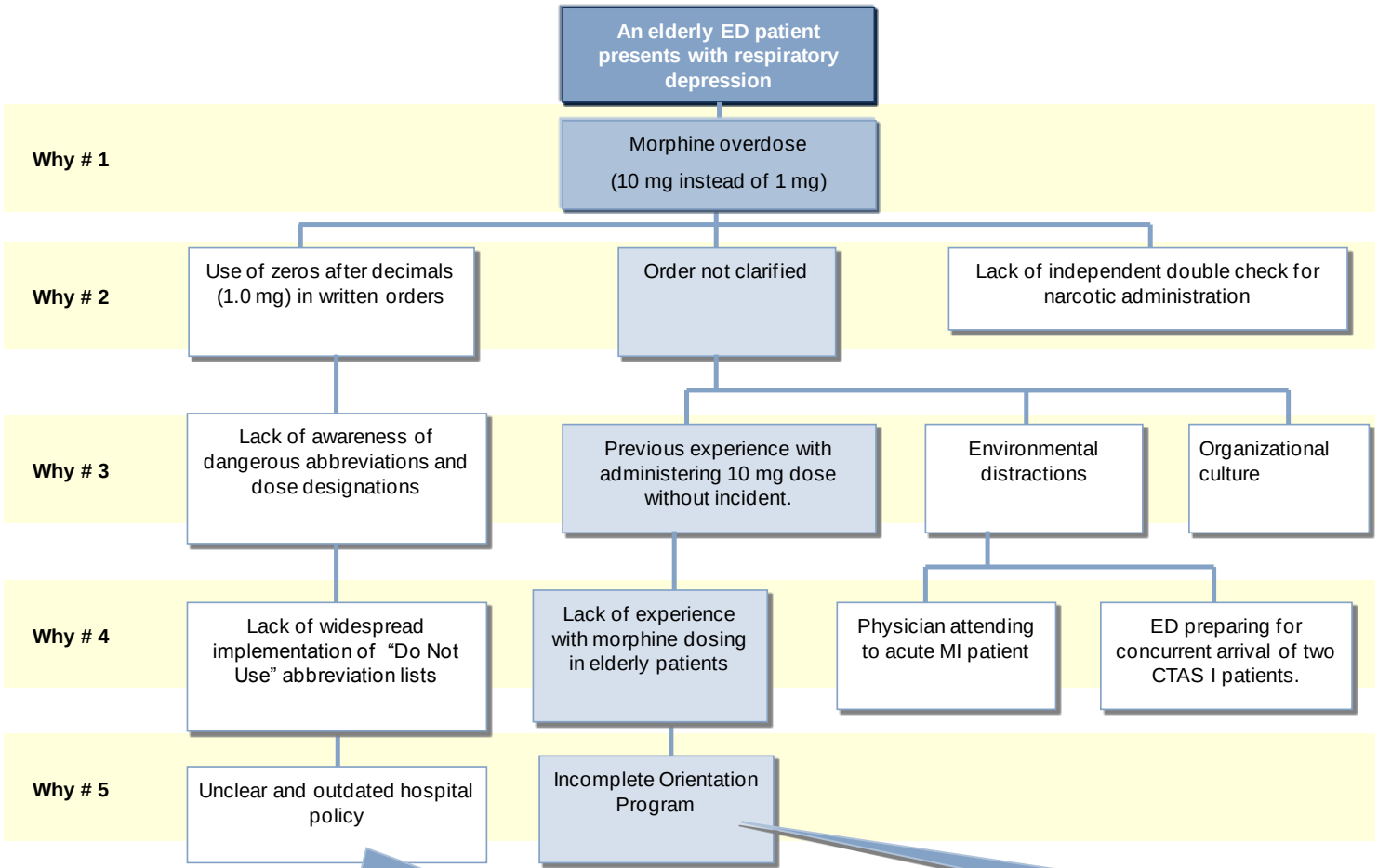
Using the same example, we can work as a team to articulate possible solutions...



A possible solution could include the revision of hospital policy and provision of in-service training to all relevant staff

A solution addressing the root cause would include updating and improving the hospital orientation program

Tips and Tricks for Root Cause Problem Solving

- Root cause problem solving means **listening more and talking less**
- Use each root cause problem solving session to build a relationship with the people you work with
- Some problems have several root causes, makes sure that you identify as many as you can

- Take the emotion away before you begin the process – sometimes emotion prevents us from driving down to root cause
- Be cautious not to use the 5-Whys in an aggressive or condescending way – the discussion should be engaging and collaborative
- Be patient when drilling down to the 5-Whys – resist the opportunity to propose an answer outright; time spent in finding the right root cause can save time later