

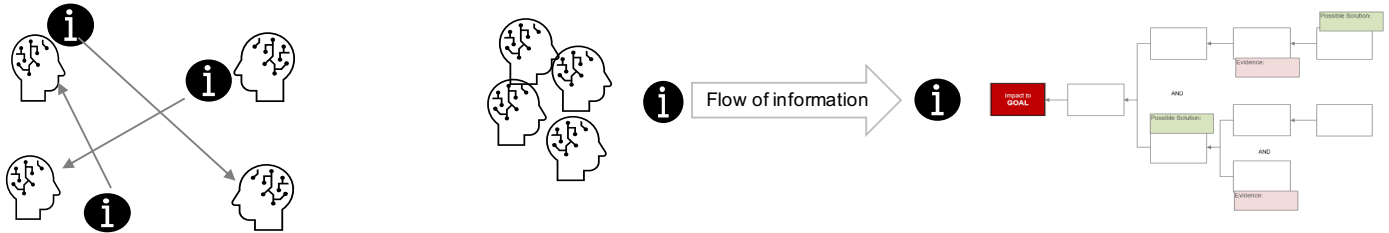
Facilitation Tip 7: Focus on the Cause Map™ Diagram

As a facilitator, some of your key responsibilities are to document, organize and manage the discussion. This tip highlights the importance of focusing on the *Cause Map* diagram to effectively navigate the flow of information and manage the dialogue of the group.

The Map Captures and Organizes the Information

Everyone has their own information and point of view. All that information needs to be organized accurately. By focusing on the *Cause Map* diagram, the discussion stays neutral, objective and factual. The diagram keeps asking Why questions and demands evidence. It's beneficial for people to point at and disagree with the diagram, rather than each other. The *Cause Map* diagram can't be offended. The conversation is no longer about what he or she said or thinks, but about how the information is causally relevant to the incident. It naturally helps put everyone on the same team rather than against certain people or groups.

The facilitator should not stand in the way or block the flow of information but help aid in the flow.



As people reveal information during meetings, without the use of a visual tool, the focus may turn toward the individuals or groups. However, by focusing on the *Cause Map* diagram, it immediately creates a common focus point beyond the individuals.

Stay on Track, Reduce Unnecessary Side Conversations and Topics

Use the *Cause Map* diagram to keep the group engaged with the specific details of the incident that are being discussed. It is not uncommon that side conversations break out, or conversations about past events or similar events are introduced into the discussion. The facilitator can use the Map to validate the information if those conversations are relevant, and if so, where should they be captured on the diagram. By specifically asking, "Where does that go on the Map?", you ensure it is either captured or that it is a discussion that can be tabled for another time. This ensures that your meeting continues to be efficient and on track.

The discussions will also be more productive because everyone is looking at the same causes or the same information that is being shared on the screen by the facilitator.

Limit the Rehashing of the Same Information

If there seems to be confusion on a topic, you can start on the left with the impacted goal and read the cause-and-effect relationships out loud to the team in order to obtain alignment on what's being discussed and why it's pertinent. It aligns the team on the area of the *Cause Map* diagram you're trying to develop, and the value should be immediately understood by participants because you've started with the impact to the organization.

Or, if someone on your team continues to rehash the same pieces of information and interrupts the topic being discussed, ask them if they are referring to something different or what they've already explained. You can show that person where the information has been documented on the *Cause Map* diagram (or elsewhere in the file) and continue to encourage the group to focus on the area of the Map that was being discussed prior to the interruption. If they still insist, ask the individual if their information plays into the particular area of the *Cause Map* diagram. If it does not, ask them to table the conversation and you can come back to it at a later time.

LESSON: Use the visual nature of the *Cause Map* diagram to help manage the dialogue during your incident investigations. This will save you time and improve the effectiveness of your meetings by allowing the team to focus on the specifics of an incident, not on the individuals who were involved. It will also keep discussions on track and avoid unnecessary side conversations and topics. Plus, it's a great way to keep the team aligned on a specific section of the Map--minimizing the distractions that the loudest voice in the room may bring.

To learn more, visit our website at www.thinkreliability.com
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Facilitation Tip 7

Watch this video for a more detailed perspective on why the visual nature of the *Cause Map* diagram is beneficial for a facilitator.



(6 minutes)