

Facilitation Tip 2: Be Specific When Phrasing Causes

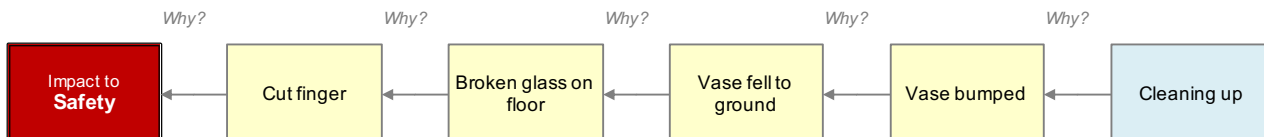
As with any communication, the words you use matter.

During an investigation, people may debate a cause and where it fits on the Cause Map™ diagram. This situation may arise because wording isn't specific enough to fully capture an individual's point of view. By asking, "What does that mean?" or "What do you mean by that?" to better understand a cause, it will:

- Mitigate unnecessary debates or confusion, and
- Help clarify and locate the cause on the *Cause Map* diagram.

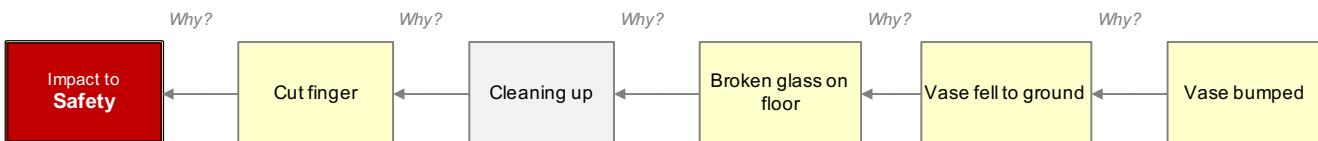
1st Perspective

Someone in an investigation may describe that a cut finger was a result of "cleaning up." From the following person's perspective, they intended to describe that the vase fell and broke because it was bumped while the room was being cleaned. The thought process is clear in their head, but they just mention "cleaning up" as the cause. This perspective would be documented as follows:



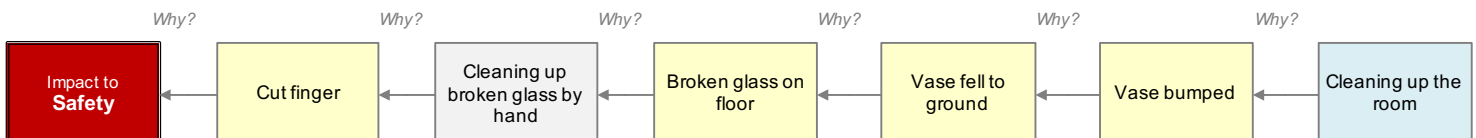
2nd Perspective

Another person in the room hears "cleaning up" and may associate that with how the finger was cut (while cleaning up the broken glass off of the floor by hand). This person's point of view would be documented as follows:



These two perspectives shown in the 5-Why *Cause Map* diagrams above are both accurate, but they define "cleaning up" differently. The vague wording allows people to inadvertently refer to different parts of the *Cause Map* diagram, which may lead to unnecessary confusion, disagreement or debates.

Capturing Both Perspectives



LESSON: As causes are identified, clarify each individual's perspective. Ask questions like, "What does that mean?" or "What do you mean by that?" to better understand people's points of views. Then, be specific when you write the cause. By taking the time upfront to provide these clarifications, it will help align the team and reduce unnecessary confusion. This added specificity helps locate where each cause fits on the *Cause Map* diagram.

Being an effective cause-and-effect analyst is a career skill. Attend a free webinar or any of our online short courses (2 hours) or one of full online workshops.

Facilitation Tip 2

For a more in-depth explanation of how to take smaller steps to find better solutions, watch this video.



(2 minutes)