



# Telligen QI Connect™

Partnering to improve health outcomes through relationships and data

## Root Cause Analysis Tool Selection Guide

Root cause analysis is a structured team process that assists in identifying underlying factors or causes of an event, such as an adverse event or near miss. Understanding the contributing factors or causes of a system failure can help develop actions that sustain corrections by including team members who have personal knowledge of the processes and systems involved in the problem or event to be investigated.

### Affinity Group

Affinity Grouping is a brainstorming method in which participants organize ideas into common grouping and identify common themes using multi-voting and cards, flip charts, whiteboards and/or post it notes. Groups may be required to meet more than once and take more than one day to complete brainstorming.

### 5 Whys

The Five (5) Whys is a simple problem-solving technique that helps to get to the root of a problem quickly. The Five Whys strategy involves looking at any problem and drilling it down by asking: "Why?" or "What caused this problem?" While you want clear and concise answers, you want to avoid answers that are too simple and overlook important details.

### Fishbone

A cause-and-effect diagram, often called a "fishbone" diagram, can help in brainstorming to identify possible causes of a problem and in sorting ideas into useful categories. A fishbone diagram is a visual way to look at cause and effect. It is a more structured approach than the Five (5) Whys tool. Groups may be required to meet more than once and take more than one day to complete the diagram.

If not Affinity Group, Use This Tool to Assist with Selecting Five (5) Whys or Fishbone

Has this problem or a similar problem occurred previously?	
Do you believe this is a complex problem?	
Have other attempts to solve the problem failed?	
Is input from others needed to uncover the root causes?	
Is this problem related to resident or staff safety?	

- **1 or 2, 'yes' responses, consider using Five (5) Whys**
- **3 to 5, 'yes' responses, consider using the Fishbone diagram**

## References

[Brainstorming, Affinity Grouping, and Multi-Voting Tool](#), [Five Whys Tool for Root Cause Analysis](#) and [How to Use the Fishbone Tool for Root Cause Analysis](#)