



Fishbone Diagram Instructions

1. Name the Problem (Head of the Fish)

- Start by writing down the problem or effect you are trying to solve. This will be placed at the "head" of the fish (on the right side of the diagram).

- **Example:** *"Long Patient Wait Times"*.

2. Group Causes by Theme (Big Bones)

- Gather all the potential causes of the problem and group them into categories that relate to the issue. These will be the biggest bones branching off the main spine.

- **Example categories:**

- People: Are staff trained properly?
- Processes: Is the scheduling system efficient?
- Environment: Are there enough exam rooms?
- Technology: Is your software causing delays?

3. Identify Cause-and-Effect Relationships

- For each category, list the specific causes that contribute to the problem. Identify how each cause affects the problem.
- Ask yourself: "What's causing this issue?"

4. Build the Fishbone Diagram

- Draw the central spine and the biggest bones (categories) branching off it.
- Under each category, draw smaller bones to represent the specific causes and sub-causes.

5. Analyze the Diagram

- Once the diagram is complete, review it to visualize all potential causes. This will help you and your team identify the root causes of the problem.
- Use this analysis to determine which areas to focus on for improvement.

Example Fishbone Diagram

Problem: Long Patient Wait Times

- People: Staff shortage, patients arriving late.
- Processes: Inefficient check-in, delays in rooming patients.
- Environment: Limited exam rooms, clinic layout causing bottlenecks.
- Technology: Slow scheduling system, software downtimes.

How to Use the Fishbone Diagram

1. Fill in each section: Start by naming the problem, then add potential causes under each category.
 2. Review with your team: Share the diagram with your staff to ensure everyone understands the root causes.
 3. Take action: Once the diagram is complete, use it to guide your quality improvement efforts.
-

Additional Resources

You can download and use the blank Fishbone Diagram templates provided in the toolkit to start mapping your problem and causes right away.