# An Introduction to Root Cause Analysis



November 2020




To introduce a process and tools for conducting a root cause analysis as part of a robust Needs Assessment

# Conducting a Needs Assessment

| | |
|---|---|
| **Current Results** | What or where is the problem? |
| **Desired Results** | Where we need to be |
| **Gap** | Difference between current and desired results |

Need a Root Cause Analysis to define the gap

# Root Cause Analysis:

- Identifies factors that contribute to the problem
- Uses facts to support decisions
- Leads to interventions designed to prevent future harm

# Root Cause Analysis:

- Is an inquiry process that requires a team and time

- Uses data to identify problems but cannot tell you why these problems are occurring

# Root Cause Analysis Is Not:

A solo process

Identifying symptoms

Identifying causes out of your control

# Root Cause Analysis Is Not:

Guesswork

Opinions

Beliefs

# The Five Whys in Action

**Please click the link below to access the "Five Whys Jefferson Memorial Example" video**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BEQvq99PZwo

# Root Cause Analysis Process

- Plan
  - –Who will be on your team?
  - –When will you hold meetings?
- Gather Data
  - –What data will you need in addition to your state report card data?
- Summarize and Analyze Data
  - –Where is the gap?

# Root Cause Analysis Process

- Brainstorm
  - –What are possible causes for the gap?
- Focus on:
  - – system challenges, not symptoms
  - – changes on the adults, not the students
  - – what you can control, not what you cannot control
  - – prioritize your most critical area or need

# Root Cause Analysis Process

- Use a root cause analysis tool
- Verify Root Cause(s)
- Are there any other data you need to ensure you found the correct root cause(s)?

# Tools to Conduct a Root Cause Analysis

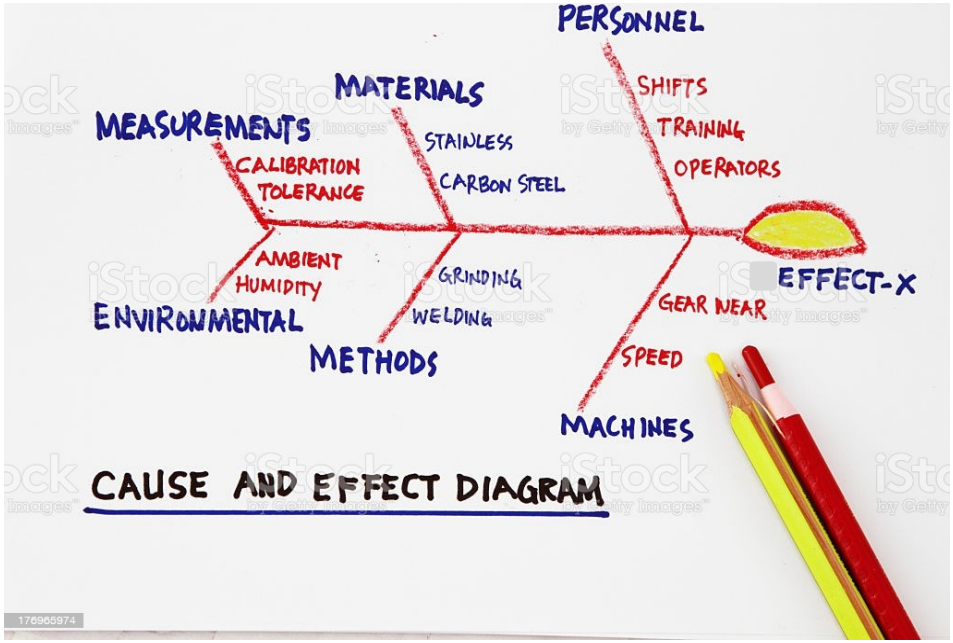





# The Five Whys

| Root Cause Category | Why 1? ↪ | Why 2? ↪ | Why 3? ↪ | Why 4? ↪ | Why 5? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
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# Fishbone or Cause and Effect Diagram




- Further visualize the possible causes of your systems challenges
- Drills down to factors associated with the problem
- Generates multiple perspectives

# Root Cause Analysis



# Problem Statements

- Determine your most significant area of concern.
- Develop a problem statement based on the most concerning problems specific to your district/building/grade band.
- Use the problem statement to focus the root-cause analysis.

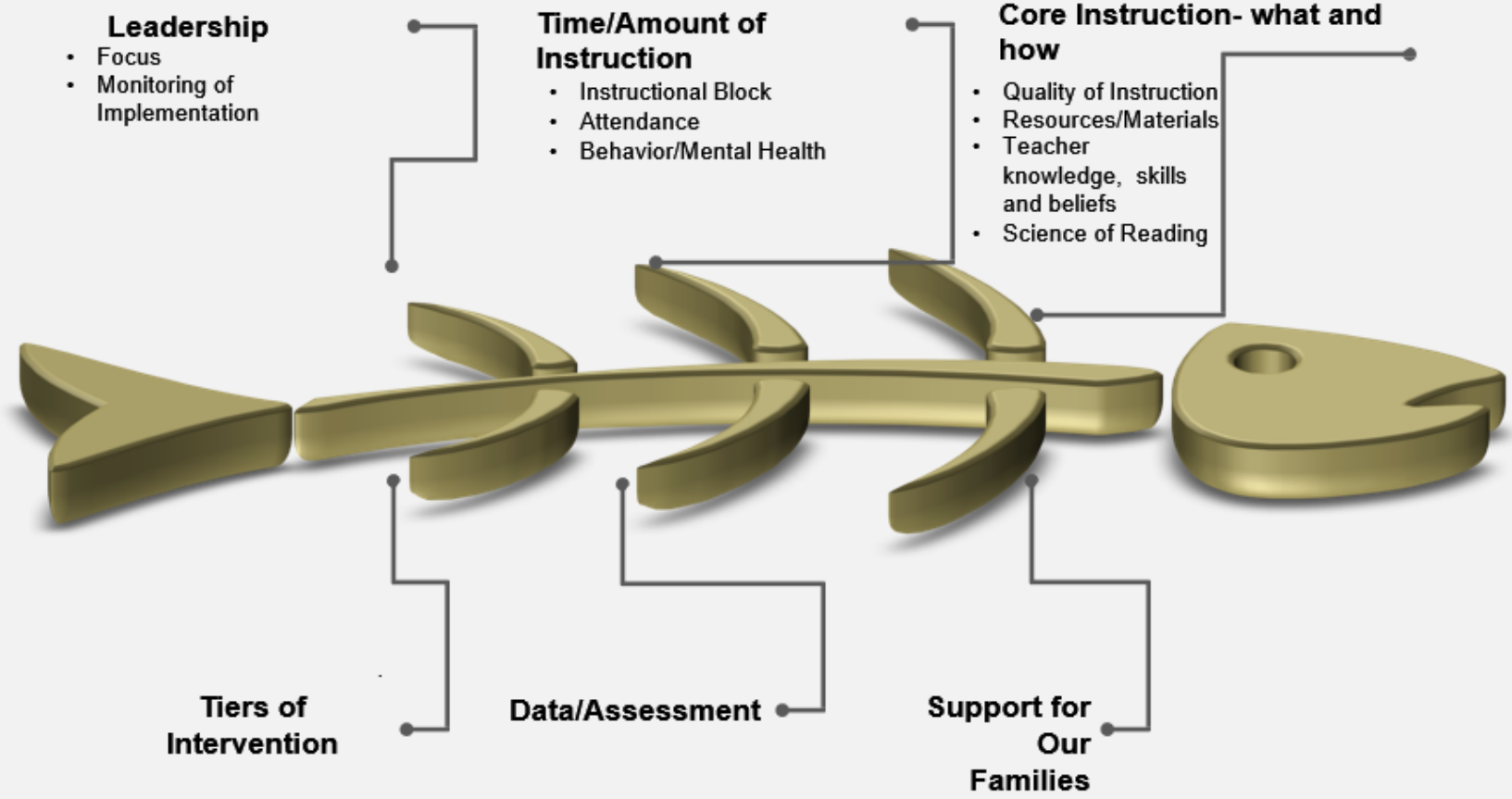
# Root Cause Analysis Brainstorming

Affinity Post-It Notes

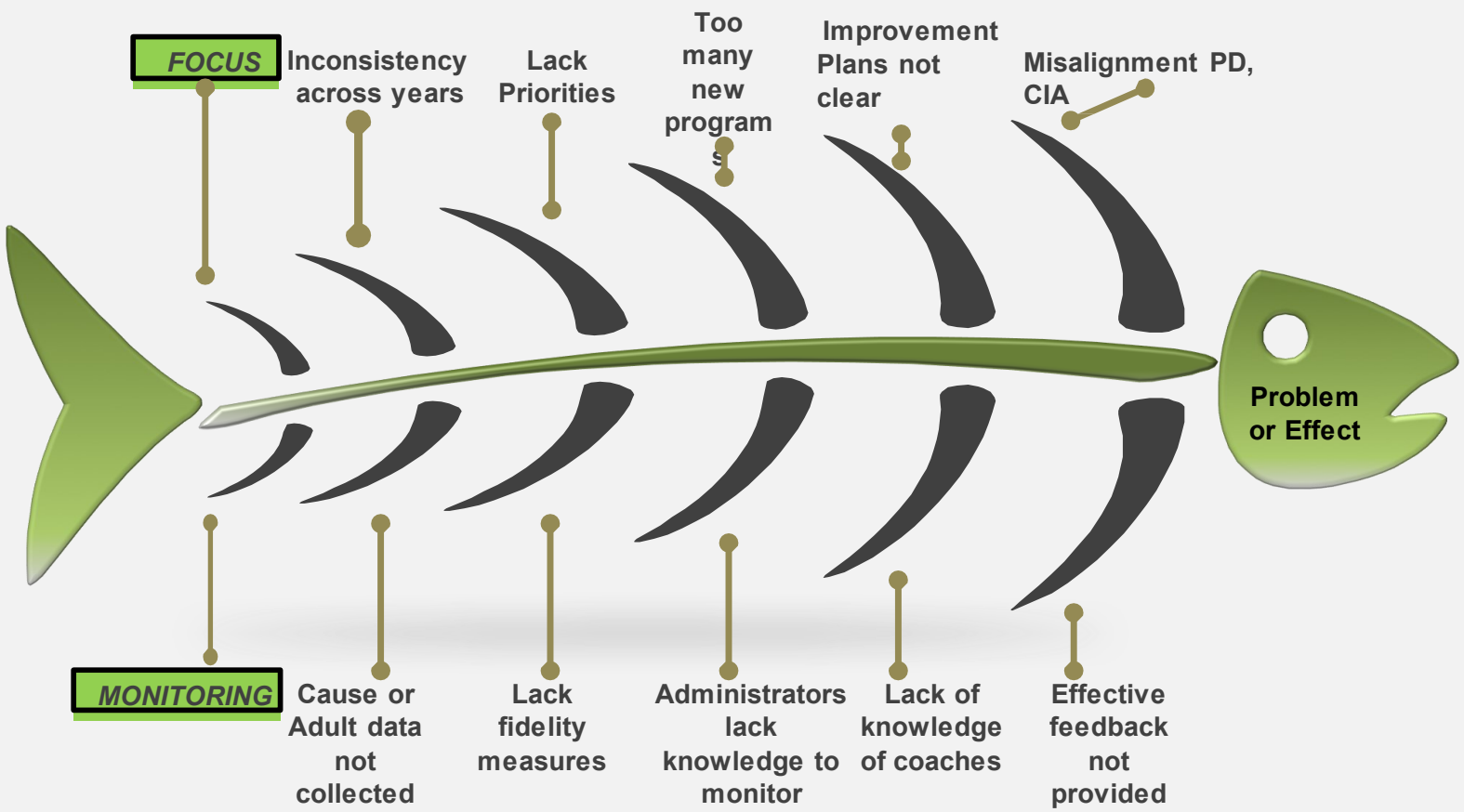
148 Notes



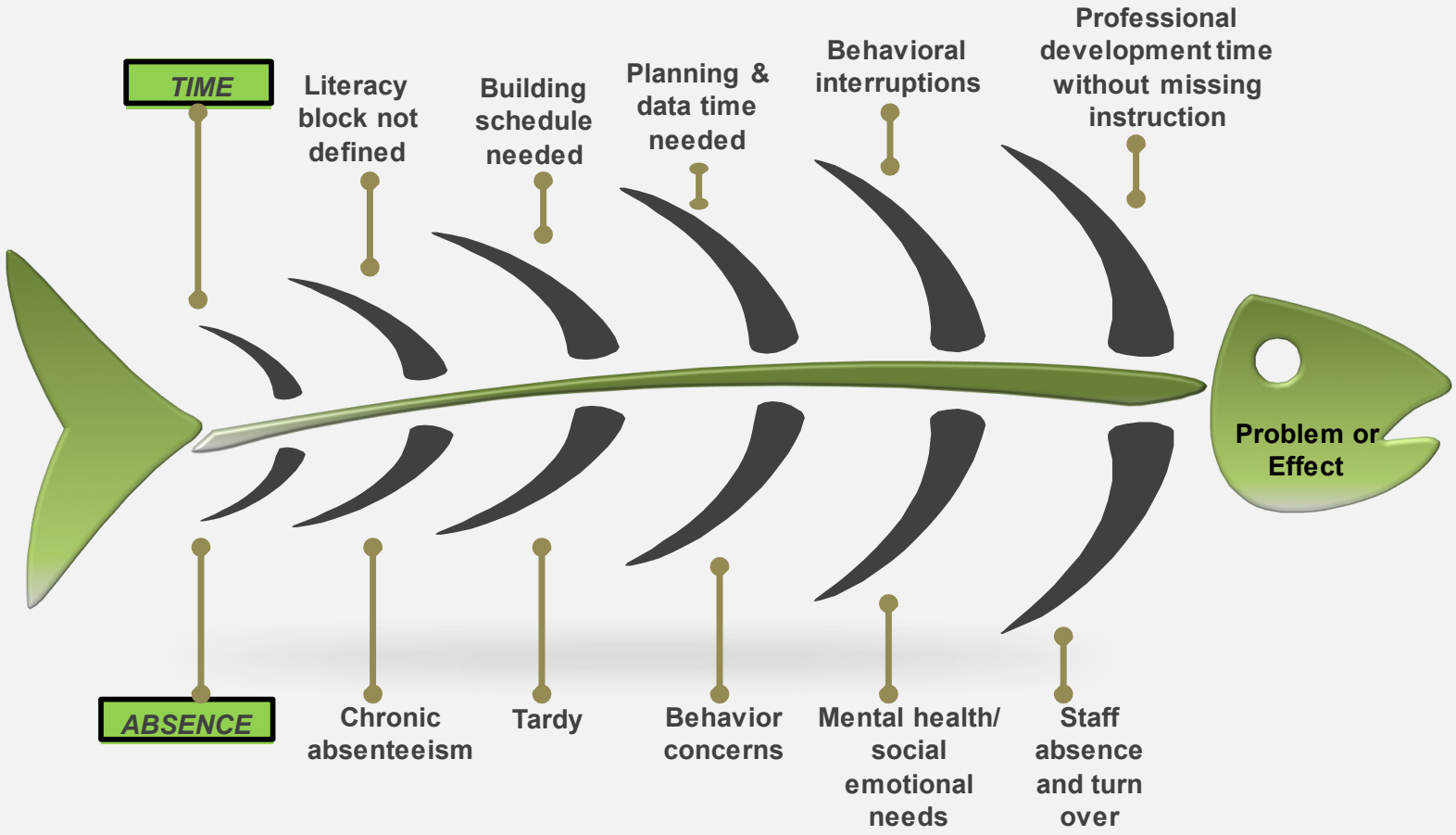
# Root Cause Analysis Categories



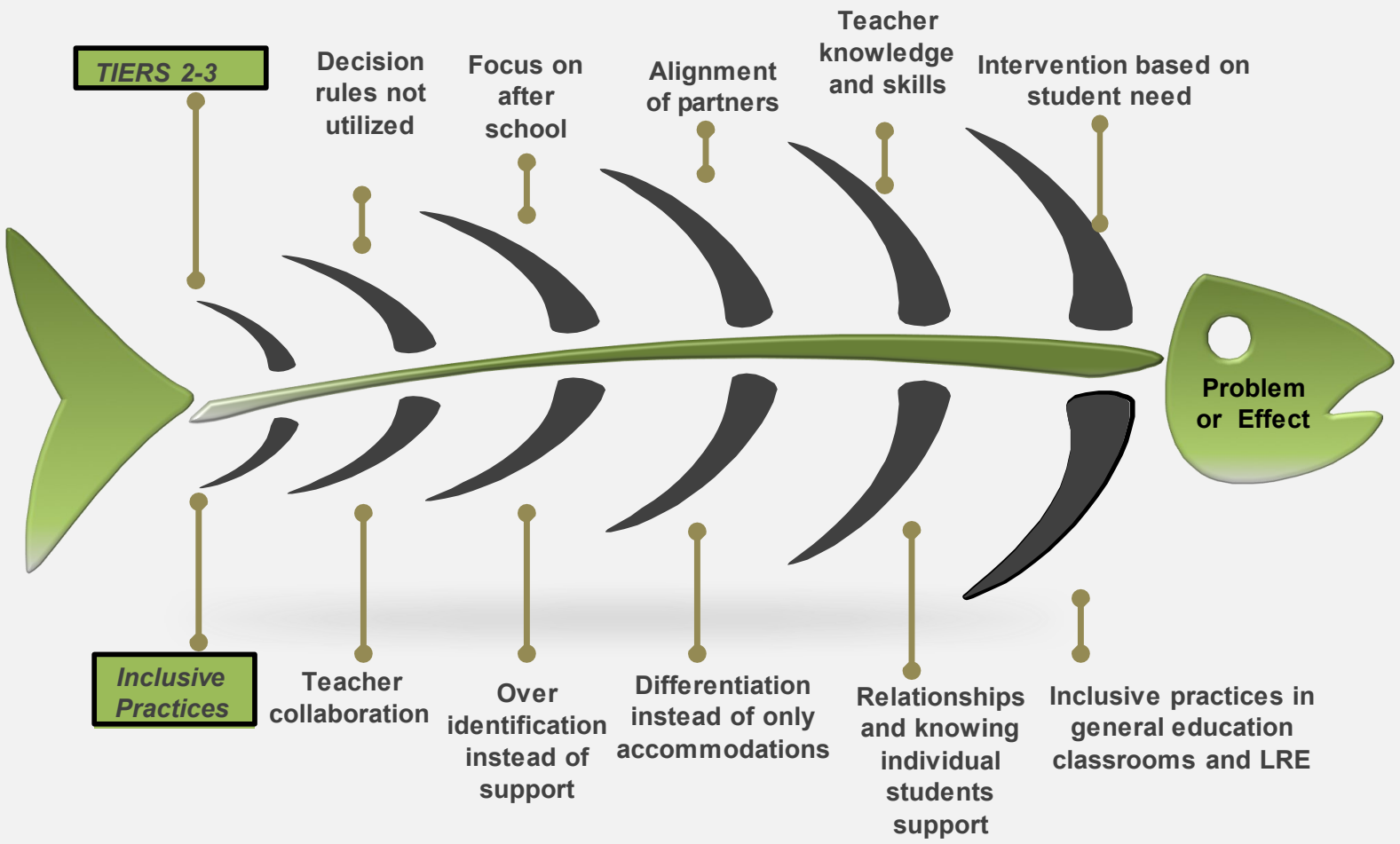
# Leadership
# Affinity Post-Note Summary



# Time/Amount of Instruction Affinity Post-Note Summary



# Tiers of Intervention- MTSS- Affinity Post-Note Summary



# Root Cause Analysis

Why didn't students master skills in phonemic awareness that are expected by the end of Kindergarten?

- Because they did not receive adequate instruction in Kindergarten in phonemic awareness.

# Root Cause Analysis

Why didn't students receive adequate or enough instruction in Kindergarten in phonemic awareness?

- Because Kindergarten teachers were only incidentally teaching in phonemic awareness skills.

# Root Cause Analysis

Why were Kindergarten teachers only incidentally teaching in phonemic awareness skills?

- Because the Kindergarten teachers did not receive training on evidence-based curriculum the district adopted two years ago for phonological awareness.

# Root Cause Analysis

Why hadn't Kindergarten teachers received PD on the adopted phonological awareness curriculum?

- Because when the curriculum was adopted, a reading specialist was trained to train on the curriculum, but she since left the district.

# Root Cause Analysis Entries in the One Needs Assessment

**Not all entries are root causes.**

# Did we get to the root cause?

**Root Cause: I believe our poverty level, as well as transiency with students contributes to the impact.**

Root Cause
Problem Description
Problem Solution

# Did we get to the root cause?

Adding another counselor to start tracking and analyzing data. We look at credits and develop plans, but probably need to look at additional ways to track and monitor.

Root Cause
Problem Description
Problem Solution

# Did we get to the root cause?

**The underlying cause of homelessness is that it destroys many families. We need to improve networking with agencies within our county to support these families.**

**Root Cause**
**Problem Description**
**Problem Solution**

# Did we get to the root cause?

If interventions were tracked to address tardiness, then we would see an improvement in attendance overall for all subgroups. There is a need for a flexible schedule option for some students.

Root Cause
Problem Description
Problem Solution

# One Needs Assessment and Root Cause Analysis Tips

One Needs Assessment

- Needs Assessment Tab
  - Determine your root cause and decide if it is a priority need.
- Priority Needs Tab
  - Consider diving deeper in these root causes.

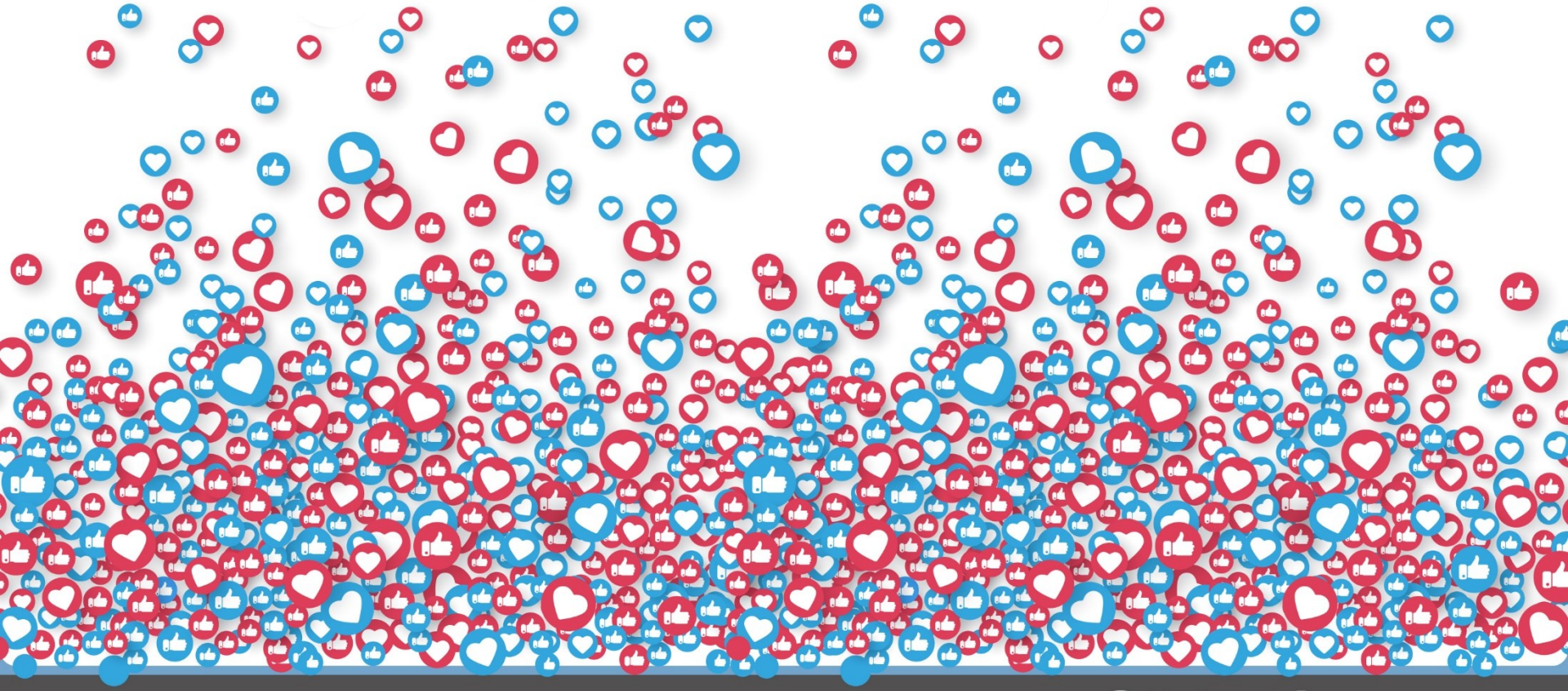
# Readiness

- Are we ready to identify our needs?
- Do we have the data we need?
- Do we have the right team members?
- Are we ready to do the work to get to root causes?
  - Engage in tough discussions
  - Engage without blame and focus on system issues
  - Engage with data, not opinion

# Effective Root Cause Analysis Leads to a Quality Plan

- Team and Data
- Narrow/Categorize
- Tool for Process
- Ensure Causes are Root Causes
- Verify

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