Problem Tree

# What is this tool used for

Problem tree analysis helps to find solutions by mapping out the cause and effect around an issue in a similar way to a Mind Map, but with more structure. The process of analysis often helps build a shared sense of understanding, purpose and action.

The main output of the exercise is a tree-shaped diagram in which the trunk represents the problem, the roots represent its causes and the branches its effects. Such a problem tree diagram creates a logical hierarchy of causes and effects and visualizes the links between them.

The idea with this activity is to focus on the central issue, separating causes of the issue (bottom area) from the effects of the issue (top area). The goal is to unpack the problem in greater depth. The tree is used as an analogy to understand the distinct parts of a problem. By studying the root of the problem you can recognise its effects. This gives you a shared understanding to set the conditions to discover new opportunities that are deeper than symptomatic issues.

# How to use this tool

In group(s), discuss and capture notes on an assigned challenge/them/problem.

## Start with CAUSES (bottom), the root of the problem

* Once you have placed your problem in the centre of the page, start by focussing on the first order root causes. Things that are directly related to the problem.
* Use one colour for root causes and capture one cause per sticky note.
* Use your root causes to discuss and note the second and third order causes. Pose the question – “what are the causes of the first order items?”

## Next, turn your attention to the EFFECTS (top), the impacts of the problem

* What are the effects (branches) of the challenge? Eg how is the system, team or stakeholders impacted by the challenge?
* Use a different colour sticky note, capturing one first order effect per sticky note
* Use your first order effects to discuss and note the second and third order effects.
* Include time for feedback, thoughts, observations

## Secondary Causes

## Core Problems

## Causes

## Effects

## PROJECT TITLE