

PATIENT SAFETY AND QUALITY BULLETIN

ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

SingHealth Duke-NUS Institute for Patient Safety and Quality (IPSQ), Singapore

WHAT IS A ROOT CAUSE?

- A root cause is a fundamental causal factor underlying a problem. There are often several root causes to a problem.
- By repeatedly asking 'why', we can get to a deeper understanding of systemic issues, that if addressed, can prevent the problem from recurring. A simple example is illustrated in Fig 1.

WHAT IS ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS (RCA)?

- It focuses primarily on systems issues, including those that underlie individual performance.
- It is important to understand not just individual systems components, but also how these interact to achieve outcomes. Deep understanding of how humans function, and interact with technology, the environment, and context, is critical.
- Solutions are targeted at those fundamental systemic issues that cause a problem to prevent the problem from recurring.

WHEN TO CONDUCT AN RCA?

- A Serious Reportable Event (SRE). An RCA is required as part of MOH Directives.
- Other Incidents or Near Misses with high potential impact.

WHY IS THERE A NEED FOR RCA?

- To ensure that fundamental contributory causal issues are identified and addressed to prevent a problem from recurring and harming other patients.
- A good analysis supports fairness for staff involved, and is a foundation of an organisational commitment to Just Culture.
- RCA concepts are useful for gaining deeper understanding of problems as they are encountered on a daily basis, even when a formal RCA is not undertaken.
- Good analyses create systemic insights that can be valuable to other healthcare organisations.

HOW TO CONDUCT AN RCA?

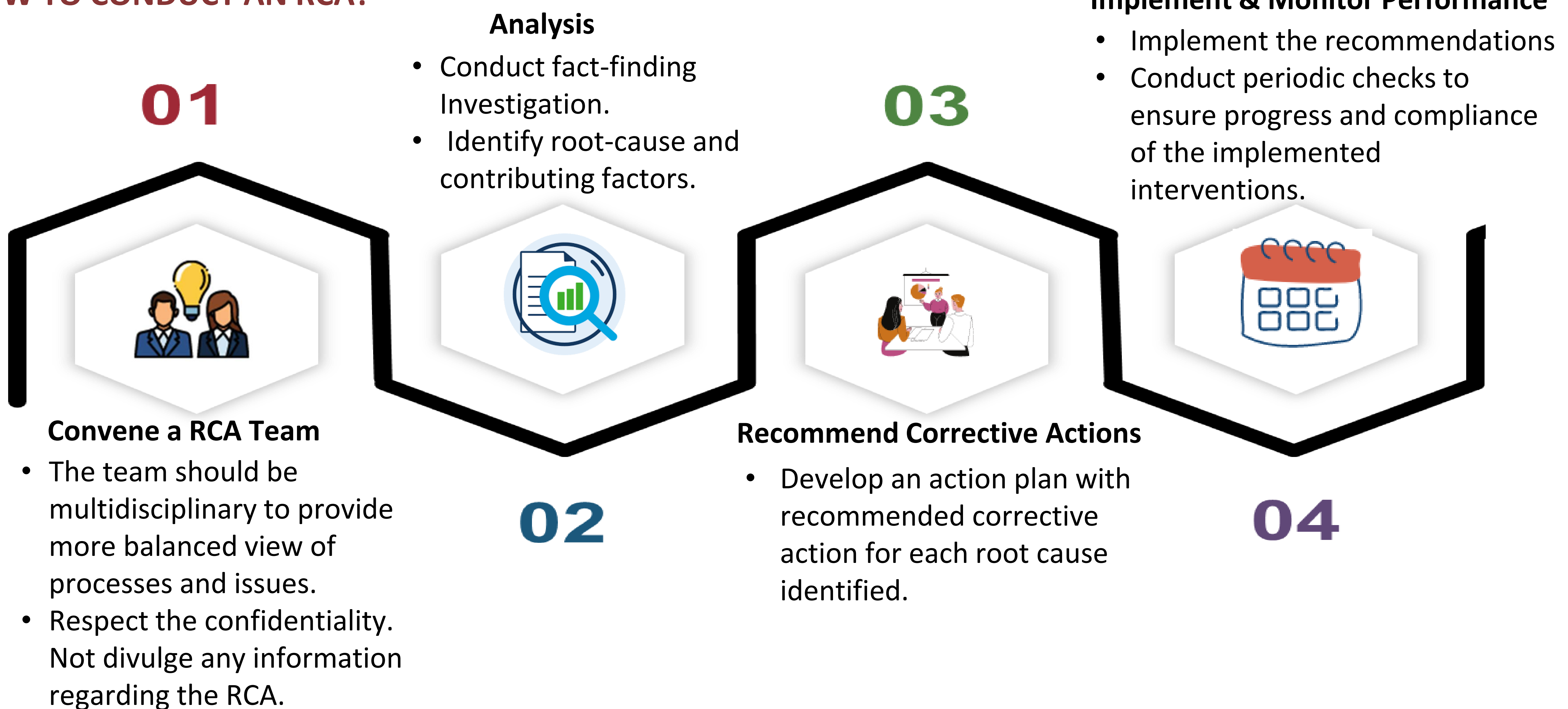
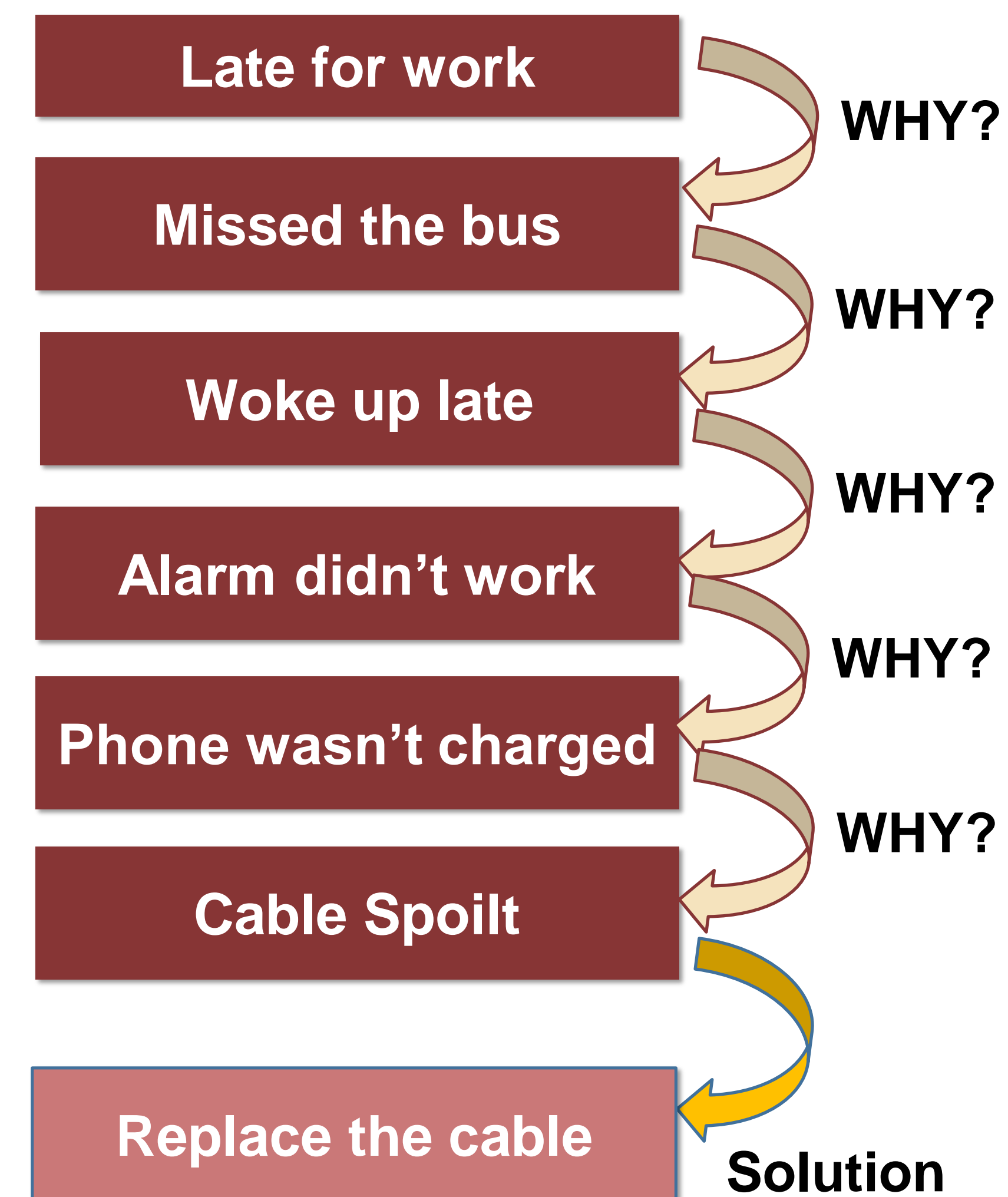


Fig .1 A "5 Whys" Example



JOIN OUR WORKSHOP TO FIND OUT MORE!

Visit http://infopedia/sites/IPSQ/Pages/AM-EPIC_RCA.aspx for more information about IPSQ AM-EPIC Root Cause Analysis Workshop Dates.



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