Root Cause Analysis
Work Session

January 2019

Kimberly A. Buckheit
Specialist, School Completion & Alternative Programs
45 minutes — **Preparing** to Do the Work

- *What* is a Root Cause Analysis & *Why* is it important to do one
- How to develop team *Norms & Processes*
- Tips for managing *Difficult Conversations*

90 minutes — **Considering** Possible Root Causes

- Examine *Step 1: The 5 Domains*
- How to complete *Step 2: Celebrations & Causes*

45 minutes — **Moving** from Causes to Action

- Understand *Step 3: Investigating Causes & Telling the Story*
- Deciding what to *Causes move to an Action Step*
Preparing to do the Work
Root Cause Analysis

The root cause analysis is a method that Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and schools can use to identify underlying reasons for disproportionate discipline.

A root cause analysis can be defined as “An objective, thorough, and disciplined methodology employed to determine the most probable underlying causes of problems and undesired events within an organization with the aim of formulating and agreeing on corrective actions to at least mitigate if not eliminate those causes and to produce significant long term performance improvement.” - Vorley & Tickle, (2002).
Symptom

Lack of Energy
Symptom

Lack of Energy

Action

Take a daily multi-vitamin
Symptom
Lack of Energy

Action
Take a daily multi-vitamin

Cause
Lack of sleep
**Symptom**
Lack of Energy

**Cause**
Lack of sleep

**Action**
Adjust evening routines and diet
Take the time to be deliberate about your team norms and processes.
Disproportionate Review Team Norms & Processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operational Norms</th>
<th>Respect all Members and Perspectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• How will voices be heard?</td>
<td>• Assume positive intentions</td>
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<td>• Hand raising, popcorn style, talking piece/turn taking</td>
<td>• Approach the task with humility</td>
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<td>• Agenda items in advance for thought</td>
<td>• Small group versus whole group</td>
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<td>• Role of facilitator</td>
<td>• Confidentiality – group decision on what is shared publicly</td>
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<td>• Meetings - dates &amp; time, notetaking</td>
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<th>Decision Making</th>
<th>Managing Disagreements</th>
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<td>• Consensus, majority vote, ranking</td>
<td>• Emotional time-outs</td>
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<td>• Ways to capture ideas (gallery walks, post-it notes or google doc)</td>
<td>• Thinking time</td>
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<td>• How will you “check” each other?</td>
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Facilitating Difficult Conversations

- **Belief Statements**
  “I” statements rather than “you” statements

- **Value the process – thinking, writing, listening, speaking**
  “Seek first to understand and then to be understood”

- **Small to large dialogue to build relationships & safety**
  Separate Impact of what another person has said (how it made you feel) from Intention (what am I assuming)

- **Agree upon the mutual purpose**
Facilitator Tips

- Be clear about the purpose of the discussion: process or product.
- Define and assign roles; timekeeper, task master, note taker, process observer.
- Ask open ended questions to advance the discussion.
- Control your own biases.
- Be thoughtful of when and how you contribute.
- End each session with a summary; 1. acknowledging accomplishments, and 2. agreeing upon next steps.
Considering Root Causes
5 Domains

1. Quality Instruction & Assessment
2. Discipline Policies & Procedures
3. Safety & Security
4. Health & Wellness
5. Bias, Beliefs & Barriers

Root Cause Analysis

Kimberly A. Buckheit
January 2019
Step 1: Considering Possible Root Causes-- is designed to lead the DRT through consideration of each potential cause for elevations in student misconduct that lead to out-of-school removal.

A list of conditions are provided with both a negative and positive position. This list is intended to produce dialogue among stakeholders as they either consider across all schools within the LEA, or for a specific school, the general status of the condition.

A possible statement starter for dialogue about each condition could be: “In general, across our LEA/School … “. It is recommended that individuals on the committee first complete independently their impressions using the document provided. Individuals should then come together either as a whole group, or in smaller work discussion circles depending upon the size of the committee, for dialogue. The end product should be whole group consensus on a hypothesis of whether the condition is a potential cause for elevated student misconduct and disproportionality or not.
Steps 2: Prioritizing Root Causes & Celebrations-- is divided into celebrations and causes for concern for each of the five areas.

The committee should agree upon 3-5 celebrations and 3-5 causes for concern in Step 2.

Celebrations should be considered closely as there may be effective implementation processes and resources that can be used to inform root cause actions.
Root Cause Analysis

- Quality Instruction & Assessment
- Safety & Security
- Discipline Policies & Procedures
- Health & Wellness
- Bias, Beliefs & Barriers
Step 2: Prioritizing Root Causes & Celebrations
What are we doing? What can we do in the future?

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<th>Causes for Concern</th>
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<td>1. Multi-tiered literacy intervention has been in place for three years and used with fidelity in all schools – data indicates increases in students reading at grade levels for each grade.</td>
<td>1. It is believed by the team that a large number of instructional staff believe that student misconduct is related to influences out of school rather than instructional practices within the classroom.</td>
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Root Cause Analysis

Quality Instruction & Assessment

Safety & Security

Discipline Policies & Procedures

Health & Wellness

Bias, Beliefs & Barriers
## Step 2: Prioritizing Root Causes & Celebrations

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Root Cause Analysis

Quality Instruction & Assessment

Safety & Security

Discipline Policies & Procedures

Health & Wellness

Bias, Beliefs & Barriers
Logic Summary Sample

My Perspective
Point of View or Belief Statement:
I believe that students at our high school are tracked by ability simply because of the way the master schedule is designed so that if you have to take lower level math class you can’t also take honors or AP level courses.

Evidence
This is why I have this point of view or belief:
My son entered high school in Algebra I and I had to personally go to school every spring during course sign-ups to make the counseling department craft a schedule for him by hand that allowed for AP and honors level courses. It was very frustrating for me as I had to advocate repeatedly all four years of high school. Students without a mom educated in the system would just assume it has to be that way.

Opposition
The opposing point of view or belief may be:
There are limitations of staffing and course options within the computer. All your son has to do is meet with the guidance department and then can assist you with designing a schedule for him.

Assumption(s)
I have made the following assumption(s) about the opposing point of view or belief:
That high school guidance counselors have too many students on their caseload to be able to individually be aware of student needs.

How are the two points of view or beliefs the SAME?
That a schedule can be built to accommodate students with different abilities in different subjects.

How are they DIFFERENT?
Why it can’t be easier to make it happen.

What is our Mutual Purpose?
That each student has his individual needs met and high school boys are expected to achieve at high levels.
### Step 2: Prioritizing Root Causes & Celebrations
What are we doing? What can we do in the future?

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Moving From Causes To Action
Step 3 – Analyzing Possible Causes

Committee members should go deeper into the identified causes for concern. Teams should gather more information, both quantitative (such as test scores, school climate survey data, surveys, needs assessments and student grades) and qualitative (such as focus groups, interviews, teacher perceptions, administrator perceptions, parent perceptions, climate surveys, and student perceptions), to more closely examine a cause and develop an understanding of why it is happening.

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<th>What, Who, How?</th>
<th>Investigate</th>
<th>Tell the story to DRT</th>
<th>Decision for action</th>
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<td>Kim &amp; Deb will review school climate results for last 3 years by LEA and schools</td>
<td>Pull climate survey results, review for trends, document</td>
<td>Meet and share results of the investigation</td>
<td>Team decides if this is a primary cause to be addressed with an action step</td>
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Root Cause Analysis
# Data Sources to Consider

The investigation process should be thorough, yet quick using existing data sources. If the team identifies a significant information gap look to the future to solve it. The gap should not become a barrier for moving forward now.

## Quality Instruction & Assessment:
- Summative academic data trends
- Assessment and grading practices
- Student file review

## Discipline Policies & Procedures:
- Discipline data trends - by student, by groups
- Audit of Code of Conduct
- Interviews; staff, students, families

## Health & Wellness:
- Drug & Alcohol reports
- Visits to Nurse
- Medical needs of students
- Staff & Student attendance

## Safety & Security:
- Climate survey
- Bully & arrest data
- Office discipline referrals

## Bias, Beliefs, & Barriers:
- Interviews; staff, students & families
- Student file reviews for comparison (discipline, cumulative)
- Case studies (identify a student and follow the intervention trail through time)
- Focus group, town hall discussions
Tell the Story
(of your investigation)

- Who should hear the story?
- What's the best method to share the story?
- Make the story concise with critical details.
- Archive the stories for continued sharing and future growth.
Deciding What Causes to Address

Leverage for Future Action

Consider causes that when resolved will lead to other positive outcomes.

Address those causes that are at the foundation of other causes/action, i.e., without addressing it other things can’t happen (see 10 Fundamental Conditions document).

Immediate Need & Results

Safety concerns of students and staff must be addressed if not within the disproportionality plan then within a school or LEA plan.

High profile outcomes that create buy in by stakeholders for future actions.
Questions
?

Thoughts about your future needs.