

The 5 Whys Worksheet Sample

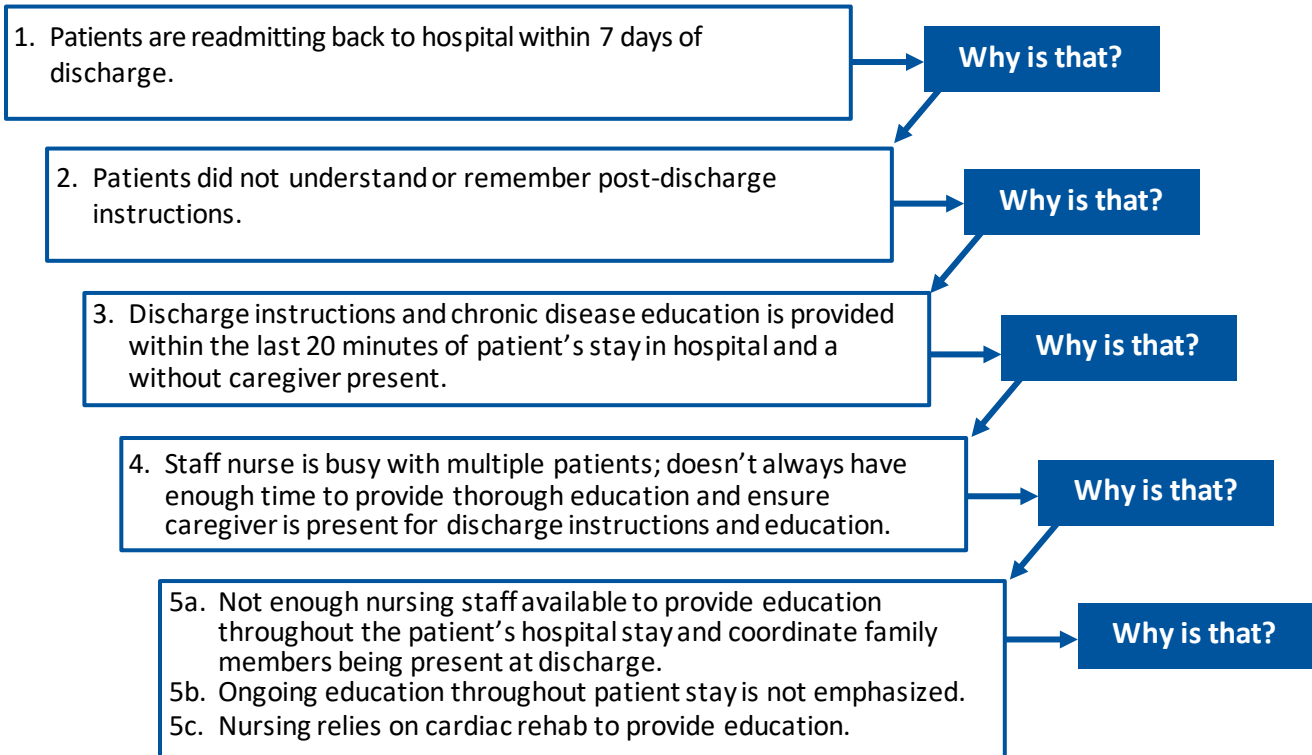
The 5 Whys tool aids in the identification of the root cause of a problem. Begin by identifying a specific problem and ask why this is occurring. Continue to ask “Why?” to identify causes until the underlying cause is determined. Each “Why?” should build from the previous answer. There is nothing magical about the number five; sometimes a root cause may be reached after asking “Why?” just a few times; other times deeper questioning is needed.

Steps

1. Define a problem; be specific.
2. Ask why this problem occurs and list the reasons in Box 1.
3. Select one of the reasons from Box 1 and ask, “Why does this occur?” List the reasons in Box 2.
4. Continue this process of questioning until the team agrees the problem’s root cause has been identified. If there are no identifiable answers or solutions, address a different reason.

Define the problem: High volume of heart failure readmissions

Why does this occur?



Root Causes:

1. Staff responsible for providing education are being stretched too thin.
2. Staff are not consistently ensuring a family member is present when providing discharge education.
3. Staff are not consistently using teach-back to ensure patients understand the information they need to know.
4. Patient education is not a shared responsibility across all departments.

To validate root causes, ask: If you removed this root cause, would this event or problem have been prevented?