

# CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT 101

**improvement  
for equity**  
*by  
Design*

## INTERRELATIONSHIP DIGRAPH

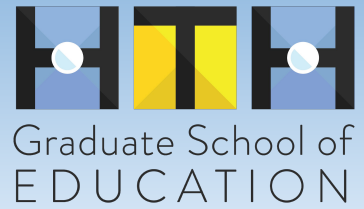
COLLABORATIVE WORKBOOK

# COMMON CHALLENGES & FACILITATION TIPS FOR THIS PROTOCOL



Common challenges	Fierce facilitator phrases/moves
<b><i>Challenging group dynamics, especially as discussions get heated.</i></b>	<b>ATTEND TO STATUS ISSUES</b> Make sure all voices are heard. You can say, “We are looking for a majority, not a consensus.” Invite all voices to share.
<b><i>Deficit thinking</i></b>	<b>INTERRUPT DEFICIT THINKING</b> Attend to problematic blaming language as it arises, offering shifts such as, “What about our current system do you think might be contributing to that?”
<b><i>Searching of the One True Cause</i></b> The key is the conversation, not the answer. We are basing our decisions in this protocol in our own understandings and biases, so it’s important to keep that in mind when we arrive at our conclusions..	<b>EMPHASIZE LEARNING</b> Avoid framing the groups conclusion as “the root cause.” Instead, explain the purpose of the protocol as identifying what the group sees as the most influential factor affecting the problem. It can be helpful to remind folks at the end of the protocol that this is a reflection of the group’s current view, and that as we learn together, we may improve our understanding of the system in ways that change what we see as the core issue.
<b><i>Vague language used for causes</i></b>	<b>GET CLARITY ON TERMS</b> As the group discusses each cause, add language that adds specificity and clarity to the terms that are used. For example, maybe “time” turns into “lack of time” which then turns into “too many competing priorities.”  Capture these revisions in the text of the post-it on your digraph poster.

# COMMON CHALLENGES & FACILITATION TIPS FOR THIS PROTOCOL



## FACILITATION TIPS

- **DISPLAY PREVIOUS WORK**

If you have done a fishbone, display it for clarity about where the identified causes come from. You can also display empathy interviews, research or data unpacking summaries.

- **LIMIT THE NUMBER OF CAUSES TO 5-8**

The more causes you include in the process, the longer it takes. You may run into discussion fatigue.

- **CHOOSE A CAUSAL DIRECTION FOR EVERY RELATIONSHIP**

Start at the top and work your way around for each cause. In the end, there will be an arrow between all boxes. It's very rare for there to be no connection between two causes. *Many causes will influence on another, but do not draw an arrow that goes both ways. Instead draw an arrow in the direction that has the larger influence.*

- **EMPOWER PARTICIPANTS**

If the group is getting a hang of the flow, you can invite a participant to take the lead on the conversation.

# FACILITATOR GOALS & FEEDBACK



## **FACILITATOR REFLECTION** (5 minutes)

Share this with your learning group before the Facilitation Lab begins.

### **Facilitator Core Competency Goal**

What is the Facilitator Core Competency you would like to focus on in this facilitation lab?

Predict how you might enact this competency in this Facilitation Lab.

### **Protocol-Specific Goal**

What is a facilitation goal will you focus on during this lab that is specific to this protocol?

Predict how you might enact this competency in this Facilitation Lab.

# INTERRELATIONSHIP DIGRAPH PROTOCOL

## Improvement Tool: Interrelationship Digraph

*A convergent tool for dialogue that helps us identify the root causes we believe to be most important to address.*

**40 minutes total**

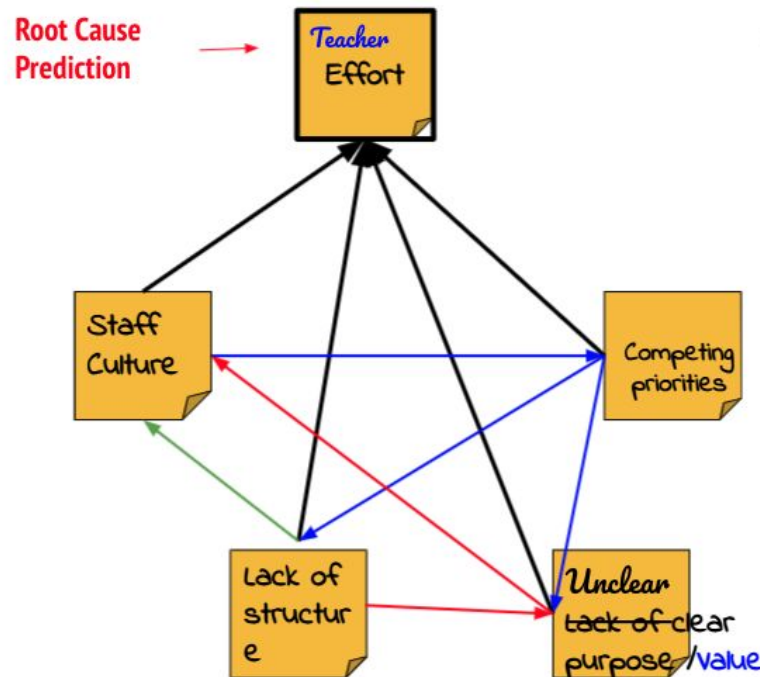
### Norms:

- **Avoid Solutionitis**... the goal is to understand the issue, not solve it (yet)
- **"Yes and"**... the goal is to generate lots of ideas, and not fixate on one
- **Embrace "definitely incomplete; possibly incorrect"**
- **Share the air**

### Roles:

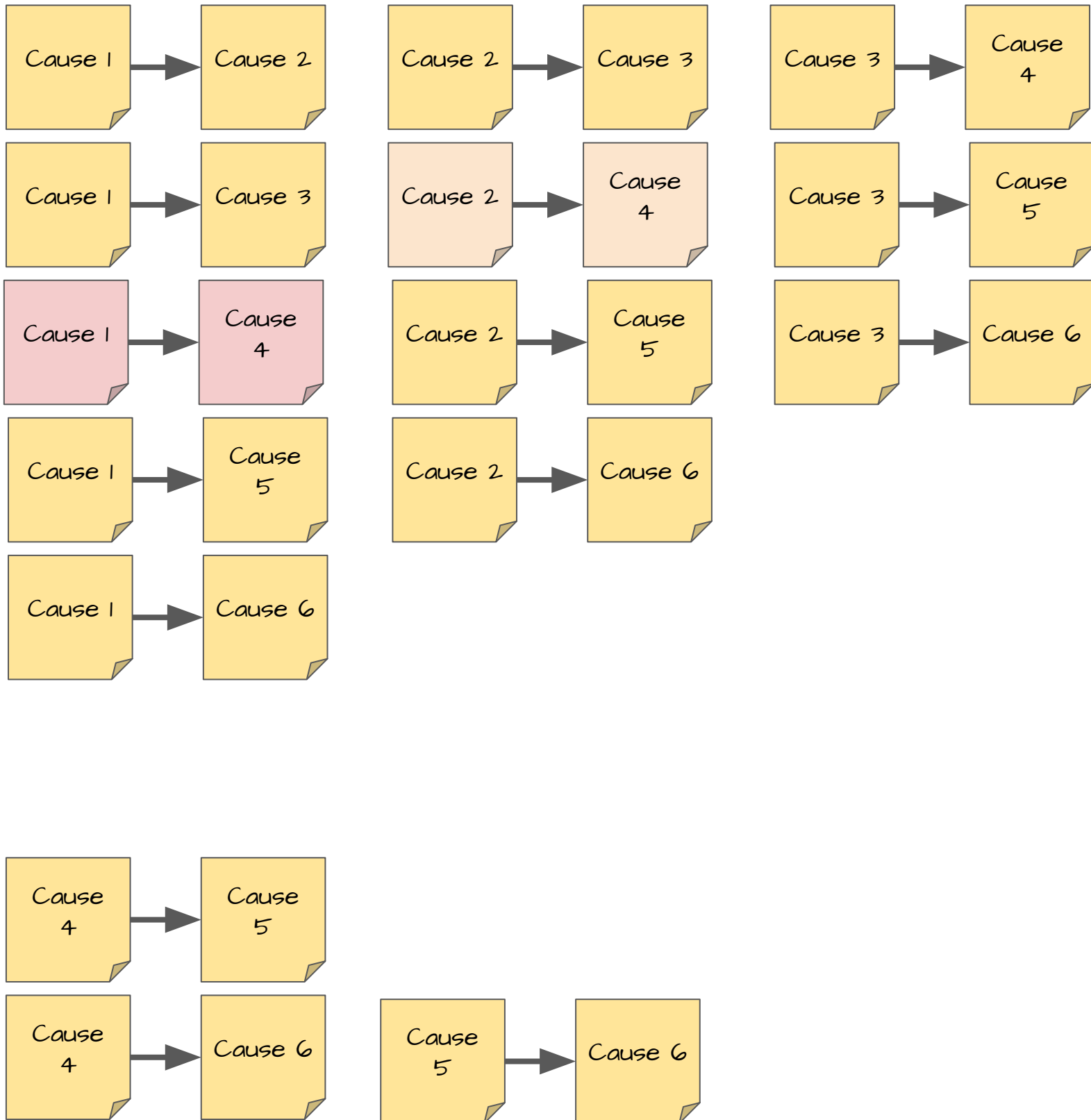
- **Facilitator** who monitors times, walks people through the process, and helps uphold the norms.

### Example:



## Our Team's Problem Statement:

Our school is enrolling too few graduates of color in colleges that have high predicted graduation rates.



Not enough  
one-on-one  
support with  
college  
applications

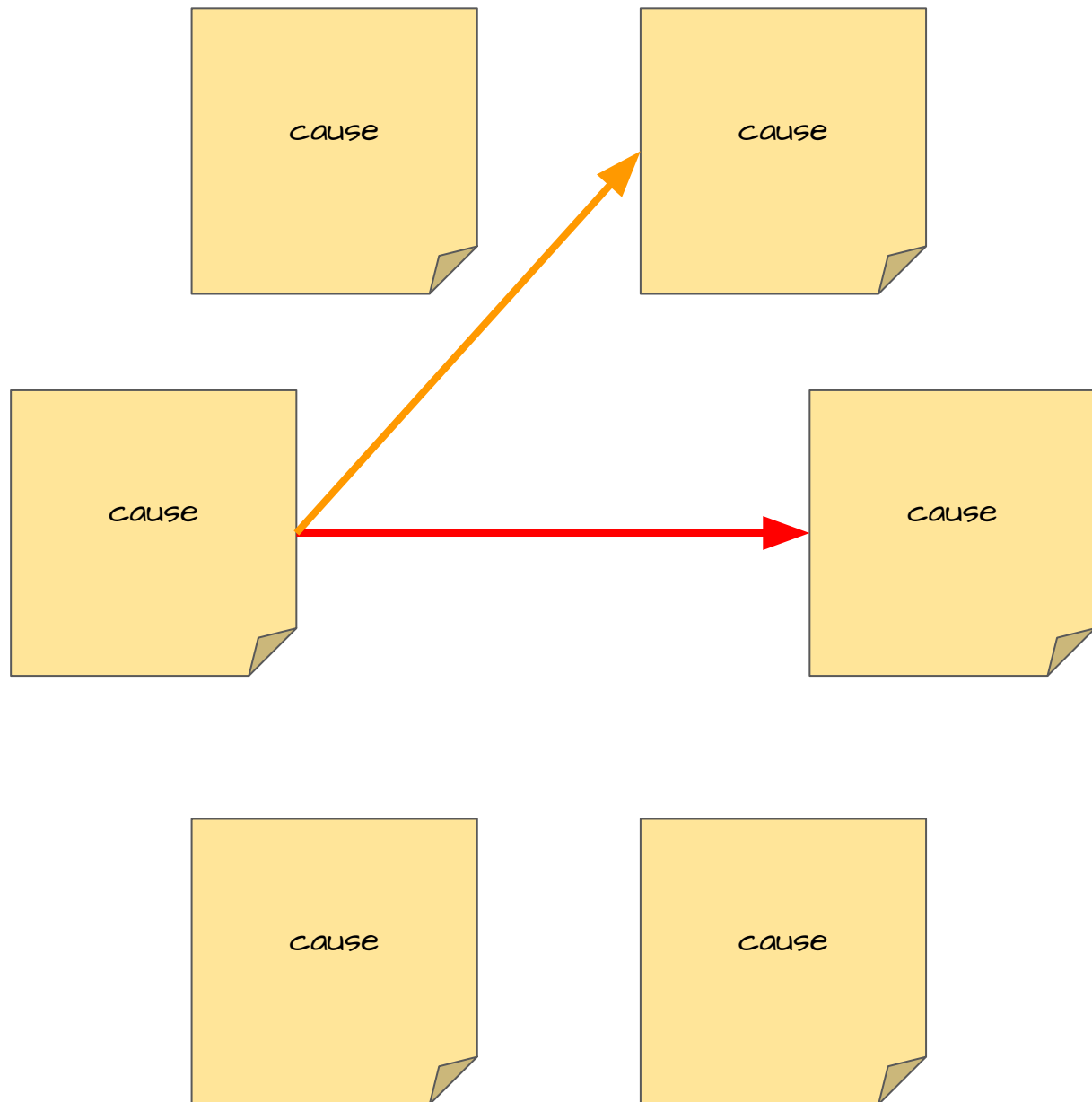
Inadequate access  
to financial aid  
(currently at 42%  
FAFSA  
Completion)

Our school is not  
engaging families  
in the college  
application  
process

School culture  
prioritizes high  
school completion  
(not yet prioritizing  
college completion)

Tracking  
structures that  
don't meet college  
entrance  
requirements

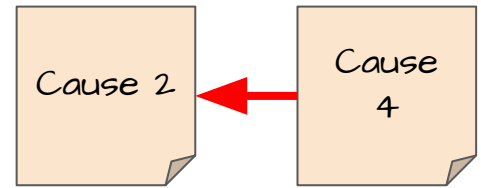
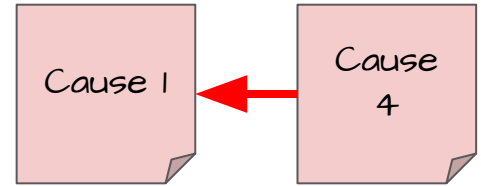
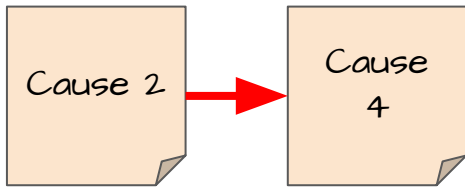
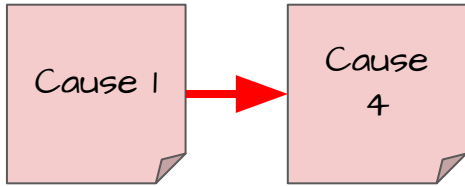
## Our Team's Problem Statement:



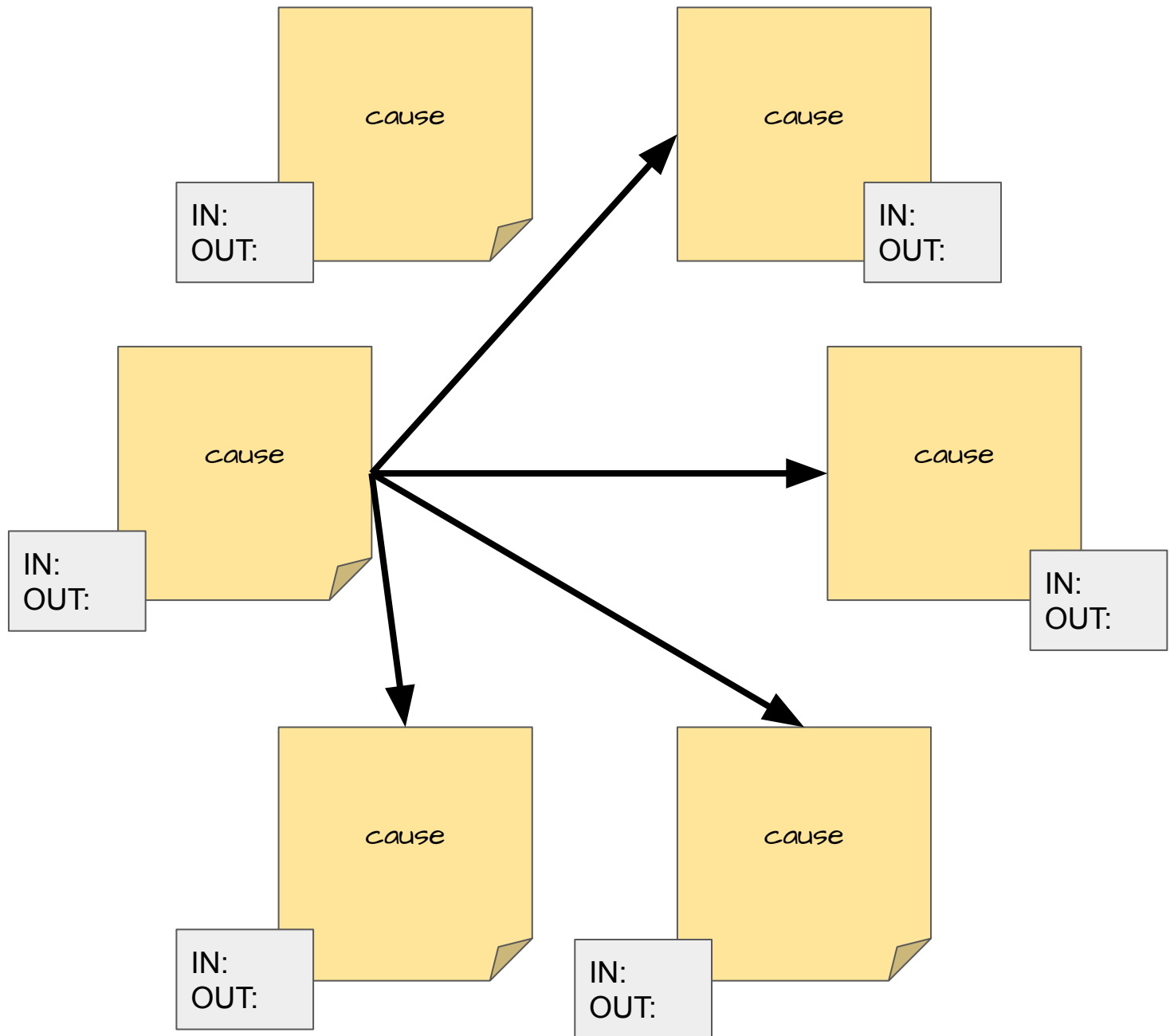


Our Team’s Problem Statement:

Relationship	Rationale	Questions



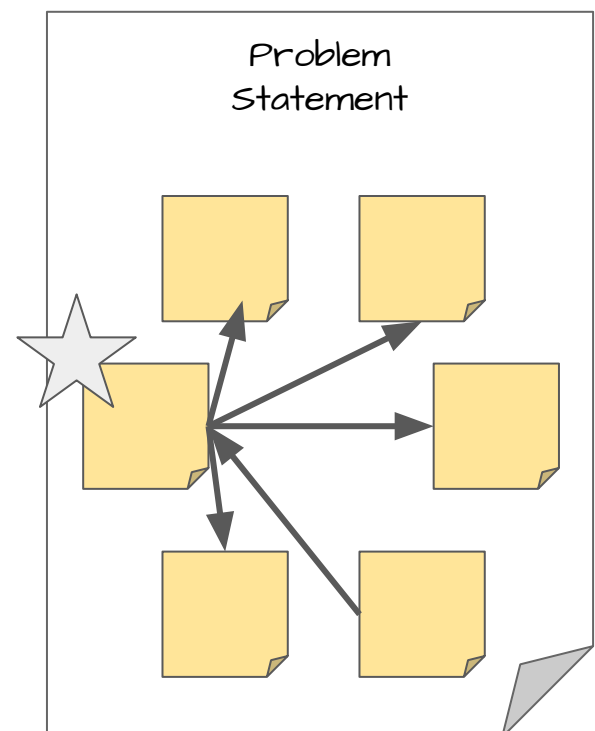
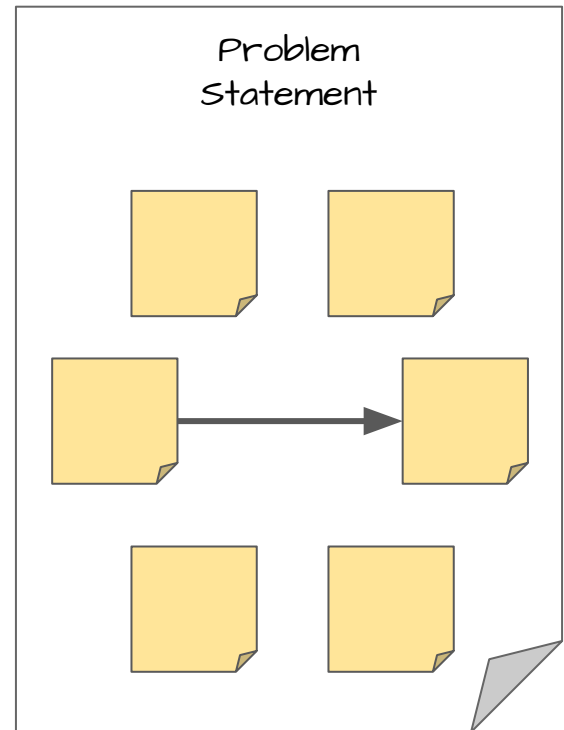
## Our Team's Problem Statement:



# INTERRELATIONSHIP DIGRAPH PROTOCOL

## Step 4: Construct the Digraph. (20 min)

- **Starting with one cause, for each pair of causes ask yourself:**
  - Is there a relationship between these two?
  - If yes, which causes the other, *the most*?  
Draw an arrow from one to the other to show directionality.
    - For example, the facilitator may ask the group “Does social anxiety about school cause a lack of motivation or visa versa?” If the group thinks social anxiety causes lack of motivation (more than lack of motivation causing social anxiety), draw the arrow going toward motivation (*from cause to effect*).
  - You can decide there is not a causal relationship, but you must pick a direction if you do see a relationship.
- **Repeat until you have established a relationship (or not) between all the topics.**
- **Tally (out, in) for each cause.**
  - ***The root causes with the most outgoing lines most impact the issue/problem. Star the top 1-2 root causes!***
  - The root causes with the most ingoing lines tend to be the effects/symptoms of the causes.



## Our Team's Problem Statement:

### Step 5: Discuss Predictions & Implications (10 min)

Name	What root cause(s) do we see as most at the heart of the problem?	What was your original prediction? What new understandings emerged from this process?	The root cause(s) we identified are based on the group's current understandings. What questions can we ask and information can we gather in order to challenge our assumptions?	What have you tried to address the root causes - and what are the <i>successes</i> and <i>challenges</i> we've experienced? What will you do next?

# FACILITATOR FEEDBACK/DEBRIEF



## **GROUP FEEDBACK/DEBRIEF** (8 minutes)

*To be completed following the Facilitation Lab.*

**Self Reflection (2-3 min):** Facilitator shares how they feel did with their goals, citing moments that went well and moments that were tricky for them.

**Feedback & Discussion:** Learning group starts with celebrations, then moves to feedback based on the facilitator's goals. How did this feel? What did we appreciate? What moments felt tricky? What might we suggest or do differently? *Facilitator takes notes and participates in the discussion.*