



5 WHYS TECHNIQUE

5 Whys is a specific interview technique involving an intentional and short discussion about one topic to uncover an underlying core motivation that is actionable for an HCD team in designing solutions. By looking past the surface rationale, you will be able to achieve greater success with your design.

This technique is typically used during interviews. It can also be useful during the prototyping and testing to understand why a design has failed.

OBJECTIVE

Explore the root cause of a problem, or deeper motivation for a behavior or action.

WASH-HCD CONNECTION

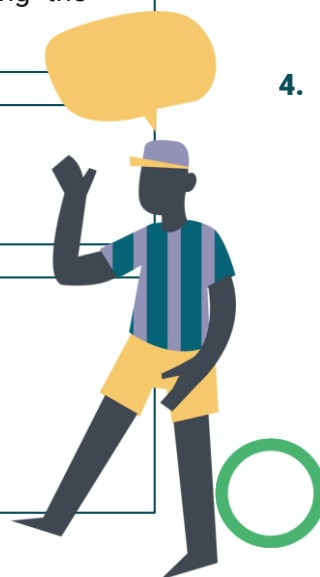
Different communities and people will use and want WASH products and services in distinct ways. The 5 Whys technique is useful for uncovering the root of a person's barriers, motivations and assumptions.

TIMING

15 MINUTES

MATERIALS

- PAPER OR NOTEBOOK
- PENS OR PENCILS



STEPS

- 1. Start broad.** Ask broad questions about the participants' problems, habits or behaviors.
- 2. Favor questions that provide depth.** Look for different ways to ask why, instead of questions that re-state the respondents' answers. For example, try using these follow-up questions after an initial response:
 - *Can you tell me more about that?*
 - *That is interesting, I would love to learn more about why you have been doing that?*
 - *When did you start doing xxxxx?*
 - *Do you remember what caused you to start doing xxxxx?*
- 3. Take notes.** Write what you hear on a piece of paper. Listen attentively and follow through on moments when it feels like you have gained a deeper level of understanding.
- 4. Be persistent.** You might have to wait until the fourth or fifth "why" to discover a person's core motivation. Sometimes, it might not always take five rounds of questions. Continue the activity until you arrive at a satisfactory conclusion.

