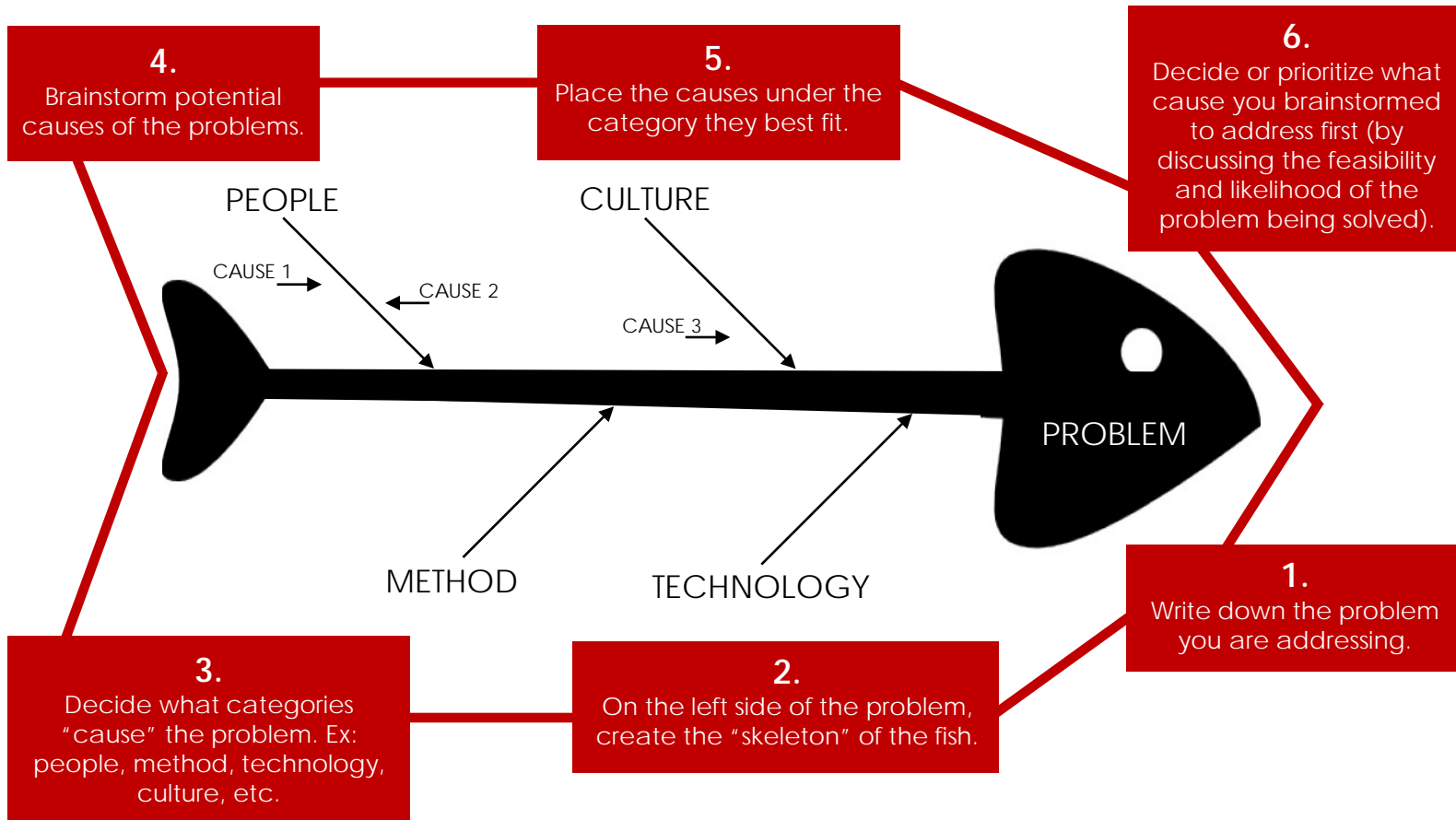# Fishbone Diagram

WHAT →	The fishbone diagram is a tool that helps people organize their ideas and theories about what causes a problem or an event. Other names for it are: **Ishikawa diagram** (after Kaoru Ishikawa who developed this tool) or **cause and effect diagram**.
WHEN + WHY →	During the baseline analysis, a fishbone diagram is helpful to brainstorm reasons (why is it happening) of the problem you are trying to address. The causes that are identified are then grouped in several categories highlighting the causes of the potential issues.

4.
Brainstorm potential causes of the problems.

5.
Place the causes under the category they best fit.

6.
Decide or prioritize what cause you brainstormed to address first (by discussing the feasibility and likelihood of the problem being solved).

PEOPLE

CULTURE

CAUSE 1

CAUSE 2

CAUSE 3

PROBLEM

METHOD

TECHNOLOGY

1.
Write down the problem you are addressing.

3.
Decide what categories "cause" the problem. Ex: people, method, technology, culture, etc.

2.
On the left side of the problem, create the "skeleton" of the fish.

STEP ONE	**Write down the problem you are trying to solve.** For example: length of time from funding to enrollment; delays in the site start up; patients wait 1 hour to be seen by the doctor; room turn over in the operating room, etc.
STEP TWO	**Identify as many factors you can think of that contribute to the issue or problem you are addressing.** You can start out with 4-6 main categories, and that may be sufficient, or you may choose to use more. Examples of general categories of what causes problems are: people (or stakeholders) culture, method (or process), technology, equipment, supplies, etc.
STEP THREE	**Brainstorm the possible causes of the problem** and place these causes under the category where they best fit. For example: 1. We don't have clear expectations on why to track results, could go under Culture 2. There are bottleneck and delays in step A of the process, could go under Method 3. The computer system is outdated, could go under Technology
STEP FOUR	**Prioritize what cause you should address first.** You can't (or shouldn't) tackle every cause at once. Ideally you will select the key 1-3 causes that, if addressed, will have the highest likelihood to solve the problem. This is where you discuss each cause's feasibility to address (based on cost, support, timeframe, etc.) and likelihood of success in solving the problem.