

1 Problem

QUESTIONABLE MEDICAL ADVICE LEADS TO DEATH OF OLD LADY WHO SWALLOWED A FLY

Cause Map

What When	Problem(s)	Woman swallowed various animals
	Date	Unknown
	Time	Unknown
	Different, unusual, unique	Medical advice from internet?; woman able to swallow increasingly large animals
Where	Facility, site	Home
	Task being performed	Unknown
Impact to the Goals		
	Safety	Death of old lady

There was an old woman who swallowed a cow, I don't know how she swallowed a cow! She swallowed the cow to catch the goat, She swallowed the goat to catch the dog, She swallowed the dog to catch the cat, She swallowed the cat to catch the bird, She swallowed the bird to catch the spider, That wriggled and jiggled and tickled inside her, She swallowed the spider to catch the fly, I don't know why she swallowed the fly, Perhaps she'll die.
There was an old woman who swallowed a horse, She's dead—of course!

Cause Mapping is a Root Cause Analysis method that captures basic cause-and-effect relationships supported with evidence.

CAUSE MAPPING

Problem Solving • Incident Investigation • Root Cause Analysis

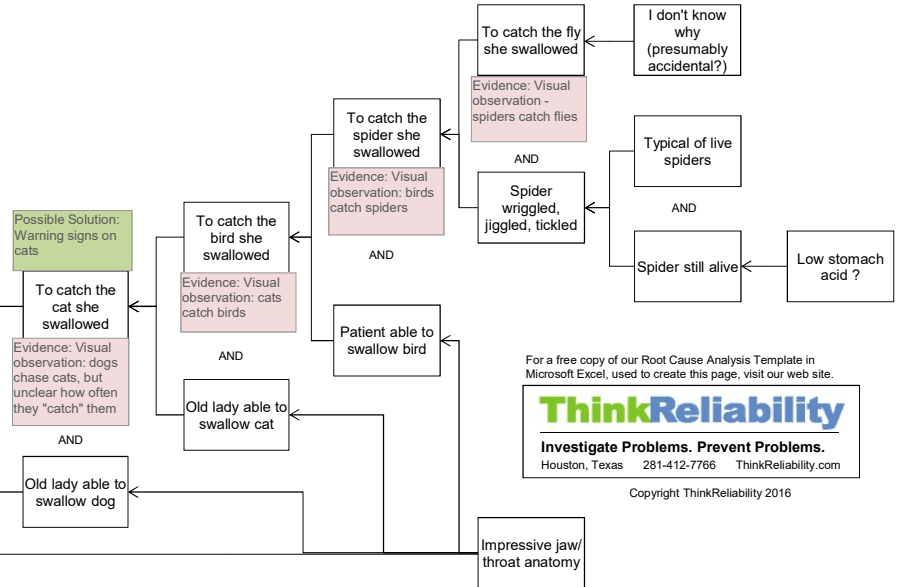
- Step 1 Problem** - What's the Problem?
- Step 2 Analysis** - Why did it happen?
- Step 3 Solutions** - What will be done?

2 Analysis

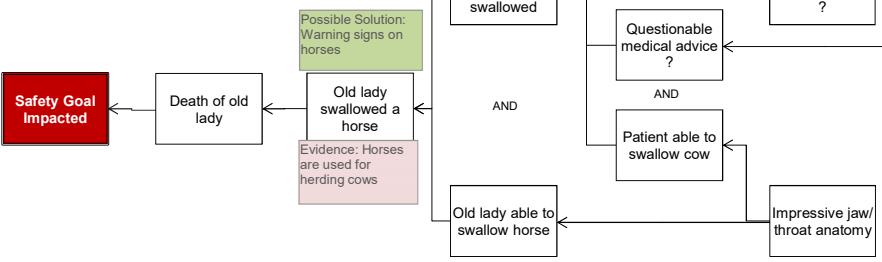
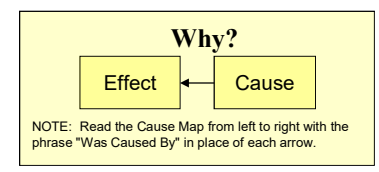
- Eyewitness Statement

Basic Level Cause Map - Start with simple Why questions. **Basic Cause-and-Effect**

There was an old lady who swallowed a fly. Then the old lady swallowed a spider. And, if you were looking for a Darwin-ish-way to catch live flies, this seems to make sense. However, at that point, whether due to increasing hysteria or bad medical advice (possibly from the internet?), the old lady then proceeded to swallow progressively larger and larger animals until it led to her untimely death.



More Detailed Cause Map - Add detail as information becomes available.



3 Solutions

Because our best witness (the old lady) is speaking no more, we can only guess at what led to her decisions. I suspect that she came upon a nursery rhyme on the internet and confused it for advice. Which is why, any time you have a concern about something that somebody swallowed, it's best to see or call a doctor, or poison control. (And if you swallow a fly, your stomach acid will make quick work of it, so no worries.)

Because of the risk of death involved, I propose that we place warning signs on all animals not meant to be consumed whole. The obstacles in implementing this solution are many, but when deaths of old ladies are at stake, one cannot be too safe.

For a free copy of our Root Cause Analysis Template in Microsoft Excel, used to create this page, visit our web site.

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