**Fishbone Generation Protocol**

*The purpose of this protocol is to arrive at a deeper understanding of the problem*

*we want to address (before jumping to solutions).*

**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**

1. **Generating our Problem Statement** (5-7 minutes)

* Individual: What is the problem we need to solve? See if you can express the problem in one sentence.
* An example problem statement: **First-generation college students often struggle to connect with existing services on campus.**

1. **Initial Brainstorm of Causes** (5 min.)

Based on your work digging into the problem (i.e. empathy interviews, expert convenings, relevant data, research, etc.) and your own ideas/experiences, *individually brainstorm* as many causes as you can that might contribute to the problem/issue. Write each cause on a different post-it. *For meaty “big” topics, it can help to ask a chain of “why?”.*

1. **Share & Categorize** (15-20 min)

* *Share around :* Each person shares one cause contributing to the problem. If others have a similar cause, you can start to group those post-its together on your poster.
* *Continue to share* your initial brainstorm, building on each other’s ideas and adding new causes that may contribute to the problem.
* **Cluster on your Poster:** Group related causes together, and give each category a title. (The stuff on the post-its are the details/bones on the fishbone).

1. **Post & Reflect** (5 min)

Post your poster to the wall. Does your diagram capture the root causes you think are important? Anything missing? Then *each person* gets to vote with *one heart* and *one star*:

* *High Leverage*: Put a **heart** by the factor, that if addressed, you think would have a significant impact on the problem.
* *Practical*: Put a **star** by the factor that is within your control, that your team could address with little effort.

1. **Debrief** (5 min)

How did we do upholding the norms? How might we adjust this protocol in the future?