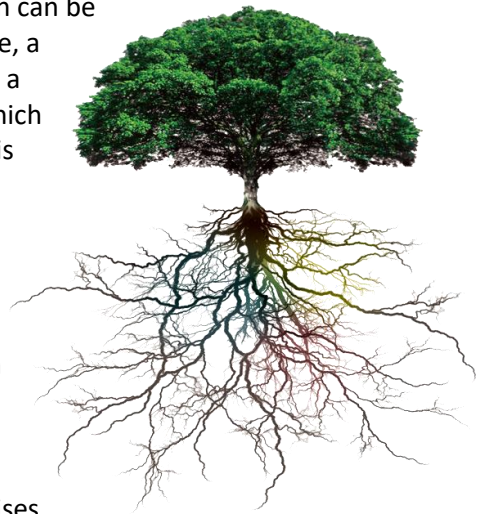


## Sound Professional When Talking About Causes And Consequences

Whenever we have a problem, it is important to find the **root cause** of the problem. It can be difficult to **get to the bottom** of a problem if there are many possible causes.

Of course, it is not only with problems where we might want to find the cause of something. Sometimes it is worth looking at where our successes **stem from**, so that we can repeat them again in the future.

When we use the verb 'cause', we usually refer to something negative happening. For example, bad management can cause problems in the team. If we want to talk about something good, we can use the verb **to bring about**, which can be used both for positive and negative situations. For example, a positive attitude in a team can **bring about** real progress in a project. Another way that we can talk about something which causes something positive, especially something dynamic, is to say that something or someone was the **driving force** or **catalyst behind something**.



If something causes a process to start, especially if it causes something to start immediately, we can use the verb **to trigger**. For example, a government's poor decision can **trigger** protests across the city.

If one effect then causes a second effect, we can call the second effect **a knock-on effect**. Many of the economic crises seen around the world are **knock-on effects** of the covid pandemic. If one negative knock-on effect causes another negative knock-on effect, which causes another negative knock-on effect, we are experiencing a **vicious circle**.

The phrases **due to** and **despite** are also great ways to talk about the causes of something. However, be careful when using these. These phrases on their own can only be followed by noun phrases. If we want to put these phrases before a full sentence we have to use **due to the fact that** and **despite the fact that**. These are great to use because they offer a really easy way to sound professional:

**Due to + noun phrase:** "Due to poor decision making, the economy started to crash."

**Due to the fact that + full sentence:** "Due to the fact that the government made a series of poor decisions, the economy started to crash."

**Despite + noun phrase:** "Despite our strong performance last year, our profits are still below expectations."

**Despite the fact that + full sentence:** "Despite the fact that the company performed so well last year, our profits are still below expectations."

This also works with **stem from**:

**Stem from + noun phrase:** "Our success stems from our strong preparation."

**Stems from the fact that + full sentence:** "Our success stems from the fact that we carried out thorough preparation and planning."

### A) Match the phrases to the definitions

Based on the context of the article, can you match the words in the box to the definitions listed below? Then add the word into the example sentence. You may need to change the form of the word to fit the meaning of the sentence.

The root cause of	to get to the bottom of	to stem from
To bring about	to be the driving force behind	to trigger
a knock-on effect	a vicious circle	

1. To find an explanation for (a mystery or a problem): \_\_\_\_\_

*"We have managed to \_\_\_\_\_ why we have been losing customers."*

2. An indirect effect on something: \_\_\_\_\_

*"The forced redundancies are unfortunately a \_\_\_\_\_ from the pandemic."*

3. To cause something to happen, especially quickly or directly: \_\_\_\_\_

*"The bankruptcy of a major US bank \_\_\_\_\_ a global financial crisis in 2008."*

4. To come from or originate from: \_\_\_\_\_

*"Success often \_\_\_\_\_ hard work and commitment."*

5. The basic, fundamental cause of something: \_\_\_\_\_

*"After extensive research, we have managed to pinpoint the \_\_\_\_\_ of the downward trend in website hits that we have been experiencing recently."*

6. To cause something to happen (this can be something positive or negative): \_\_\_\_\_

*"Progressive government policies have \_\_\_\_\_ fundamental social change."*

7. The person or the thing that has the power to make something happen: \_\_\_\_\_

*"Our strong, customer-oriented values are \_\_\_\_\_ our success."*

8. One negative effect which causes another negative effect and another negative effect: \_\_\_\_\_

*"If you eat unhealthily, it can cause you to feel a lack of energy and motivation, which can trigger a \_\_\_\_\_".*

**B) Key Words in a New Context**

Below you can find a paragraph. Can you fill in the gaps in the paragraph with the words from the box below? You may need to change the form of some of the verbs in order for them to fit into the sentence.

the root cause of	to get to the bottom of	to stem from the fact that
to bring about	despite the fact that	the driving force
due to the fact that	a knock-on effect	a vicious circle
		to trigger

## Mental Health In Today's World

Mental health has become a global issue, and many developed countries talk of a 'mental health epidemic' affecting people of all ages, genders, and races. It poses a really worrying question: If countries are developing in terms of economy, technology and healthcare, why are the statistics for mental health worsening year on year? It is becoming more and more urgent that we pinpoint the \_\_\_\_\_ of this crisis.

So what are some of the potential causes of this crisis today? Mental health issues can \_\_\_\_\_ our world seems to be moving at a much faster pace today than ever before, which can cause severe stress among those who are struggling to keep up. Social media appears to be another serious trigger which has become hugely significant over the past decade. Excessive social media use is directly linked to anxiety, depression and feelings of inadequacy as users try to \_\_\_\_\_ why their lives are not as good as the lives that their friends seem to be enjoying in highly choreographed photos.

Another problem is the fact that mental health has long been stigmatized and misunderstood. \_\_\_\_\_ society is much more aware of mental health as a serious issue, there is still a long way to go before a person suffering from mental health issues can be confident that their friends, family or boss will offer them the support that they require. \_\_\_\_\_ mental health is often still seen as a "weakness" or a "personal failing", people who suffer from mental health problems are often reluctant to seek help. The \_\_\_\_\_ of this is that people don't receive it, which can worsen their condition, and cause them to become more isolated and withdrawn. This isolation and withdrawal can \_\_\_\_\_ what can best be described as a \_\_\_\_\_ in which isolated people develop even more severe mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety, leading to further withdrawal from society.

One example of governments attempting to \_\_\_\_\_ change can be seen in Scotland, Ireland and New Zealand among others. These governments have joined forces to propose a shift towards a 'wellness economy' model to measure the success of a country. The idea behind this is that a country's success should not just be measured on

economic output, but also by the happiness and contentment of their citizens. The \_\_\_\_\_ behind such an initiative is a strong desire to raise awareness of mental health and to make the world a happier place.

### C) Comprehension Questions

1. What are 3 societal causes of mental health issues that are mentioned in the article?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
2. What do you notice about the way the word 'trigger' is used in the second paragraph?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
3. Excessive social media use can lead to "feelings of inadequacy". What do you think that this means in the context of the sentence at the end of paragraph 2?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
4. Based on the context of the sentence, what do you think the phrase 'reluctant to' means in the 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
5. Based on the very general information in the final paragraph, to what extent do you think that a shift towards a 'wellness economy' could be a good idea?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

### D) More Uses of Selected Key Words

#### To get to the bottom of

We can also add a question word onto the end of this phrase:  
*"We have to get to the bottom of why we are losing so much money."*

**E) Glossary of words for sounding professional when talking about causes and consequences**

the root cause of  
to get to the bottom of  
to bring about  
to be the driving force behind  
the catalyst behind  
to trigger / a trigger

a knock-on effect  
a vicious circle  
despite (the fact that)  
due to (the fact that)  
to stem from (the fact that)